

# Yoga and relaxation

## Topic

Yoga poses and guided relaxation

## Aims

- To raise learners' awareness of yoga
- To build learners' vocabulary for body parts and actions
- To practise using imperatives
- To develop listening and speaking skills
- To encourage imagination

## Age group and level

Primary (8–12 years)  
CEFR level A2 and above

## Time

60–90 minutes approximately

## Materials

- the instructions sheet for the teacher
- one copy of the worksheet per learner
- a copy of the Tree pose picture per pair/three for half the class
- a copy of the Warrior pose picture per pair/three for the other half of the class
- coloured pens/pencils and paper
- YouTube video for the Tree pose <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SfLrMwcxw1g> (optional)
- YouTube video for the Warrior pose <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mOYTNOzK2ml> (optional)

## Introduction

This lesson plan helps raise awareness of yoga and relaxation, which can benefit the physical and mental well-being of children as well as adults.

In the first part of the lesson, learners do a basic yoga pose and a warm-up. They then learn and practise language for giving instructions for yoga poses. Next, they create their own instructions for a yoga pose, which they give to a partner to follow. After the yoga poses, learners experience a guided relaxation. They then draw a picture to illustrate the 'story' they heard during the relaxation, or they can draw a picture of a different scene that they find relaxing. Finally, they describe their picture to a classmate.

**Procedure**

<b>Before the lesson</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Check with your learners' parents/carers and/or your school to make sure that it's OK to do a lesson that includes some physical activity and whether there are any learners who are unable to do the poses/warm-up for any reason.</li> <li>• If anyone is unable to do the poses/warm-up due to mobility issues, you could include some adapted yoga poses/stretches to do instead. Websites such as <a href="https://www.wheelpower.org.uk/resources/adaptiveyoga">https://www.wheelpower.org.uk/resources/adaptiveyoga</a> can provide you with some ideas.</li> </ul>
<b>1. Introducing the topic (5 minutes)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell the learners that you're going to show them an activity. Can they tell you what it is? Sit in <i>Easy pose</i> (this is also called <i>Sukhasana</i> or <i>cross-legged pose</i> – see instructions sheet).</li> <li>• Once they have guessed 'yoga', have a brief discussion. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Which country does yoga come from originally? [India]</li> <li>– What do we do when we do yoga? [relax our body and mind, stretch, do poses, etc.]</li> <li>– Have you ever tried yoga? [If they have, did they like it?]</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Do the learners know the names of any poses, or can they guess? You could explain that many poses are named after animals or things from nature. Some examples are <i>Cobra pose</i>, <i>Fish pose</i>, <i>Cat pose</i>, <i>Dog pose</i>, <i>Crocodile pose</i>, <i>Mountain pose</i>, <i>Bridge pose</i>. For reference, Wikipedia has a list of poses (or <i>asanas</i>):  <a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_asanas">https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_asanas</a> </li> </ul>
<b>2. Listening skills (5–10 minutes)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell the learners they're now going to do the Easy pose that you showed them at the start. Before you begin, tell them that the pose is not always easy! But with practice it can become comfortable.</li> <li>• Do the Easy pose with your learners. They listen and copy you as you give them step-by-step instructions, referring to the instructions sheet if necessary.</li> </ul>
<b>3. Building language for body parts and actions (15 minutes)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell the learners that they're going to warm up before learning some more poses.</li> <li>• Use the warm-up instructions on the instructions sheet, as they contain the language that the learners will need in the next stage for doing the Tree and Warrior poses. Learners listen to your instructions and copy you as you do the actions.</li> <li>• Do the warm-up a second time, but this time the learners should repeat the instructions after you, in order to practise pronunciation of the language.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Then give the learners the worksheet. Show them how to use the table. Going from left to right, they can create a sentence using words from each column. Read an example, pointing to the words. Then ask them to do the action. For example:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Bend your knees.</li> <li>– Straighten your left arm above your head.</li> <li>– Put your right foot behind you.</li> <li>– Stretch your arms up.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Ask one of the learners to make a sentence. The other learners do the action. Repeat a few more times until you are sure that the learners understand how to create the sentences and that they understand all the vocabulary.</li> </ul>
<b>4. Speaking and listening skills (20–30 minutes)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell the learners that they are now going to learn another yoga pose and they are then going to teach it to a partner.</li> <li>• Divide the class into two groups – Trees and Warriors. Check they understand the meanings of the two words.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Within the Tree group, put the learners into pairs/threes.</li> <li>– Within the Warrior group, put the learners into pairs/threes.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Give each pair/three the picture of their pose, Tree or Warrior. Should you wish, you could also use videos such as those below. Alternatively, you could watch the videos before the class for your own reference, in order to help the learners learn the poses. (You can see the four steps of the pose at 0:15 of each video.)             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Tree pose: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SfLrMwxcw1q">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SfLrMwxcw1q</a></li> <li>– Warrior pose: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mOYTNOzk2ml">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mOYTNOzk2ml</a></li> </ul> </li> <li>• In their pairs/threes, using the picture of the pose and the table on the worksheet, the learners decide what instructions you need to get into and then out of that pose. They can make notes on the worksheet. When they have decided, they should practise the instructions on each other to see if they work. Monitor and help the learners as needed.</li> <li>• Once they have had enough time to feel comfortable with the pose, put the learners into new pairs/threes, with at least one Tree and one Warrior in each.</li> <li>• The Tree and Warrior learners then take turns to give instructions for and demonstrate their pose. The other follows the instructions and copies the pose.</li> <li>• Get some class feedback. Which pose was easier or harder? Which was more fun?</li> </ul>

<b>5. Listening skills (5–10 minutes)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain to your learners that at the end of a yoga session, people often practise relaxation. Tell them that you are going to tell them a little story that will help them relax and feel good. They should imagine the story with their eyes closed. Before you start, draw a quick picture of a rainbow and clouds on the board and elicit the words <i>sky</i>, <i>cloud</i> and <i>rainbow</i>.</li> <li>• While listening, learners can either lie on the floor, sit in Easy pose or sit on a chair. Read the text for the relaxation from the instructions sheet, using a slow and gentle voice.</li> </ul>
<b>6. Creative skills (10–15 minutes)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask the learners to draw a picture that illustrates the story they have just heard, or to illustrate another relaxing scene that they can imagine.</li> <li>• Once they have finished, they can ask a partner to close their eyes and imagine the picture while they describe it. Remind them to use a slow, gentle voice.</li> <li>• To extend the activity, ask the learners to write a description of their picture.</li> </ul>
<b>7. Setting homework (5 minutes)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For homework, learners could find another yoga pose to learn. They could look online or, if they know someone (e.g. in their family) who does yoga, they can ask them. They show and describe their pose in the next class.</li> <li>• Alternatively, you could ask learners to find out the English names of as many yoga poses as they can and share them with the class next time.</li> </ul>
<b>Further ideas and resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UN International Day of Yoga (21 June): <a href="https://www.un.org/en/observances/yoga-day">https://www.un.org/en/observances/yoga-day</a></li> <li>• Yoga poses for kids: <a href="http://unicefkidpower.org/yoga-poses-for-kids/">http://unicefkidpower.org/yoga-poses-for-kids/</a></li> <li>• Yoga pose videos: <a href="https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLWUvWqxGsU5UyYbI5V8DTLidku5Bqx71d">https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLWUvWqxGsU5UyYbI5V8DTLidku5Bqx71d</a></li> <li>• Primary school yoga resources: <a href="https://www.ghll.org.uk/mental-health/yoga---emotional-health-and-wellbeing/yoga-resources-/yoga-resources-for-primary-schools/">https://www.ghll.org.uk/mental-health/yoga---emotional-health-and-wellbeing/yoga-resources-/yoga-resources-for-primary-schools/</a></li> <li>• Adaptive yoga: <a href="https://www.wheelpower.org.uk/resources/adaptiveyoga">https://www.wheelpower.org.uk/resources/adaptiveyoga</a></li> </ul>

**Contributed by**

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