

It's 12 o'clock! A speaking lesson with no materials

Topic

Activities in a park

Aims

- To practise the present continuous
- To practise grammar in a safe environment

Age/level

Primary (can also be used with older learners)
CEFR level A1 and above

Time

45 minutes

Introduction

This is a drawing and speaking activity that is fun to use with primary classes to revise the present continuous form. It is easy to set up and requires no preparation or materials, except a board and a board pen. Learners will need a piece of paper and a pencil.

This version practises the present continuous form, but other versions can practise other tenses. Children like it because it allows them to practise grammar in a safe environment. By repeating the same question and answer a number of times, learners become more confident and make fewer and fewer errors. They also like it because the drawing adds an element of fun to the activity and allows learners who might be good at drawing but less good at English to excel.

Procedure

1. Setting up the scenario (10–15 minutes)

On the board, draw a simple background scene such as a park with some gardens, a river and a few trees. As you build up the picture, elicit the vocabulary from the learners by asking a few simple questions, e.g.:

What's this place?

What am I drawing now?

Add a simple stick drawing of yourself in the scene. You should be doing something in a specific place, e.g. sitting by the river and eating a banana. Label the picture of yourself with your name. Point to it and say:

This is me. It's 12 o'clock and I'm sitting by the river, eating a banana.

	<p>Give each learner a piece of paper and a pencil and tell them to copy the picture on the board. Give them a limited time of about five minutes. They should include the stick drawing of the teacher.</p> <p>Tell the learners to add a drawing of themselves and label it. They should be in a specific place and doing something. Explain that if necessary they can add other elements to the picture. Explain that learners shouldn't show their picture to anybody.</p>
2. Speaking practice (15 minutes)	<p>Write these two questions and answers on the board. If possible elicit the answers.</p> <p><i>It's 12 o'clock in the park. Where are you? What are you doing?</i></p> <p><i>I'm sitting by the river. I'm eating a banana.</i></p> <p>Explain that learners should walk around the classroom speaking to their classmates. They should ask and answer the question on the board. Each time a learner answers, they should draw that learner in the picture, doing the action. Then they should label the learner.</p> <p>The activity finishes when each learner has drawn and labelled all of their classmates doing different things in different parts of the picture.</p>
3. Extension (10–15 minutes)	<p>Learners can do a follow-up writing activity. They should start with the following:</p> <p><i>It's 12 o'clock on Saturday and everybody is in the park. Everybody is doing something. The teacher is sitting by the river eating a banana. I'm ..., ... is ..., etc.</i></p> <p>Display their pictures and texts around the classroom.</p>
Alternative versions	<p>Change 'It's 12 o'clock in the park' for 'Last Saturday at (4 o'clock) (in the library)' and change the tense to the past continuous.</p> <p>Change 'It's 12 o'clock in the park' for 'Next Saturday at (7 o'clock) (at school)' and change the tense to the future continuous.</p> <p>For older learners, make the activity a 'scene of the crime' activity, with each learner being a potential witness to a crime that has occurred in the park. You will need to change the question to 'Where were you?' and 'What were you doing when (somebody stole the bike)?'</p>

Contributed by

Katherine Bilborough