

Comparison of lockdown in different countries

Important – please read

This lesson has been created for teachers working in face-to-face classrooms where Covid-19 restrictions are in place. The guidance at the start of the lesson plan is designed to provide suggested ideas for managing pair work and group work in a physically distanced classroom environment. It is a general guide and your situation may be different. You may need to adapt the lesson to the context you are working in.

There is also an online version of this lesson plan, which you could refer to if you are working in a 'hybrid' learning situation. Hybrid learning is the method of teaching remote and in-person students at the same time via virtual instruction.

Topic

Comparing experiences of learning from home from children in different countries

Aims

- To provide learners with examples of experiences of learning at home with which they might identify
- To practise reading comprehension skills
- To practise speaking skills
- To develop problem solving and critical thinking skills
- To give learners an opportunity to evaluate experiences and collate ideas
- To promote group work and collaboration skills

Age/level

Primary
CEFR level A2+

Time

50-60 minutes

Materials

- Copies of the reading texts that you are using
- Learners will need a pen and paper

Introduction

One of the major factors for primary-aged children during lockdown is their school being closed and having to learn from home. This lesson focuses on the experiences of learning at home during lockdown and how that could have varied from country to country. They will read texts about several different children and answer some questions. They will role play a conversation with a child in a different

country to find out what that child likes and finds difficult about learning at home. Finally they will consider solutions that could help the children, as well as reflect upon their own experiences.

Communicative activities in face-to-face physically-distanced classrooms

Make sure you are familiar with the rules for face-to-face teaching in your school

These lesson plans are designed to include opportunities for students to work in pairs or groups to develop their communication skills. This is likely to present a number of challenges, as there will be different physical distancing rules you may need to follow in your classroom to protect the safety of students and teachers. These procedures and rules may involve some of the following:

- Reduced class sizes so that desks can be placed up to two metres apart.
- Student 'bubbles', in which groups of up to ten pupils are able to work together safely.
- Clear plastic screens placed around students' desks to allow for safer interaction
- Hybrid learning situations, where some students are physically present in the classroom and others join the lesson remotely.
- Policies on handouts and worksheets, where it is not possible to give learners a physical worksheet.

All of the issues above will bring new challenges and influence the way you teach, particularly in activities where you would normally ask students to talk to each other in pairs or groups. The ideas below are intended to help you manage your lessons effectively and ensure that students have sufficient opportunity to communicate as much as possible during the lesson.

Suggestions for communicative activities

The key purpose of using communicative activities, such as pair work and group work is to ensure students have an opportunity to practise their speaking and listening skills at the same time as other students in the class. However, due to restrictions this may not be possible in the normal way. To avoid your classes being too teacher-centred, we have suggested some ideas below that can replace more traditional group and pair work speaking activities:

- Use written dialogue in place of spoken dialogue for simple tasks.
 - Pen and paper. In low-resource environments, ask students who are physically in the classroom to communicate using pen and paper. For example, where students have been asked to give an opinion, they write this in larger than normal writing on a piece of paper and hold it up for their partner to read. Their partner then responds by writing on their own piece of paper.
 - Post-it notes. Ask students to write comments on post-it notes, or on small pieces of paper, and take turns to stick them to a board in the classroom, or on a 'post-it' wall. This gives students the opportunity to write their opinions, ideas or responses to a question, and share them with the rest of the class. The teacher is then able to read comments and focus on any follow-up language work, respond to the students' writing or extend the discussion as a whole class. If working in a hybrid situation, where some

of the students are learning simultaneously in a remote environment, they could do the same activity using an online 'wall', such as Padlet. Alternatively, they could write their comments and ideas into a shared online document, which could be displayed on a computer, via a data projector in the classroom, or read out by the teacher.

- **Using messenger applications.** In contexts where students have access to an internet connection, the above activity could be done using a messenger tool such as WhatsApp, with students writing messages to each other online. Again, with hybrid learning situations, this pair work activity could be done between a student physically in the classroom and a partner learning remotely.
- **Collaborative writing.** An online solution, which may be particularly effective in a hybrid learning situation, might be to use an online messaging board such as [Padlet](#), or a shared document in [Google Docs](#). The teacher could ask a simple open-ended question, for example 'What are some of the advantages/disadvantages of learning from home?' Having shared the link with the students, the teacher gives a word limit and a time limit for students add their comments to the messaging board. The teacher then follows up with whole-class feedback, responding to the comments and asking students to clarify orally.
- **Use voice recording tools for spoken communication.**
 - **Recorded voice messages.** If resources and connectivity make this possible, using voice recording tools can be an effective way to encourage dialogue between students for pair work activities. Make sure all your students have access to a mobile phone before doing this type of activity to ensure everyone can participate. Ask students to record their turn and send via SMS or a messaging application to their partner to respond and build a recorded dialogue.

Alternatively, an online voice recording tool like [Vocaroo](#) is a simple way to create voice recordings and share via SMS or an online messaging application.

Most basic mobile phones have a built-in voice recorder, so it might be possible to share one or more phones and for the teacher to pass it between pairs or small groups of students, who listen and respond or add their comments.

Both of the above activities could be done effectively in hybrid learning situations.

- If you are working in a low-connectivity context and have access to cassette recorders and blank cassettes in your school, using these to record students speaking might be a possible solution. Ensure there is a quiet space where they can do this. Divide students into two groups and invite them to record themselves individually. Play back the recordings as a whole class to evaluate communicative competence and focus on any common errors.

These ideas are a small selection that can encourage student-led communication in physically-distanced face-to-face classrooms, or in hybrid learning contexts. It is recommended that, if possible, you work with colleagues in your institution to create a list of activities and ideas for your own context. We also recommend that you join the [British Council teacher community](#) on Facebook to share ideas.

Procedure

Stage	Instructions
1. Lead-in (5-10 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the learners to guess how many different countries they think there are in the world. Tell them that you will give them the answer later. • Divide the class into pairs. Tell the learners that they have two minutes to work with their partner to write the English names for as many different countries as possible. • At the end of two minutes, ask each group to tell you how many countries they wrote. Ask each group to tell you one of their countries, starting with the group who have written the least. • Finally tell them that there are approximately 200 countries in the world (this varies according to different criteria – therefore 200 countries is an approximate number) • Ask the learners to raise their hand if they have family or friends who live in a different country. How can we talk to people who live in different countries? (phone, Skype, Zoom, Whatsapp, FaceTime etc)
2. Preparation for reading comprehension (5 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elicit the word ‘lockdown’ from the learners (due to Covid-19 you can’t go out, you have to stay at home to stay safe, you can’t go to school) • Ask them how many countries in the world do they think have had a lockdown? (more than 100). • Have the learners had a lockdown in their country? Could they go to school? (maybe just children of essential workers?) Did they have to learn at home? • Can they think of the different ways in which children in different countries may learn from home during lockdown? (online lessons, using a laptop, tablet, phone; watching videos, worksheets; talking to the teacher on the phone; lessons on TV or on the radio, learning with a family member)
Reading comprehension (10 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Before the lesson, decide which of the six reading texts you want to use. The activity will work with two texts, but you can use four or six. • According to how many texts you are using, divide the class into groups and give the same text to everyone in each group. For example, give Ali’s text to everyone in group 1, Nina’s text to everyone in group 2 etc. • Subdivide each group into pairs or groups of three. • Tell the learners to read the text carefully and if there is something they don’t understand, ask their partners. Then they should answer the questions together.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor to check that all the learners have understood the main points of their text.
3. Speaking practice - role play (10 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell the learners that they are going to do a role play. They are going to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pretend to be the child that they read about in the text (ie you are Ali, Nina etc) - Pretend to be at home because their country is in lockdown and their school is closed. - Speak to a child from a different country on the phone/FaceTime etc • Ask them what questions they could ask as well as the ones that they have already seen under the reading text. (For example: What's your name? Where do you live? How old are you? Have you got any brothers and sisters?) • Write the questions on the board and if you wish, ask the learners to write them at the bottom the worksheet. • Demonstrate the activity with one of the stronger learners. • Put each learner with a different partner – someone who has read a different text to their own. Tell them not to show the other person their text. • Remind learners that during the role play them must only speak in English, give as much information and ask as many questions as possible. • Monitor while they are having the conversations and give them a one-minute warning before ending the activity.
5. Problem solving and critical thinking (10-15 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the learners to report back to the class about what they found out from their phone/FaceTime partner. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Who spoke to Ali? - Where does Ali live? - How is Ali learning at home? - What are the good things for him? - What problems does Ali have? • Encourage learners to suggest what could help Ali with the problems that he's having, and why this would help. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - His internet connection is bad > Try closing down other programmes to make the connection more stable - He sometimes has problems speaking and hearing in online lessons > Use headphones to hear better or write in the chat instead of talking - His eyes feel tired > Have breaks away from the computer or other screens to rest your eyes

- Repeat with the other texts that you have used. Some possible answers:
 - Nina – doesn't have enough space, shares a desk, can't concentrate
 - put things away when you're finished with them
 - divide the desk into two areas
 - use headphones so you can't hear other people in the house
 - Petra – can't see the video very well, fights with brother and sister
 - ask the teacher to show things as big as possible in the videos
 - make a schedule of when everyone will use the smartphone
 - David – misses school and friends, too many worksheets and activities, doesn't understand what to do
 - message, call or video chat with his friends more
 - ask his dad to help him with the worksheets and activities
 - ask his teacher to tell his dad which ones are the most important
 - Alex – mum doesn't always have time to collect worksheets, worksheets are sometimes really difficult
 - ask the teacher to email the worksheets then copy them on paper
 - ask a family member to help explain the worksheets
 - Salma – parents don't know what to teach and get interrupted, gets bored
 - tell her parents about what other things they were learning at school
 - try to teach her little brother something instead of playing
 - write a list of different ideas of things to do which she can look at and choose from when she's bored

**Personalisation
(5 minutes)**

- Agree some physical actions with your learners to represent 'yes', 'no' and 'maybe', e.g. standing up, turning around, shrugging shoulders, etc.
- Tell the learners that you are going to say some sentences and they need to do the relevant action depending on whether:
 - they agree / it's the same for them,
 - they partly agree / it's partly the same for them,
 - they disagree / it's different for them.
- Adapt some sentences from the texts or choose your own sentences which are relevant to your context. For example:
 - I liked learning from home.
 - I missed my friends when school was closed.
 - I'm happy to be back at school.
- Read the sentences out and after each sentence, learners react with the appropriate action depending on how they feel about it. Ask a follow up question if appropriate.

Setting homework (5 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For homework you could ask the learners to write a short email or text message to a child in a different country, to tell them about how they learned at home during lockdown and how they feel about being back at school. You could provide them with a skeleton text to complete, such as: Hi! My name is _____ and I'm _____ years old. During lockdown I learned at home with _____ (how – online lessons, video lessons, etc.). Sometimes _____ (person) helped me. One thing I liked about learning at home was _____. One thing I missed about school was _____. Now I'm back at school I feel _____ because _____. Bye!
Further ideas and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> UNICEF: Keeping the world's children learning through COVID-19 https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/keeping-worlds-children-learning-through-covid-19 For practice of writing a letter to a penpal in a different country: https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/writing-practice/penpal-letter

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