

Life after Covid-19

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.

Topic

Covid-19 and the environment: past and future

Aims

Students will:

- learn vocabulary (compound nouns) associated with the environment
- improve listening, speaking and writing skills
- develop more awareness of the environment, in the past and future

Age/level

Secondary students at CEFR level B1.2 and above

Time

45–55 minutes

Materials

- Student worksheet
- Video links:
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DaFRheiGED0> (Steve Cutt's animated cartoon *Man 2020*)
 - <https://www.facebook.com/110861655604080/posts/3449272885096257/> (Friends of the Earth video)
- Excellent sources for optional reading:
 - <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/features/2020-06-25/the-new-normal-after-the-coronavirus-pandemic>
 - <https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-52488134>

Introduction

During this lesson, students will consider the impact that the pandemic had on the environment and ask themselves if they want to go back to 'normal', to life as it was before the pandemic. They begin by watching a clever animated cartoon showing how the planet healed while humans were in lockdown. Next, they will study some useful compound nouns and apply these to examples of life before and during the pandemic. The focus from here on is about the future, including a discussion and a video

from Friends of the Earth. Finally, students will send some ideas to the United Nations in the form of a simple manifesto, with photos and hopes for the future.

Guidance for 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 may be different physical-distancing rules you may need to follow in your classroom to protect the safety of students and teachers. Procedures and rules will vary but 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. 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

A key purpose of communicative activities, such as pair work and group work, is to ensure students have an opportunity to practise their productive 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.

Where you see the  symbol on the lesson plan, this tells you that the instructions include a group- or pair-work activity. Refer to the suggested activities below for ideas, the instructions on the lesson plan or use your own ideas.

Using 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.
- Sticky notes. Ask students to write comments on sticky 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 can 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, students could use a messenger tool such as WhatsApp to write 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. If students are working in larger groups of four or five, they can create a closed group with the students they are working with.
- Collaborative writing. An online solution, which may be effective in a hybrid learning situation, is to use an online messaging board such as [Padlet](#) or a shared document in [Google Docs](#). The teacher asks 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 to add their comments to the messaging board or Google doc for their group. The teacher follows up with whole-class feedback, responding to the comments and asking students to clarify orally.

Using 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 is a possible solution. Ensure there is a quiet space where they can do this. Divide students into 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.

Setting up traditional group- and pair-work activity

- If none of the above are possible, consider ways of rearranging your classroom by moving desks and chairs to the side of the room or to the middle of the room for speaking activities in groups or pairs. Arrange students so that they are able to speak at a recommended distance from each other and also from the other groups.

This is a small selection of ideas that may be used to encourage student-led communication in physically distanced face-to-face classrooms or in hybrid learning contexts. If it is possible where you

work, we recommend that you work with your colleagues 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 and collaborate with a global group of teachers.

Procedure

| Stage | Instructions |
|---|---|
| <p>1. Lead-in (10–15 mins)</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Show a short animated cartoon by Steve Cutts. (Students can watch this on their mobile phones if it's difficult for everyone to see the video on a screen.) Ask students to watch and decide what the message is. <p>Answer: While humans were sick, the planet had a chance to heal. But when life returns to 'normal', humans might ruin all the progress they made.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tell students to watch the video again and to tick the examples of positive changes shown in the video. <p>Answers: The smog disappears; there's no traffic; you can hear the sounds of animals; animals move into new places.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optional: Introduce a short speaking activity. Ask students to tell the class or a partner about any positive news stories they heard about animals or smog during the pandemic. (Time allowing, you could let students research these. A suggested short video link is: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ma3k6FAozZk) <p>Possible answers: Sheep were seen in a town in Wales; monkeys entered cities in India; people started to watch the stars more; people's health improved; etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finally, hold a class vote: Do you think these positive changes will last beyond the pandemic? Yes/No/Maybe. |
| <p>2. Vocabulary and discussion (15–20 mins)</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To introduce compound nouns, write two questions on the board. For example: During the pandemic ... did carbon emissions increase or fall? (Answer: They fell.) Did global warming go up or down? (Answer: It went up.) Elicit or explain compound nouns. Ask students to suggest other compounds they know (e.g. climate change) Ask students to match the words in Column A and Column B to form compound nouns. <p>Answer key:</p> <p>air pollution - animal poaching - carbon emissions - climate change - climate strike - cycle lanes forest fires - fossil fuel industries - global warming - habitat loss - household waste - low-carbon transport - noise pollution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optional: Play a mime game in small groups. One student acts out a compound noun from the list while the others guess which compound noun it is. |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have students complete the sentences with the correct compound noun. Answer key: 1. emissions 2. pollution 3. fires 4. waste 5. loss / poaching 6. strike • To carry out the discussion, model the activity with a student first. Ask: <i>How did you improve carbon emissions in your family?</i> Encourage a true answer, e.g. <i>My mum and dad stopped driving to work. / We cancelled our flight abroad. / We bought food from local markets instead of supermarkets. / I bought fewer clothes.</i> Have students form pairs or groups and allow them to talk about their lives and homes. (Note: in situations where students can't discuss, students record questions and send them to a partner, who records and sends back the answer.) |
| <p>3. Video (10 mins)</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set the scene. Many people have talked about the future in terms of 'Soon we'll be back to normal.' They mean 'life as it was', but some people don't agree with this. • Explain that you are going to play a video made by an environmental group. This is gist listening only. Ask: <i>What do they think about 'returning to normal'?</i> • Play the video (or ask students to watch it on their phones). Check the answer. (Answer: Friends of the Earth thinks we shouldn't go back to normal, because normal doesn't work.) • Have students watch the video for detail this time and answer the questions. • Check the answers. (Answer key: 3, 1, 2, 4) • Divide the class into small groups and invite them to hold a discussion. (If this isn't possible, encourage a conversation via a chat box on Messenger.) |
| <p>4. Campaign (10 mins or for homework)</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite students to work in pairs or alone to plan a simple campaign for others to focus on a green recovery. Students can film, write or record the campaign. |

Lesson plan written by:

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