

## Learning at home

### Important – please read

This lesson has been adapted for teachers providing online classes. These notes are specifically for online lessons and the accompanying class PDF has been designed to support the lesson activities.

There is also guidance and advice for what teachers need to know and do before the lesson and at the beginning of the lesson. Please read the lesson instructions carefully before using them. They are for guidance only, designed to be used with the most common online platforms. You may need to adapt the lesson to the online platform you are working with.

### Topic

Experiences of learning at home

### Aims

- To provide learners with examples of experiences of learning at home with which they might identify
- To practise reading comprehension skills
- To develop problem solving and critical thinking skills
- To give learners an opportunity to evaluate experiences and collate ideas
- To promote group work and collaboration skills

### Age/level

Primary  
CEFR level A2+

### Time

60–80 minutes

### Materials

- The teacher will need the accompanying class PDF and individual texts to send to learners before the lesson, and the link(s) to the online tool to be used in stage 5.
- The learners will need the text sent to them by the teacher, a pen or pencil and paper or a notebook.

### Introduction

This lesson focuses on the experiences of learning at home for primary-aged children. They will read texts about several different children and answer some questions they have written themselves. They will identify what the children like and find difficult about learning at home, and consider solutions that could help the children, as well as compare their experiences to their own. Finally, they will work together in groups to review and collate their ideas and produce an online poster.

## 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**

<b>Before the lesson</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decide which of the six texts you are going to use with your learners.</li> <li>• Divide the learners into groups. Send one text to all the learners in each group, e.g. send Ali's text to all learners in group 1, Nina's text to the learners in group 2, etc.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tell them to read the child's text and answer the accompanying questions, then to write one more question about the child.</li> <li>- If you prefer, you can ask the learners to send you their work before the lesson for you to give feedback on.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Before you start the lesson:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Test your microphone and camera to make sure they work.</li> <li>- Make sure that you have the accompanying class PDF open and shared.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>At the start of the lesson slide 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome the learners as they arrive:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Check that you can all hear and see each other.</li> <li>- Check that they can see the first slide.</li> <li>- If they can't, ask them (or ideally an adult they have present) to check their settings or troubleshoot in the way you have shown them previously. You may need to write this in the chat facility if they cannot hear you.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Tips:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Consider having a short task for the learners to do until they have all arrived. For example, you could have a poll set up (if your platform has this function) or a simple activity where they write in the chat, such as to say what they've done that week.</li> <li>- Consider muting learners' microphones after greeting them to avoid having too much background noise when you get started. Tell them if you do this and explain why. You could also suggest that if possible they use a headset with a mic rather than their device's in-built speakers and mic.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>1. Warmer – reviewing vocabulary (5 minutes) slide 2</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenge the learners to think of as many technology-related words in English that they can, e.g. <i>tablet, screen, online, download, television, etc.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- If your platform has an annotate function, ask them to write on the screen.</li> <li>- Otherwise ask them to write in the chat, or on paper to show the camera.</li> <li>- After a few minutes, review the words and ask the learners to identify the longest word, the shortest word, the most common word, any unique words that only one person thought of, etc.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>2. Reading (10–15 minutes) slides 3 to 14</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use only the slides which refer to the texts you are using with your learners.</li> <li>• Ask all the learners who read the first text to tell the class what they remember about him or her, without looking at the text.</li> <li>• Explain that the learners who read this text are going to ask the rest of the class the extra question they wrote before the lesson, and the rest of the class needs to read the text to find the answers.</li> <li>• Display the text. The first learner with a question asks the class.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The rest of the class reads the text to find the answer then writes it on a piece of paper or in their notebook and shows the camera.</li> <li>- The learner who asked the question confirms the answer.</li> <li>- The next learner with a question about this text asks the class, and so on.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repeat with the other texts.</li> <li>• Variation:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Before the lesson, specify that the learners write a true or false question about the text they have.</li> <li>- When learners are answering each other's questions, they hold up 'true' or 'false' written on different pieces of paper or pages of their notebook (or 'stamp' <i>true</i> or <i>false</i> on the screen if your platform has a stamp function).</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Additional vocabulary activity:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Display each text in turn with some of the words covered up.</li> <li>- Ask the learners to remember the missing words.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>3. Problem solving and critical thinking (10–15 minutes)</b> <b>slides 4, 6, 8, 10, 12 and 14</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Again, use only the slides which refer to the texts you are using with your learners.</li> <li>• Display each text in turn. Ask the learners what each child likes about learning at home and what's difficult about it.</li> <li>• Tell the learners that they're going to think about what could help each child and why/how. Display the first text again.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Encourage learners to suggest what could help him or her.</li> <li>- For example, for Ali: closing other things using the internet, writing in the chat or using headphones, not staying at the computer during break times, not using a screen after lessons, e.g. playing with toys, not watching TV.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Where appropriate, ask learners why or how their suggestion will help to encourage critical thinking. For example, for Ali:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Closing other programs might help the connection be more stable.</li> <li>- Using headphones will help them hear each other better.</li> <li>- Not staying at the computer during break times gives your eyes a rest.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Repeat with the other texts. Some possible answers:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Nina – doesn't have enough space, shares a desk, can't concentrate                 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ put things away when you're finished with them</li> <li>▪ divide the desk into two areas</li> <li>▪ use headphones so you can't hear other people in the house</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Petra – can't see the video very well, fights with brother and sister                 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ ask the teacher to show things as big as possible in the videos</li> <li>▪ make a schedule of when everyone will use the smartphone</li> </ul> </li> <li>- David – misses school and friends, too many worksheets and activities, doesn't understand what to do                 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ message, call or video chat with his friends more</li> <li>▪ ask his dad to help him with the worksheets and activities</li> <li>▪ ask his teacher to tell his dad which ones are the most important</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Alex – mum doesn't always have time to collect worksheets, worksheets are sometimes really difficult                 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ ask the teacher to email the worksheets then copy them on paper</li> <li>▪ ask a family member to help explain the worksheets</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Salma – parents don't know what to teach and get interrupted, gets bored                 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ tell her parents about what other things they were learning at school</li> <li>▪ try to teach her little brother something instead of playing</li> <li>▪ write a list of different ideas of things to do which she can look at and choose from when she's bored</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<p><b>4. Personalisation (5–10 minutes)</b> <i>slide 15</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agree some physical actions with your learners to represent ‘yes’, ‘no’ and ‘maybe’, e.g. standing up, turning around, dabbing left or right, shrugging shoulders, etc.</li> <li>• Tell the learners that you are going to say some sentences and they need to do the relevant action depending on whether:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- they agree / it’s the same for them,</li> <li>- they partly agree / it’s partly the same for them,</li> <li>- they disagree / it’s different for them.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Choose some sentences from each text, e.g. from Ali’s text, <i>I like learning from home</i> and <i>my eyes feel really tired at the end of the day</i>.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Read the sentences out.</li> <li>- After each sentence, learners react with the appropriate action depending how they feel about it.</li> <li>- If appropriate, ask learners a follow-up question, e.g. <i>Why do/don’t you like it?</i> or <i>How do you rest your eyes?</i> etc.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>5. Reviewing and collating ideas (20–25 minutes)</b> <i>slide 16</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For the next activity the learners will ideally work in breakout rooms, if the platform you’re using has this function, and your learners are comfortable and responsible when working in breakout rooms. However, it could also be done as a whole class activity or an activity that learners do individually outside of class time.</li> <li>• Tell the learners that they are going to work together in a group to make an online poster about learning at home. The poster could include:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- good things about learning at home</li> <li>- what’s difficult about learning at home</li> <li>- tips/advice for learning at home</li> <li>- things which are different about learning at home compared to school</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Brainstorm ideas with the learners and encourage them to include some of the things that have been read about and discussed in the lesson so far. Get them to decide the format of the poster, e.g. a mind map, speech bubbles, lists, etc.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- There are lots of online tools you could use, but it could be as simple as a Google Drawing, which has limited functions and is therefore easy to use.</li> <li>- If you create blank ones in advance and change the sharing settings, you can simply give the learners the link in the lesson.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Demonstrate the activity first by opening a new file in the tool you are going to use, e.g. a new Google Drawing.             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Show them how to write text and how to draw a shape, line and picture, and how they can arrange these on the canvas to make their poster.</li> <li>- Explain that they will need to discuss with each other in the breakout room to agree who is going to write and draw what parts.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Put the learners in their groups in the breakout rooms and give each group the link to the place where they are going to make their poster by putting it in the chat.</li> <li>• You may wish to remind the learners of the ‘breakout room rules’ before you move them there, for example speaking English only, staying on task, etc.</li> <li>• Visit each breakout room as soon as possible to make sure the learners in each group have been able to open the link and are working together on the poster.</li> <li>• Monitor the learners during the activity by regularly moving between breakout rooms. If your platform has the function, turn your camera off while you monitor so as to disturb the learners less when you enter a room.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Before you bring learners back to the main room, visit each breakout room briefly and announce that they have two more minutes to finish their poster before you will bring them back.</li> <li>• After two minutes, bring all the learners back. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Screen share each poster.</li> <li>- Ask learners to say what they like about the other groups' posters and identify an idea which is not on their own poster.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>6. Cooler (5 minutes)</b> <i>platform whiteboard or blank document</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review new vocabulary from the lesson with an anagrams game. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Put the learners in teams. For reference write the names of who is in each team on the whiteboard (if the platform has one) or on a blank document that you screen share.</li> <li>- Write a word with the letters mixed up on the whiteboard/document and ask the learners to say or write in the chat what they think the word is.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>7. Setting homework (5 minutes)</b> <i>slide 17</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• For homework, ask learners to write a short text about themselves. If learners need support, you could provide them with a skeleton text to complete, such as:  My name is _____ and I'm _____ years old. I learn at home with _____ (how – online lessons, video lessons, etc.). My teacher is _____ (name). My favourite lesson is _____ (subject). Sometimes _____ (person) helps me. One thing I miss about school is _____. One thing I like about learning at home is _____.</li> </ul>
<b>At the end of the lesson</b> <i>slide 18</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Praise the learners for their participation and work and tell them you're looking forward to seeing them again in the next lesson.</li> <li>• Make sure they know how to exit the platform and wait until they all leave before leaving yourself.</li> </ul>
<b>Further ideas and resources</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If feasible, you could ask the learners to send you a scan or a photo of their text, and you could post them on a virtual 'wall' using a tool such as Padlet.</li> <li>• This lesson could lead into the topic of online safety. The LearnEnglish Kids website has various activities that can support this:  <a href="https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/category/topics/online-safety">https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/category/topics/online-safety</a></li> <li>• If your learners talk about feeling bored at home, you could address the subject of how to keep busy. This page on the LearnEnglish Kids website is aimed at parents but has ideas for ways that children can keep busy that you could explore in class:  <a href="https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/covid-19-support-for-parents">https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/covid-19-support-for-parents</a></li> </ul>

**Contributed by**

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