

New things learned or done differently

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

New things learned and things done differently while learning at home and returning to school, in the context of Covid-19

Aims

- To allow learners to reflect upon and share activities that they did during time spent at home
- To help learners' transition back to school
- To establish class rules where Covid-19 restrictions are in place, and reflect upon what is done differently
- To help learners develop vocabulary and understand concepts in a visual way
- To encourage groupwork and collaboration

Age/level

Primary (8–11 years)
CEFR level A2 and above

Time

60 minutes

Materials

- A copy of worksheets 1 and 3 for each student
- One copy of worksheet 2 per pair or small group, cut into strips by the teacher
- Learners will need a mini whiteboard and pen, or paper and a pen

Introduction

This lesson is designed to help primary children's transition back to school in the English classroom, giving them opportunities to think about and share experiences from their time at home, and to establish a set of

rules for the classroom where Covid-19 restrictions apply. The lesson is largely based around the popular game 'Pictionary', which helps learners reinforce vocabulary and understand new concepts in a visual way.

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.
 - 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 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 to 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
Warmer – ‘Pictionary’ game for revising vocabulary for free-time activities (5–10 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell the learners that they are going to play a game called ‘Pictionary’. Explain that you are going to draw a picture on the board and they have one minute to guess what it is. All the words and phrases are activities that you can do at home in your free time. They should not call out the answer but instead write the English word or phrase on their mini whiteboard or paper. They should wait until the teacher tells them to show the answers. They get one point for each correct answer and should keep a tally of their score in the corner of their whiteboard or on their paper. Check understanding of the rules. • Using a timer to time one minute, draw a picture on the board to illustrate a free-time activity that you can do at home (during lockdown or school closure). Choose from the following or use your own ideas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - do origami - play the piano - make cookies - do yoga - paint a picture - dance - juggle. • At the end of one minute, ask the learners to show the word or phrase they have written on their whiteboard or paper. Choose one or two of the more interesting suggestions to share and then give the correct answer. Continue with two or three more words and phrases. At the end of the game, ask learners to show their scores by holding up the whiteboard or paper. Congratulate them all.
Pair/group work – free-time activities done at home (10 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put the learners into pairs or groups of three and tell them that they have one minute to draw an activity that they did at home in their free time or a free-time activity that they would like to do. At the end of a minute, they should show their partners their picture. Each partner tries to guess the activity and, if possible, learners could talk about the picture. For example: ‘I did origami. I made a box and a flower.’ Or ‘I would like to learn to play the guitar, to play my favourite songs.’ • Have a short discussion as a whole class about the different activities. Was there something that lots of people did? Was there something unique?
Teacher-led class discussion –	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With schools being closed due to Covid-19, home became a place for both free time and school time. Some children may have found it more difficult than others

**Staying at home:
free-time and
school-time
activities
(10–15 minutes)**

to cope with this situation. The following activity is designed to prompt a short class discussion about the time spent at home, challenges which could have arisen and positive outcomes.

- Write on the board the heading 'Staying at home' and then three subheadings: 'Free time' / 'School time' / 'Both'.
- Then write the following phrases on the board in speech bubbles and tell the learners that these are things that children may do when their school is closed and they are staying at home.
 - Find a quiet place to study
 - Play games with my family
- Ask the learners if these things relate to free time or school time and then have a short discussion, writing key vocabulary on the board. You could give them some question prompts, such as:
 - Why is it important to find a quiet place to study? (to help you concentrate, feel calm, learn better); What could disturb you when you're studying? (music, brothers and sisters, pets); Was it easy for you to find a quiet place to study at home? (Where did you study?)
 - Do you often play games at home? Who do you play with? What do you play?
- Give out worksheet 1. Choose individual learners to read statements 3–8 one by one and ask the class if the activity is done in free time, school time or both. Prompt discussion with questions such as:
 - (no.3) Did you watch television as part of your school time? (this was the case for children in many parts of the world) Do you often watch TV in your free time?
 - (no.4) Did you do regular exercise during lockdown? What did you do? Have you ever tried an online exercise video? Did your school tell you how to exercise?
 - (no.5) Do you read for fun? Did you learn with books when your school was closed? Were they real books or online books?
 - (no.6) Did you find it difficult or easy to organise your time? Did you get your schoolwork done faster or slower than usual? Did you ever feel stressed by how much you had to do?
 - (no.7) Did you listen to the radio as part of your school time? (this was the case for children in many parts of the world) Do you ever listen to the radio in your free time? Do you listen to podcasts?
 - (no.8) Did you have to share a computer or another device with someone in your family? How did you organise your time? Was it difficult?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the learners for other ideas. They choose two of them to write on their worksheet. If learners had online classes on a platform such as Zoom or Google Classroom, you could ask them what they liked/didn't like, what was easy/difficult.
'Pictionary' game for classroom rules (10 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write the heading 'Classroom rules' on the board and elicit what this means (a list that helps us know what it's OK to do or not OK to do in class). • Say to the learners that now we are back at school, we need to follow school and classroom rules. (Some of the rules in the following activity are specific to going back to school in the context of Covid-19 and some are traditional classroom rules.) • Tell the learners that they are going to play 'Pictionary' again, but this time the phrase that you are drawing is a classroom rule. • This time they don't use the mini whiteboard but instead raise their hand to say their ideas. Remind them not to shout out the answers. • Illustrate the following classroom rule on the board: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Raise your hand if you want to talk. • Keep taking suggestions until the class has guessed the rule correctly, or if nobody can guess after a minute or two, invite them to say 'I give up'. Accept different ways of describing the same concept, for example 'Put your hand up when you want to speak' or 'Raise your hand – don't interrupt'. • Continue with one or two more rules until the learners become confident with the game. Choose from those on worksheet 2 or use your own ideas. Try to use at least one 'traditional' classroom rule and one 'different' rule for the physically distanced classroom.
Group-work activity – 'Pictionary' for classroom rules and making a poster (20 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put the learners into groups of two or three. • Tell them that they are going to take it in turns to draw a classroom rule for the others to guess. • Before they start, give them some tips for drawing the rules by demonstrating on the board. For example, draw stick people instead of detailed people to go faster. For things it's OK to do, they can draw a tick, a thumbs-up or a happy face. For things it's not OK to do, they can draw a cross, a thumbs-down or a sad face. • Give each learner one or two rules on a piece of paper. Cut out the rules from worksheet 2 (don't use any that you have already drawn!) or use your own rules. Choose those which are most relevant to your context. • Once all the rules have been guessed, if possible, ask the learners to talk to their group about which are the most important, which are the easiest or most difficult to keep and if they can think of any more rules together.

- Give each learner worksheet 3, the blank classroom rules poster. Ask them, ideally with their group, to decide which rules to write on their poster.
- End with a brief class discussion about which rules are different in the context of Covid-19 restrictions and which are the same as before. For example, raising your hand is the same, but not sharing your things is different.
- If time allows, learners can do a drawing for each rule, or alternatively they can do this for homework. The posters could then be displayed in class.

Further ideas and resources

- To read more about 'Pictionary':
<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/blogs/larry-ferlazzo/four-games-vocabulary-development>
- More classroom rules posters with blank speech bubbles are available on TeachingEnglish:
<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/kids-classroom-rules-posters-space-ships>
- Word games for free-time activities:
<https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/word-games/free-time-1>
<https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/word-games/free-time-2>

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