Resolutions

Topic

Post Covid-19 Resolutions

Aims

- To encourage learners to talk about their feelings during lockdown
- To listen for gist to get an idea about the teacher's post COVID-19 resolutions
- To talk about post COVID-19 resolutions and brainstorm strategies for achieving the goals
- To use emergent language for talking about resolutions

Age group and level

Teenagers and adults (CEFR level B1-B2)

Time

50-60 minutes

Materials

- Download emoji for emotions such as angry, happy, bored, scared and sad (optional)
- Choose any online vision board template (optional)

Introduction

Many of us today have been forced to teach in a situation where our coursebooks have become less useful because of remote teaching. This lesson is based on a Dogme approach, a learner-centred way of teaching, encouraging dialogue between learners and teachers without relying on published materials and planned lessons, and focusing on emergent language. The main idea is English teachers should only use the resources that are brought to the classroom by their students.

This Dogme-style lesson plan explores post Covid-19 resolutions in the online classroom to start the rest of the year on a positive note. It assumes that the teacher is able to conduct a live teaching session via Zoom, Adobe Connect, Microsoft Teams, or any other videoconferencing platform, and that the teacher has the facility to share their screen or a whiteboard in her/his meeting room, and set up breakout rooms.

Breakout rooms in videoconferencing platforms such as Adobe Connect and Zoom allow the teacher to put their students into smaller groups for pair-and group work. It is expected that the teacher

understands and follows child protection procedures while using technology inside and outside their virtual classroom.

Checklist for online teaching

Make sure you are familiar with the online platform you are using

- Have you tested your microphone and camera in the platform to make sure they work with it? A headset with a mic is usually better than a device's in-built speakers and mic.

- Do the learners need a URL or code to join the class? Do they all have this?

- Do you know how to share what is on your computer screen so that the learners can see it?

- Do you know how to mute the learners' microphones if you need to?

- Do you know how to use the 'breakout rooms' if the platform has this facility? Is this enabled?

- Does the platform have a 'raise hand' button that the learners can use to indicate they want to speak? You can also use this function to get them to indicate if they can hear you or see what you're showing on the screen, or to hold a quick vote!

- Do you know what the platform looks like from a learner's perspective? It may look different or have slightly different functions compared to the teacher's view. If you use screenshots to explain to learners where to click on something, make sure they're taken from a learner's perspective.

- Do you know how to troubleshoot some of the technical issues that you or your learners might experience with the platform? Does it make a difference if they are accessing the platform from a mobile device or a certain browser?

- Do you know if your learners' parents or another adult will be available during lessons to help them resolve technical issues?

- Have you considered safeguarding and child protection issues? For example, you may wish to insist that learners do not record the lessons.

- Most online platforms have support videos or tutorials available online. Have you looked at these?

General tips

- Make sure you have explained to your learners (and ideally a parent or another adult if they can be around during lessons) about how to use the basic functions of the platform, how to troubleshoot issues and how to check their settings. This could be done in an initial lesson where you practise using the different buttons and teach them the things to try if there are technical or connection issues. This is also a good opportunity to teach them the language connected with the platform, such as 'mute', 'breakout room', 'refresh', etc., which they will need each lesson in order to follow your instructions.

- Make sure you have explained to your learners the rules and the behaviour you expect during lessons, such as patience, respect for each other, writing only relevant things in the chat, etc.

- Always check your microphone and camera before each lesson and check with each learner at the start that you can hear and see each other, and that they can see what you share on the screen.

Make sure all the learners know they must arrive on time and what they must bring, such as their notebook and pencil case. Many online learning platforms have a virtual waiting room. It's a good idea to tell your learners to join the class at least five minutes before it begins to avoid disruption.

Procedure

Before the lesson	• Download emojis for emotions such as angry, happy, bored, scared and sad (optional).
	• Download an online vision board template (optional).
	• Be ready to talk about your resolutions.
	• Visit Penzu.com to make sure you know how it works. Penzu is a simple online tool for creating a personal journal. Entries are automatically dated and students can add titles and text as well as images. This can also serve as a kind of writing portfolio. You will need to create a free account.
	Optional: Create a journal entry with your resolutions tracker on Penzu.
Reflective activity (10-12 min)	The aim of this stage is to allow students to express their thoughts without focusing on language, so accept all kinds of reactions including silence.
	• Draw an emoji or show an emoji to represent each of the following emotions on the whiteboard in the main meeting room in your virtual classroom:
	- **Angry**
	- **Happy**
	- **Bored**
	- **Scared**
	- **Sad**
	• Ask students just to think at this stage about these feelings so they can talk about how they felt during lockdown. Students should choose at least three of the above adjectives.
	• If students don't wish to talk about their feelings, they could draw a moment that portrays how they felt during their time at home, or choose a physical object that represents their feelings.

	• Give your students a choice, and time to prepare to talk.
	• Set up breakout rooms for interaction.
	• When they are in their breakout rooms, students should share their feelings, or hold their drawing or the object up to the camera for the other members of their group to see.
	• Monitor and then bring the students back to the main meeting room.
Live listening and predicting task (8-10 minutes)	• Tell your students it is time to focus on new beginnings and goals and there's no better way to start the rest of the year than on a positive note.
	• Ask your students, 'Was there anything you had planned to do before lockdown and couldn't do?' and get some responses.
	• Draw a simple 'vision board' on the whiteboard in the main meeting room in your virtual classroom and label the boxes as shown in the table. You can change the labels/topics to suit your teaching context.
	Optional: Use an online vision board template.

My Vision Board 2020/21

Home/Career/Money	Education/Language learning	Family/Love/Relationships
Health/Fitness	Travel	Anything else?

	• Show the vision board to your students (example above).
	• Ask students to predict what you'll be talking about for each of those topics.
	• Talk about things you had planned to do before lockdown but couldn't, and your resolutions for the rest of the year. Make sure you speak about at least two topics in the vision board.
	• Model how you plan to achieve your goals. For example, talk about how you will save more money for the future.
	• Students listen, make notes and compare their predictions.
Student presentations 1 (15-20 minutes)	• Explain to students that they will be creating their own vision board. • Ask students to work individually and draw their vision boards on a sheet of paper or a Word document on their computer.
	Optional: If your students are comfortable with using technology, you could set up this activity on Padlet or Wallwisher.

- Students think of at least one resolution for each category in the vision board.
- Students prepare to talk about their resolutions and strategies for achieving their goals.
- Set up breakout rooms for interaction and collaboration.
- When they are in their breakout rooms, students hold their vision boards up to the camera for the other members of their group to see, and discuss strategies for achieving their goals by comparing, asking questions and suggesting some ideas.
- Monitor the groups, recording the emerging language in a language box (see below), encouraging the students by asking questions of your own, and supporting and helping with language, when required.
- Save the language box in a *Word* document or take a screenshot and share it with your students.

Note: Use this opportunity to provide language input but refrain from using a lot of metalanguage (i.e. how we talk about language). Adopt a lexical approach to grammar items, where possible and don't worry about structure, which learners will deduce by practising and recycling. The focus is on engaging in meaningful conversations, so focus on pronunciation, including weak forms and intonation.

Below are some examples of emergent language that may occur at this stage. Remember to work with the language **your students produce** at this stage, though you can make suggestions that will make the language more appropriate for its purpose.

Lexis

- *Jobs (focus on pronunciation)*

- *Collocations (e.g. go swimming, go walking, quit smoking, save/invest money)*

- *Tourist destinations – names of countries and cities (focus on pronunciation)*

- *Adjectives for describing places*

Functional language and grammar

- *Modal verbs: should/must/can/could…*

- *Making suggestions: What about….?, How about…? Why don't you…? I'd recommend, I suggest…*

- *Accepting and rejecting suggestions: What a good idea! That's wonderful! Amazing! I'm not sure about that.*

- *Talking about goals: I hope to… I want to…, I'd like to……, I wish I could……., I'm going to…, I will…*

- *Talking about past regrets: I should / shouldn't have…, unreal conditional*

	• Bring the students back to the main meeting room and conduct whole class feedback.
Student presentations 2 (10-15 minutes)	• Re-group students or change the pairs. • Give your students a chance to repeat the exercise. Encourage your students to use some language from the examples above. • You should monitor, to support and help. • Bring all the students back to the main meeting room. Conduct whole class feedback and get students to vote for the most popular resolutions.
Your Resolutions Tracker (Homework)	• For homework, encourage your students to make a resolutions tracker i.e. a wall poster with their goals, strategies and timelines. • Students could take a photo of their wall poster to share with classmates on the online course learning site if there is one. • Alternatively, students could use Penzu.com for tracking their goals. Learners make their resolution trackers as journal entries and update them as and when they like. These journal entries can be shared by email with the teacher and the rest of the class.

Contributed by

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