

Future learning

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

The future of schooling for primary-aged children

Aims

- To help learners address any changes that have taken place and those which may happen in the future
- To practise language for describing and comparing and discuss advantages and disadvantages
- To develop listening, reading and writing skills
- To identify and use *will* for saying what we feel sure about the future
- To give learners an opportunity to imagine a positive future

Age/level

Older primary (9–11 years)
CEFR level A2 and above

Time

90 minutes or two shorter lessons

Materials

- picture 1 version A and B and picture 2 version A and B (one of each per learner)
- picture 1 description (one copy for the teacher)
- worksheet 1 and worksheet 2 (one of each per pair of learners)

Introduction

In this lesson learners are provided with an opportunity to think about how schooling may change in the future. They work with pictures showing two different children, predicting what they might see around them and comparing the full scenarios. They imagine what learning is like in the future for the children in the pictures and write about it, then think about how learning might really change. Finally, there is a short language focus on *will* and then the learners do a project on the 'perfect' school of the future.

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

At the start of the lesson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome the learners as they arrive: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Depending on the guidelines in place where you teach, direct them to their place one by one or give them any relevant initial instructions that they need to follow as they enter, e.g. to sit down directly and put their jacket on the back of their chair as opposed to gathering around the coat hooks or hat stand. - Give any further guidelines or rules relating to social distancing that the children need to follow during the lesson and check they understand them. - Reassure the learners that if they have any doubts or questions, they can ask you at any time. • Tips: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consider having a short task for the learners to do at their desk until they have all entered. For example, you could have some anagrams on the board of vocabulary that was learned in the previous lesson which learners have to solve and write the answers to in their notebooks.
1. Warmer (5 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the learners to stand up at their places. Tell them that you are going to say some sentences, and they have to do an action depending if they agree or disagree. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Decide the actions together, for example jumping on the spot for <i>agree</i> and touching their toes for <i>disagree</i>. • Make a few general statements about school, such as <i>School is important</i>, <i>School now is better than when my parents were at school</i>, <i>I like going to school</i>, <i>I get too much homework</i>, etc. The learners do the corresponding action depending if they agree or disagree.
2. Introducing the topic (5 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give out copies of version A of the two pictures. Ask learners to say what they can see and elicit or feed in the vocabulary they need to describe the picture. • Confirm where the children in the picture are (at home and at school) and what they are both doing (learning).
3. Drawing dictation (10 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the learners to look at their copy of picture 1 version A and explain that this is only the centre of a bigger picture. Ask them to tell you what they think they might see in the whole picture. • Tell the learners that they are going to listen to you describe the whole picture, and they need to try to draw the rest of it around the centre. • When the learners are ready, read out the description for picture 1.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Note that the first two paragraphs describe the centre of the picture which they already have, so you can omit this or let the learners draw in the rest of the sofa and the photo. - Consider in advance if there is any language in the description that your learners might need support with and adapt if necessary. • After the learners have drawn, ask them to hold up their picture so the person nearest them can see it. • Give out copies of picture 1 version B (the whole picture). Allow the learners to compare it with their own and then invite them to say something that's the same or different between them.
4. Reading (10–15 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Now ask learners to look picture 2 version A. Again, explain that this is only part of a bigger picture and ask them what they think they might see in the whole picture. • Put the learners in pairs. Give one learner in each pair a copy of worksheet 1 and the other a copy of worksheet 2. • Ask the learners to take turns to read the sentences to each other and draw what each sentence describes on the picture. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consider in advance if there is any language in the description that your learners might need support with and adapt if necessary. • When they have finished, they can compare their pictures. • Give out copies of picture 2 version B (the whole picture). Allow the learners to compare it with their own and then invite them to say something that's the same or different between them. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - See above for suggestions on adapting communicative activities for a physically distanced classroom.
5. Comparing scenarios (5–10 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the learners to line up in two lines, facing each other. The learners in one line hold up picture 1 version B and those in the other line hold up picture 2 version B. • The learners in each line take turns to say something that's different between picture 1 and picture 2. The learners in the other line can listen and check against their picture and confirm. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - See above for suggestions on adapting communicative activities for a physically distanced classroom.
6. Discussion (5–10 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm that the pictures are set in the future. • Ask the learners to imagine what learning is like for the two children in the pictures and elicit some ideas to write on the board. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How do the two children learn?

- Does the child at home in picture 1 have lessons on her tablet or does she watch videos or TV (or holograms!) or use apps? Does she have a teacher or does she study by herself?
- Does the child at school in picture 2 have lessons like we do now or in a different way? Does he have a teacher? How does he work with other children in the classroom?
- What's their timetable like? Do they learn at the same times and have the same length day as each other or as now? Do they have the same subjects as we have now, or are there new ones, e.g. *hygiene, pandemic control, homeworking*?
- How do the two children spend their break and lunch times? Is it different from each other or from how children spend them now?

7. Writing (15–20 minutes)

- Ask the learners to choose one of the pictures. Tell them they are going to imagine the child's school day and write about it from their perspective, for example, *Hi, I'm Luca, I'm ten years old and it's the year 2030. I want to tell you about my school day. In the morning ...*
- Refer the learners back to the ideas on the board from the discussion and tell them to make sure the child talks about how they learn, their timetable and their break times, as well as any other areas that were discussed.
- Help the learners plan their writing, for example by getting them to write headings in their notebooks (e.g. *name and age, way of learning, timetable, break times, anything else interesting*) and make notes under the headings of what ideas they have chosen from the board (or their own ideas).
- When the learners are ready, they can start writing.
 - Monitor as much as you can to help and ensure they are on track.
 - Fast finishers could take the relevant picture and add more detail to reflect what they wrote as an illustration to their writing.
- If possible, the learners can swap their finished writing with another learner, either one who wrote about the same child to compare, or the other child to see how different their school day is. They could write a short comment underneath the writing before they give it back, saying what they like most about that child's school day.
- Alternatively, after the lesson you could scan and upload their writing to a shared space and set a homework task for learners to read some of them and leave a comment.
 - See above for suggestions on adapting communicative activities for a physically distanced classroom.

8. Discussion (5–10 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Display the two pictures on the board and ask the learners which scenario they prefer and why. What are the advantages and disadvantages of each? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - For example, for learning at home, there's no travel time for going to school, they don't have to carry a heavy bag, it's better for the environment if fewer children are being driven to school, etc. - For going to school, they see and play with their friends, it's easier for the teacher to help them, they get more exercise from moving around the classroom and playing outside at breaks, their parents don't have to look after them during the day, etc. • Ask the learners what they think learning will really be like in the future. Will it be the same as one of these scenarios, a mix, or something more futuristic, e.g. will children have robot teachers at home or 'attend' school from home as holograms?
9. Language focus (10 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write some of the learners' ideas from the previous discussion as sentences on the board, e.g. <i>We will go to school three days a week, we'll have robot teachers, we'll do more homework</i>, as well as some sentences with <i>won't</i> if appropriate. • Ask the learners to identify which word is the same in every sentence (<i>will / 'll</i>). Can they tell you why it's used in these sentences? Elicit that it's because the sentences are about the future and explain that we are saying what we feel sure about, or predicting for, the future. • Write some prompts on the board connected with possible things in the learners' future, e.g. <i>job, children, university, house, country</i>, etc. Ask them some initial questions, e.g. <i>What job will you have? Will you go to university?</i> • Now ask the learners to think of some other questions they could ask, helping them with the question form if necessary. Then put the learners into pairs or small groups to practise asking each other the questions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - See above for suggestions on adapting communicative activities for a physically distanced classroom.
10. Project (15–20 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell the learners to imagine that they are going to time-travel into the future and start going to the 'perfect' school. They need to imagine what it will be like. Elicit lots of ideas and write them on the board. • Put the learners into pairs or small groups. Tell them that they are going to work together in their pair or group to make a poster about the perfect school, so they first need to discuss and agree what it will be like. Give them some categories to discuss, such as what the way of learning will be, what the timetable will be like, what subjects they will study, etc. • Then within each pair or small group, each learner takes one of the categories, e.g. <i>way of learning</i>, and writes sentences about what the perfect school will be like in

	<p>that respect. They can also draw some pictures to illustrate their sentences. Monitor as much as you can to help and ensure they are on track.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finally, the learners in each pair or group can cut out their sentences and pictures and stick them all together on one piece of paper to make a poster. • Put the posters up around the room. The learners can take turns to stand individually at each poster and tell the class one thing they like about it. The learners who are waiting for their turn should listen out for comments on the poster they helped make. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - See above for suggestions on adapting communicative activities for a physically distanced classroom.
11. Setting homework (5 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For homework, learners could imagine what the future might be like for other areas, for example, how will people spend their free time in the future, or what will holidays be like in the future. Learners can write and/or draw their ideas. • Alternatively, ask learners to imagine they can write to the principal of their current school to request some changes. What would they ask for? For example, would they ask for different ways of learning, such as online for some days a week, or to study different subjects? Learners can write an email and say why each change they suggest would be a good thing for the learners and the school.
At the end of the lesson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Praise the learners for their participation and work and for following all the requirements. • Depending on the guidelines in place where you teach, make sure they stay in their places after they've packed up so you can direct them to leave the classroom in a socially distanced manner or give them any other relevant instructions that they need to follow as they leave.
Further ideas and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If feasible, you could ask the learners to send you a scan or a photo of their homework, and you could post it on a virtual 'wall' using a tool such as Padlet. • The LearnEnglish Kids website has a variety of resources on the topic of school: https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/category/topics/school

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