Why should I vote?

Lesson plan

Topic: General Elections
Level: B1
Time: 75 minutes

Aims:
• To give students an insight into how UK General Elections work.
• To develop students’ knowledge of political lexis and give them the opportunity to use it.
• To develop students' awareness of the use of the first conditional and to allow them to practise this in a semi-structured speaking activity.

Introduction
Students will watch the beginning of a short film entitled “The General Election Xplained" [http://www.parliament.uk/education/online-resources/videos2/the-general-election-xplained/general-election-xplained-short/], which will be used to spark debate and provide background knowledge. Students will consider why it is important to vote and discuss the reasons why many young people choose not to do so. Finally, students will take part in a role play in which political candidates try to persuade people to use their vote.

Preparation and materials
For each group of three students, you will need one copy (pre-cut) of the ‘Task 1 – Vocabulary: Political lexis’ cards, and one copy (pre-cut) of the role play cards.

For each student in the class, make one copy of the worksheets, and also one copy of ‘Task 1 – Vocabulary: Political lexis’.

Procedure

Warmer – Discussing reasons to vote (5 minutes)
• Tell students that they are going to learn about General Elections and voting. Elicit the meaning of the word: to vote (to choose the political candidate you think is best).
• Write the lesson heading on the board “Why should I vote?” and give students two minutes to work in groups of three and discuss possible answers to this question.
• After one minute, bring the class together and ask students to report back on their ideas.

Possible Answers: You can vote for the kind of government which will make life better for you and the people around you, in a democratic country everyone’s vote is important, it is important to care and take an interest in how your country is run, across the world people have died fighting for the right to vote.
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Task 1 – Vocabulary: Politics (10 minutes)

• Tell students that they are going to watch a film and that you are going to give them some vocabulary which will help them understand the film.
• Distribute cut-up vocabulary and definition cards and ask students to work in their small groups to match the cards as quickly as they can.
• Students continue working in their groups: taking it in turns to “test” each other on the new vocabulary by saying one of the words and asking others in their group to remember what it means.
• Conduct class feedback. Model and drill the correct pronunciation of the new lexis (ask students to help you mark word stress on the board).

Answers:
1. f, 2.d, 3.a, 4.b, 5.j, 6.i, 7.h, 8.g, 9.c, 10.e

Task 2 – Video: The General Election Xplained in brief: General understanding (20 minutes)

• Tell students that they are going to work in pairs to write down questions they would like to ask about UK General Elections, e.g.
  o What do candidates do before an election?
  o What are the main political parties in the UK?

• Write students’ questions on the board.
• Play the first 3.17 minutes of the film. Students discuss with their partners which of their questions have been answered. Conduct feedback. Ask students to tell you which of their questions have not yet been answered. (You can try to answer students’ questions yourself or you can set this as a homework activity.)

Task 3 – Video: Detailed understanding

• Students watch the film again and answer the questions on the worksheet.
• Show the film again. Pause the film at intervals and allow students to check their answers with their group.
• Go over the answers together as a class.
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Answers:

a) True or False? 1. False (It took place in 2010) 2. False (He is a comedian) 3. True 4. True 5. False (There are six) 6. True

b) Who says what? 1. c 2. a 3. b

c) Why be interested in politics?

“you get to make a choice about what your country’s going to be like”

“If you want to make a change, and you want what you want to happen then you have to vote.”

Task 4 – Lexis review (10 minutes)

- Elicit some of the lexis that students learned at the beginning of the lesson, e.g.: politician, election, candidate etc.
- Tell students that they have two minutes to work with their groups and write as many sentences as they can about the film they have just watched. Each sentence must contain one of the new words.
- Conduct feedback, writing students’ sentences on the board and awarding points for sentences which are correct and use the new lexis accurately.
- Give them a copy of ‘Task 1 – Vocabulary: Political lexis’ – the students could match up the words and definitions again for homework.

Example sentences:

There are six candidates in the election.
The candidates want to be MPs.
The candidates speak to the voters.
The general election was in 2010.

Task 5 – Role play (5 minutes)

Preparing for role play

Elicit the terms voter and candidate from the students. Ask students: Who votes at an election? Who wants to be elected?

Write the words ‘voter’ and ‘candidate’ on the board and recap on how people in the film (both candidates and young people) answered the question “Why should I vote?”

Write the question “Why shouldn’t I vote?” on the board. Give students one minute to work in pairs and brainstorm as many answers to this question as possible. Write all ideas on the board.
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Possible Answers:
I don’t trust politicians, what’s the point? The parties are all the same, my vote won’t make any difference etc.

If you vote for me, you won’t regret it.
If you don’t vote, you won’t be able to complain about the result.

• Write these sentences on the board and elicit the name of this structure (first conditional). Elicit why the first conditional is being used here (we use this for promises, predictions and warnings). Drill the sentences chorally and individually, focusing on pronunciation and sentence stress.

• Write the following sentence heads on the board and ask students to complete with their own ideas using the first conditional structure:

If you vote for me...
If you don’t vote...
If candidates meet a lot of voters...
If you go to the polling station on election day...

• Conduct feedback and write students’ ideas on the board.

Example answers:
If you vote for me I’ll build better hospitals.
If you don’t vote you won’t have a voice.
If candidates meet a lot of voters they’ll win a lot of votes.
If you go to the polling station on election day, you’ll have to give your address.

The role play (15 mins)
Distribute role cards and give students the opportunity to read their roles. Organise students in groups depending on their role (e.g. all student A’s together) and give them five minutes to discuss what they are going to say.

Conduct the role play, monitoring and offering support where necessary.

Feedback any common errors you noticed during the role play (focusing in particular on the new vocabulary and the first conditional). Ask students: Who would get your vote? Why?

Possible Extension Activities
Students could make a leaflet or design a Facebook page encouraging young people to become more politically active.