BRITISH COUNCIL

The Climate Connection

Lesson plan

Our Family Footprint

Environmental impact of family life

Face-to-face lesson plan

Suitable for use with secondary learners of English

CEFR level B2 and above

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Our Family Footprint

Topic

The environmental impact of family life

Outcomes

During and after the lesson, learners will be able to demonstrate they can:

- describe the environmental impact of family life
- apply critical thinking and collaborative working techniques
- seek agreement and compromises in group discussions
- use specific vocabulary related to the family footprint
- ask sensitive questions about environmentally responsible behaviours.

Age group and level

Older teenagers aged 16 and above at CEFR B2 level

Time

60 minutes or two lessons of 45 minutes. First lesson – stages one and two; second lesson – extended stage three.

Materials

- Our Family Footprint Student worksheets
- Our Family Footprint Vocabulary sheet

Introduction

The climate emergency begins at home, and self-awareness of the impact of home life on the environment is very important. In this lesson, learners will develop their language and 21st-century skills in critical thinking and reaching agreement and compromise in discussions. They will then implement a questionnaire with some sensitive questions about home life and environmental issues.

Procedure

Stage one: What are the environmental impacts of our families and homes?	
Warmer (5 minutes)	• Briefly check that learners are comfortable with the term 'footprint' as a way of describing an environmental impact. The Cambridge dictionary definition is: 'the effect that a person, company, activity, etc. has on the environment, for example the amount of natural resources that they use and the amount of harmful gases that they produce.' See the full definition here • Ask the whole class briefly how their family life impacts the environment. Accept any answers at a class level either orally or in the chat room.
Group discussion – collaboration, creativity and communication Vocabulary discussion and development (20 mins)	• Divide the class into groups of around five learners. Give the **student worksheet** to each group or put one copy on the classroom wall. Ask learners to look at the new vocabulary and discuss the possible meanings within the group. • Give the **vocabulary sheet** to each group or put one copy on the classroom wall. Give learners five minutes to check any new items, and be ready to answer any questions. • Ask the groups to think again about the how family life impacts the environment and how the impact can be reduced. • Give an example to the class, for instance how often we reuse items such as bottles or shopping bags. Ask them to make a list of new ideas in their notebooks, and tell them that this is critical thinking in action. The **vocabulary sheet** and the examples in the **worksheet** should help them. • Ask each group to appoint a leader to call out their ideas to you and the rest of the class when you ask. Possible ideas might include the ones below, but accept all ideas: – car emissions – using public transport or walking as much as possible – impact of electricity use – using solar energy and reducing consumption – waste issues – recycling and fixing 'old' items – food miles – buying locally sourced food
Stage two: Questionnaire design	
Group discussion – collaboration, compromise and communication	• Ask the learners to remain in their groups. Tell them they are going to design a questionnaire about the impact of family life on the environment, and ways of reducing this impact. Explain that sometimes these issues can be sensitive, and people might feel embarrassed or guilty about, for example,

Understanding sensitive situations and questions (15–20 mins)	how much paper and plastic they waste, when they could reuse and recycle instead. Because of this we may need to use sensitive questions. • Tell them that in **exercise 3 on the student worksheet**, there are some examples of questions. Explain that some of the questions are designed to ask about sensitive information. • Ask students to look at the questions in exercise 3 of their worksheet, or put one copy on the wall, and ask them to underline those questions that they think are sensitive. The sensitive ones are: - *Is it all right to discuss why you don't buy locally produced food?* - *Do you mind if I ask about your electricity use?* - *How do you feel about trying car-sharing?* • Ask how the learners know which questions are sensitive. Remind them that sensitive questions are less direct. Briefly remind students of the three example sentence heads and question stems used for sensitive questions. They are: – *Is it all right* + infinitive – *Do you mind if* + simple present – *How do you feel about* + *-ing*/noun/noun phrase • Ask the groups to discuss and agree six questions they could ask a family about its environmental impact. They should include at least three new questions not on the list. • Remind learners that this discussion and agreement may require some compromises. They should write down the questions in the form of a questionnaire. • Ask two or three groups to tell the class briefly about their discussions and if any compromises were made to help them reach agreement about the questions they chose. Remind them why compromise is important in discussions, as a way to make the best decisions.
Stage three: Using the questionnaire and feedback	
Asking and responding to sensitive questions Collaboration and agreement	• Ask the learners to appoint three representatives from their group, two to be speakers and one to be a note-maker. The three representatives should then visit one or two other groups (depending on the time available) and ask their questions to individuals in the group about their family footprint. Remind them about sensitivity. They should make notes on the outcomes. All groups should be 'visited' at least once.

(20 minutes)	• Ask the learners to go back to their groups and discuss and choose the three most interesting things they discovered from the other groups. They should be ready to present their ideas to the whole class. • With the whole class, ask each group to share at least one of the interesting things they discussed. **Extension activity** If time permits, learners can go back to their groups and discuss and agree a list of actions that they think their families could take. They can also discuss if they think families would accept the advice they were given. Ask learners to try and discuss the issues with their families at home.

Contributed by

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