

Litter poem

Topic: Litter

Aims:

- To consolidate and extend understanding of vocabulary associated with litter pollution
- To develop an ability to understand and respond to poetry
- To be able to make suggestions to solve problems
- To follow sentence stress patterns and rhythm to read a poem aloud
- To express ideas on litter in the form of a poem

Level: Pre-Intermediate and above

Materials

You will need a computer or an audio device (e.g. MP3 player) with speakers to play the recording of the poem or you can read the poem out aloud yourself.

Introduction

This lesson introduces learners to some of the main issues related to litter and raises awareness of what can be done to reduce litter. The main focus is on modern poetry and encouraging learners to enjoy poetry, follow the rhythm and write their own anti-litter poems.

This lesson is suitable for teens and should be around 60-90 minutes long. For a shorter lesson, select stages that are more relevant to your learners.

Procedure

Litter – what, where and why?

- This poem has a great start and should get learners motivated to listen. To introduce the topic, play the first 3 lines of the poem up to “*my name is litter*”
- Write litter on the board and elicit some examples of what it is. (the photograph from the worksheet might help).
- Put learners in groups of 3 or 4 and ask them to make notes on the following questions (they should all take notes in their notebook):

Where is the litter problem very bad near their school or home?

Where else do you see a lot of litter?

What words describe litter (sight and smell)?

Why is litter dangerous?

- As feedback, collect some of the ideas on the board clarify any vocabulary that some learners know that others do not. Encourage them to discuss local habits such as burning litter, throwing litter from cars, wasting plastic bags etc. Allow learners to add to their notes.

Listening to the poem

Tell the learners that they will listen to the poem and tick the words in their notebooks that they hear.

Play the poem from the beginning to the end.

Allow learners to check with a partner the words they have ticked and listen again.

Understanding the poem

- Give out **worksheet A** and ask learners to read the poem, check the words they ticked and complete the vocabulary task. (allow learners to read it out aloud if they want. They will probably try to mimic the writer's intonation which helps improve their use of strong and weak syllable stress)
- Learners discuss the language in the poem and why the writer says: "I'm getting larger hour after hour"; "I'm really unhealthy" and "I'm produced by the rich/thrown out by the poor".
- Feedback: Their responses might include:

"I'm getting larger hour after hour"	The problems is growing as consumerism grows and more items are sold in supermarkets in extra packaging
"I'm really unhealthy"	Litter can be poisonous and litter can house rats and biting insects (e.g. mosquitoes) that carry disease.
"I'm produced by the rich/thrown out by the poor"	Large rich manufacturing companies produce the plastics etc and ordinary people have to dispose of it. You may discuss how culturally litter tends to be more of a problem where people have less income and less self respect.

Facts about litter

This stage gives the learners information about litter to raise their awareness of the dangers and help them identify bad habits that cause problems. You may change some of the facts in the true/false exercise to suit your local context better.

- Learners match the words to the appropriate picture to help them with the true false section.
- Ask the learners to decide if the statements on litter are true or false. They should circle their answer.
- Feedback: Add the facts from the answer key to the board under their ideas from earlier.

- Brainstorm with the learners *What people can do to stop litter.*
- Using **worksheet B**, in pairs, ask learners to go through each of the problems and come up with one solution to each problem. (You may divide the class into 3 groups and give each group 3 problems to discuss).
- Depending on your class's level they may use can for ability or should for obligation here. Monitor, help learners with vocabulary and take notes of their utterances.
- Pause the discussion and put some of their good ideas on the board, using the structures they used most naturally and a range of sentence starters such as:

We can/should...

People can/should...

Everyone can/should...

More people can/should...

- Restart the activity and encourage learners to use the sentence starters.

Writing your own anti-litter poem.

As part of an anti litter campaign, half the class will write poems about the problems of litter and half will write about ways the problem can be solved. Before the learners can write their own verse to the poem we want them to get a feel for the rhythm.

- Read (or play) the first verse of the poem up to “metal and paper” aloud and encourage the learners to repeat copying the rhythm
- Tap or clap out the rhythm and repeat the first over and over again. Divide the class into groups and get them to say it whilst others clap and vice versa. At first learners will have trouble fitting all the words in between the claps but they should soon catch on. You may read on more of the poem but for weaker learners this is usually enough to get the rhythm.
- Introduce the concept of an anti-litter campaign show them the picture from a campaign in the UK (e.g. <http://www.sunpack.com/blog/2009/06/anti-litter-ad-campaign/>) or show a poster from your school or a symbol for no rubbish.
- Tell the learners they are going to write their own verse for the poem and these will be posted around the school as part of an anti litter campaign.
- Divide the class into two groups. One half will focus on the problems and one half on the solutions. This will give the learners more variety when reading or listening to other group's poems later on. The problems and solutions do not need to be related.
- Remind them of the notes and ideas they made earlier in the lesson and get them to highlight the ideas they want to include. Monitor and make sure

they have not confused the problems and solutions.

- Handout **worksheet C** to the group focussing on problems and **worksheet D** to the group focussing on solutions. Remind them of the rhythm and encourage them to continue the second verse with the rhythm in mind.
- Give the learners feedback on their poems and get them to write up final drafts nicely to be displayed around the school.

ICT options: If you have the equipment, you can record some of the learners' poems (even using your mobile phone). Learners' can make a Power Point presentation with images that support the ideas in their poem and add the audio to the presentation and play them on parents' day. Perhaps your class can perform the poems at assembly or put the recordings on your school/class website or send them into your local radio station.

Optional class project: If you have more time you can ask learners to design bins for the school with their poems printed on them. These may be litter bins or recycle bins and you may be able to get a local corporation to sponsor your class so that the bins can be made.