



COUNTRIES & NATIONALITIES

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Topic Overview

This lesson introduces students to countries, nationalities, and languages — one of the most useful topics at A1-A2 level, since it comes up constantly in introductions, travel talk, and small talk ("Where are you from?"). It also naturally recycles "to be" and question formation, so it works well as a follow-up to those topics if you've already covered them.

Learning goals by the end of the lesson:

- Say and ask where someone is from
- Correctly form and use nationality adjectives (I'm Japanese, not "I'm Japan")
- Connect countries, nationalities, and languages correctly
- Use capital letters correctly for countries, nationalities, and languages

Grammar Notes for the Teacher

1. Country vs. Nationality vs. Language

Many students confuse these three, especially when their native language doesn't distinguish them grammatically. Model the pattern clearly:

Country	Nationality (adjective)	Language
Japan	Japanese	Japanese
France	French	French
Brazil	Brazilian	Portuguese
Thailand	Thai	Thai
Spain	Spanish	Spanish

Point out: nationality and language are **not always the same word** (Brazil → Brazilian, but the language is Portuguese). This trips up a lot of students — worth flagging early.

2. Common Nationality Suffix Patterns

Useful to put on the board as a reference, since most nationalities follow one of these patterns:

- **-ese:** Japan → Japanese, China → Chinese, Vietnam → Vietnamese
- **-ian/-an:** Brazil → Brazilian, Italy → Italian, Korea → Korean
- **-ish:** Spain → Spanish, England/Britain → English/British, Poland → Polish
- **-i:** Israel → Israeli, Pakistan → Pakistani
- **Irregular:** France → French, Netherlands → Dutch, Switzerland → Swiss

3. "I'm from ____" vs. "I'm ____"

Both are correct but structurally different — worth being explicit about this, since students often blend them incorrectly ("I'm from Japanese" is a very common error).

- I'm from + country: I'm from Japan.
- I am + nationality adjective: I am Japanese.

4. Capitalization

Countries, nationalities, and languages are **always capitalized** in English, even mid-sentence. This is a common error for students whose L1 doesn't capitalize these (e.g., French, Spanish speakers). Worth a quick mention, especially if you're also correcting written work.

Warm-Up Questions (Teacher-Led, No Handout Needed)

Use these to open the lesson conversationally — ask the class, or have students answer in pairs before whole-class feedback. Good for gauging existing vocabulary before you present anything.

1. Where are you from?
2. What's your nationality?
3. What language(s) do you speak at home?
4. Can you name 5 countries in Asia? In Europe?
5. What's a country you'd love to visit, and why?
6. Do you know anyone from a different country? Where are they from?
7. What's a famous person from another country that you like (actor, singer, athlete)?
8. Guess: which country has the most different official languages?

Teacher tip: Question 8 is a good hook — many students are surprised the answer is often debated (Papua New Guinea has over 800 languages spoken, though most aren't "official"). Use it to spark curiosity before moving into the structured content.