

The Climate Connection



Lesson plan

Buy. Use. Toss.

Shopping and services: responsible consumption

Face-to-face teaching lesson plan

Suitable for use with lower secondary learners of English

CEFR level B1 and above

#TheClimateConnection

www.britishcouncil.org/climate-connection

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Topic

This lesson looks at shopping and services, and responsible consumption.

Outcomes

- To highlight the environmental impact of waste on the living planet, especially plastics
- To encourage responsible consumption and responsible activism
- To discuss the causes and consequences behind these issues as well as possible solutions
- To practise the passive voice in the past

Age group and level

Lower secondary students at CEFR level B1

Time

90 minutes approximately or two shorter lessons

Materials

The lesson plan and learner material can be downloaded in PDF format. Before the lesson, print enough copies of the learner worksheet for every learner.

For the first activity, you will need some (cleaned) rubbish, such as empty drinks containers, magazines, packaged food containers, batteries and boxes. Bring it in from home, or during the previous lesson ask learners to bring theirs in from home; you could also save the contents of the classroom bin over a few days. Share the items out into several bags, one for each group of three or four learners.

There is an alternative idea in the teacher's notes below if you have not been able to collect rubbish.

Introduction


This lesson is part of the Climate Action in Language Teaching series of engaging lessons about the climate emergency and biodiversity loss. It explores different topics connected to the crisis.

In this lesson, learners will be asked to think about what happens to the things we throw away. They categorise some rubbish into 'necessary' and 'luxury' products, then answer questions about the last item they threw away. They read the 'autobiography' of a plastic bottle and write their own story in the same style. Finally, they discuss the extent to which other people's waste is their responsibility and the responsibility of all, and agree on practical ways to reduce plastic waste in the world at three levels: personal, local and national/corporate.



It would be a suitable lesson to supplement a unit in the coursebook on shopping and services, or when practising the passive voice in the past.

Procedure

<p>1. Introduce the topic (10 mins)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put learners in small groups and give each a bag of rubbish items*. Ask them to categorise the items into two groups: 'necessary' items and 'luxury' items. You may need to clarify the meaning, which you can do by showing items of yours that you consider necessary or luxuries, e.g. your reading glasses and your sunglasses. Invite groups to show the class their objects and say why they categorised them as they did. Make a distinction between the object and the packaging; for example, water is necessary, but is the plastic bottle holding it necessary? Encourage discussion about this and ask learners to think of alternatives, e.g. a reusable bottle from home. <p>* If you are not able to use real rubbish, ask learners to think of typical items that they might find in their bins at home, and write them on the board.</p>
<p>2. Answer questions about a recently thrown away item (10 mins)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tell learners to recall the last item that they threw away and write it at the top of a page in their notebooks. Do yours as an example, e.g. new computer mouse packaging. Dictate the following questions, which the learners write down. Write on the board any words they may not know how to spell, e.g. material, manufactured: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> What is it made of? Where is the material from? Where was it manufactured? How did it travel from there to you? How long did you use it for? What did you do with it when you threw it away? What happened to it after that? Put learners in pairs and ask them to take turns asking each other the questions about their item. Reassure the class that they if they don't know the answer, they can guess. After a few minutes, nominate individuals to talk about their partner's item of rubbish and what they decided about its 'story'.



3. Order the events of the story (15 mins)



- Option 1: Hand out one worksheet to each learner.
Option 2: Cut the sentences up and place them around the classroom. Ask learners to walk around copying the sentences in their notebooks.
- Explain that this is the 'autobiography' of a plastic water bottle. Make sure learners know what an autobiography is, and that autobiographies are told in the first person, 'I'.
- Tell learners that the story was mixed up at the printers when they were printing the book, and that they have to put the story back in the correct order from the start of the bottle's 'life' to the end of the story. Elicit the first line ('The first thing I remember ...').
- Put learners in pairs and give them five minutes to order the story. Go around to check they have got the sentences in the correct order, helping where necessary.
- While learners are still working, draw the following things from the story on the board: a shopping basket, drinks cans, a bin lorry, a rubbish bag, a label, a bin. When most learners have finished putting the story in order, get everyone's attention, point to each thing on the board and ask learners to find and call out the words from the story.
- Nominate learners to read each part of the story in the correct order.

Answers:



1 = The first thing I remember ... (given); 2 = I was filled ...; 3 = I was wrapped ...; 4 = We were taken ...; 5 = After a few days ...; 6 = Two days later ...; 7 = I wasn't there ...; 8 = I didn't get ...; 9 = I was thrown away ...; 10 = The next day ...; 11 = On the journey ...; 12 = I floated ...; 13 = And that's where ...

4. Discussion (15 mins)



- Ask learners the following questions, encouraging discussion and different points of view. Avoid giving learners your point of view:
 - How long is the life of the bottle? (about 400 years)
 - How much of that time is useful? (e.g. a few days holding the water, a few minutes in the customer's hands!)
 - How much is a bottle of water?
 - Do you think that includes the cost of cleaning it up in 400 years' time?
 - What problems are caused by having lots of plastic in the oceans and in the countryside? (e.g. plastic breaks down into small pieces, which are eaten by animals; it can poison the water; plastic bags can choke animals who eat it; etc.)



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Whose responsibility is it to clean it up? The people who buy the products, the companies who insist on selling their products in plastic or the governments for allowing companies to use plastic in this way? • Explain that at the end of the lesson they will discuss the question: What can we do to reduce the amount of plastic on the planet?
5. Write a mini autobiography (15 mins) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain to learners that they are going to write an autobiography of the items of rubbish that they threw away and discussed earlier in the lesson. Write a line from the water bottle story on the board: 'I was filled with water and given a label.' Ask learners, 'Who filled the bottle with water?' (Someone at the factory. / We don't know exactly. / It isn't important.) Point out the usefulness of the past passive for this writing task and remind them of the structure if necessary: <i>was/were</i> + past participle. • Put learners in pairs and tell them to choose one of their items to write about. Go around and make yourself available for help with language. Encourage them to use their imagination to fill in the gaps in their knowledge. • Ask fast finishers to design a book cover for their autobiography.
6. Read and present (15 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the learners to pin their stories on the walls around the classroom. Tell learners to now read the other stories and to choose the story they think is the most realistic, the most personal or emotional, the funniest.
7. Make an action plan (10 mins) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write on the board, 'What can we do to reduce the amount of plastic on the planet?' Put the learners in groups. • Tell each group to discuss the question and decide on three areas of action that would be effective. Explain that one area should be at the personal level, i.e. what they can do in their lives; one should be at the local level, i.e. what can change in their school or local community; and one should be at the national, economic or political level, i.e. what they can do to help make bigger changes in society. • Visit each group and find out about their ideas, helping them with language to express their ideas where necessary. • Suggested answers for the teacher's reference Things we can do to reduce plastic include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (at the personal level) refuse to use single-use plastics; use a refillable water bottle; recycle more effectively at home; choose products with paper or card packaging over products with plastic packaging; consume less



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - (at the local level) create a recycling system at school; collect rubbish in the area; organise a clean-up of a park - (at the national, economic or political level) sign petitions to stop plastics; complain at supermarkets about their use of plastic; write to big companies; organise campaigns to stop buying products or supporting irresponsible companies. • Invite spokespeople from each group to summarise their ideas. Ask the class to choose one action from their action plans to carry out this week! In the following lesson, make sure you follow this up by asking learners what they did, how it went, whether they will carry on, and so on. Congratulate learners for making a positive change for sustainability!
Homework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners research how a product such as plastic, tetra Brik™, cardboard for packaging, old electronics, etc. is either produced, recycled or disposed of. Search terms include: 'How is _ made?', 'What happens to recycled _?', 'Where does my rubbish go?'

Contributed by

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