

Valentine's Day

Topic

Valentine's Day

Aims

- To raise awareness of adjectives and nouns which go together
- To introduce the idea of using 'is' and 'are' with different (countable and uncountable) nouns
- To raise awareness of words which rhyme
- To develop writing skills with a poem

Age/level

Primary
CEFR level A1/A2

Time

60 minutes

Materials

1. a photo of yourself and a photo of a family member or friend
2. word cards in the shape of half a broken heart – the left halves should have the word for an object and the right halves should have an adjective, and all the cards should form pairs, e.g. 'roses' on one card and 'red' on another, 'sugar' and 'sweet', 'sky' and 'blue', etc. (enough for one card per learner)
3. a box to choose learners' names from and/or to deliver the poems
4. paper for learners to write up their poem on (one per learner)
5. envelopes (one per learner) – either real envelopes, or paper to make an origami envelope, such as: <http://en.origami-club.com/rectangular/envelope/envelope/index.html>

Introduction

In this lesson, learners will play a vocabulary game with words associated with Valentine's Day. They will then review language related to Valentine's Day through a simple collocation activity, and read and learn a well-known Valentine's Day poem, noticing the use of countable and uncountable nouns. They will then produce their own poem. There are also several suggestions for follow-up or homework activities.

Procedure

1. Introduction

- Ask the learners, 'What's the date today/tomorrow/on Friday?' The answer should be 14 February, so adjust your question accordingly.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Once learners have given you the date of 14 February, tell them that it's a special day and ask them if they know why. To give them a clue, draw a large heart on the board. If no one knows, tell them that it's Valentine's Day. Show the class a photo of yourself and stick it on the board on the right-hand side of the heart. Then show the class a photo of your mum, dad, other family member or a friend and stick it on the left-hand side of the heart. This should grab their attention and arouse their interest. Explain that you love this person and on Valentine's Day you send them a card, flowers, chocolates or a poem to show them that you love them.
2. Warmer	<p>This activity generates and shares known vocabulary.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In the middle of the heart write a word related to Valentine's Day, such as Valentine, chocolates, flowers, etc. This works best with longer words. Ask the class to make as many words as possible from the letters in the main word. Set a two-minute time limit. For example, using the word 'chocolates', learners could make 'late', 'sat', 'ate', 'tea', 'cool', 'hats', 'hot', 'cat', 'coat', etc. Learners can work in pairs or teams, and if you like you can award points, e.g. two points for two-letter words, three points for three-letter words, etc. and a bonus point if that pair or team is the only one to have made a particular word. Check pronunciation and meaning as they feed back with their words.
3. Preparation for writing a poem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Draw a zigzag line down the middle of the heart on the board. Write 'roses' on the left side. Ask the learners what colour they think you should write on the right side. Elicit 'red'. Show them the 'roses' and 'red' broken-heart word cards that you prepared. Do the same for another set, e.g. 'sugar' and 'sweet'. Show the learners that there are lots of word cards. Explain that everybody will have one each and they must try to find a partner with an adjective/object that matches theirs by walking around and saying their word out loud. The learners then mingle with each other until they find the other half of their heart. They should then sit next to their new partner. Each pair come to the front, tell the class what their words are and stick their word cards next to each other on the board. Learners will refer to these later.
4. Introducing the poem	<p>Write this poem on the board:</p> <p><i>Roses are red, Violets are blue, Sugar is sweet, And so are you.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Drill the poem, touching the words on the board as you and the class say them.

- Now erase one of the words, e.g. 'red', and draw a line under the gap to show where the word was. Repeat the poem together with the learners, continuing to point to both the remaining words and the gap.
- Then erase another word, again repeating the poem as a class and pointing to both the remaining words and the gaps. Do this until there is no poem left, just gaps. Your class will then be reciting the poem rather than reading it.
- Now write the poem back on the board, or ask one of the learners to do it with the help of the others.
- Draw their attention to the fact that with 'roses' and 'violets' we use 'are', but with 'sugar' we use 'is'.
- One by one, look at the other broken-heart word cards stuck on the board and elicit from the class whether we use 'is' or 'are'. There is no need to work any further on countable and uncountable nouns in this lesson, but they will need to know whether the words take 'is' or 'are' in order to write their poems.

5. Writing a poem

Learners will now write their own version of the poem.

They could write a poem for another learner in the class, anonymously. This allows the poems to be distributed at the end of the class and they can read someone else's work. You might like to put everyone's name on a piece of paper in a box, and each learner chooses a name from the box randomly, rather than letting them choose who they write the poem for, in order to avoid a popularity contest and to ensure each child receives a poem. However, depending on your learners, you might prefer to get them to write the poem for someone at home or a friend outside the class instead, if you feel they wouldn't be comfortable writing a poem for a classmate.

- On the board, write the following poem frame:
 _____ are _____,
 _____ is _____,
 _____ is _____,
 And _____
- Elicit some ideas from the class as to how the frame could be completed. Encourage them to use both the broken-heart word cards and their own ideas. Write some of their suggestions in the frame. If one of the ideas is with a plural noun for a line with 'is', or an uncountable noun for a line with 'are', write it in the frame, then elicit what should be changed ('is' to 'are' or vice versa) and change the frame accordingly.
- Draw learners' attention back to the original poem on the board. Elicit what's special about the last words of lines 2 and 4 – that they rhyme or sound the same. Now look at the new poem the class just composed. Does it rhyme? Can they make different suggestions for lines 2 or 4 to make it rhyme?

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Now erase the words, leaving only the frame again. Learners should copy the frame into their notebooks. Tell learners they're now going to write their own poem. Encourage them to use a mixture of the broken-heart word cards on the board and their own ideas, and to try to make it rhyme, just as you did as a class. Monitor and help learners as they write, encouraging them to change the verbs in the frame if need be. When learners have finished, they can write their poem up neatly on a piece of paper and decorate or illustrate it. You can provide envelopes or get the learners to make an origami envelope. They should write the recipient's name on the envelope, but remind them not to write their own name!
6. Sharing the poem	<p>If your learners wrote a poem for another member of the class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learners 'post' their envelopes in a box. One of the learners can then take the box and 'deliver' the envelopes. They open the envelope they received and read the poem. Do they like it? Does it rhyme? <p>If your learners wrote a poem for someone at home:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> In small groups, they read their own poem to the group. The rest of the group try to guess who the poem is for – a sister, friend, etc.
7. Homework and follow-up options	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> They can write another poem for somebody at home. They can make a list of words they know which rhyme. In the next class, they can mingle and compare their ideas, and see if they can find another learner who had the same rhyme but with different words, e.g. a learner with 'blue' and 'shoe' and a learner with 'two' and 'new'. They could make a list of things they have in their fridge at home, or give them a picture of an empty fridge for them to draw food in and then label. In the next class, learners can report back what they have in their fridge and try to categorise the items on the board according to the use of 'is' and 'are'. Learners could also do a drawing dictation using their fridge lists or pictures. They work with a partner and describe their fridge, using 'There's some (sugar) (on the top shelf)' and 'There are some (grapes) (on the middle shelf)' sentences. Their partner listens and tries to draw the fridge.

Contributed by

Jo Bertrand