

Teacher's notes

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Notes on the lessons

The seven lessons explore issues which are as relevant today as they were thirty years ago or will be in 2050.

The core of the lessons are seven lectures on the issues which the lessons deal with.

One of the primary aims of the lessons is to give the students all of the information and background they need to watch the full, subtitled films on their own.

One of the key points to the films and lessons is to give the students access to an environment where they are working with two languages simultaneously – principally this involves audio in their own language and subtitles in English. The simultaneous linking of the reading and listening skills is often neglected in the language classroom and, over the course of the seven lessons here, can be dealt with in an in-depth, engaging and effective way.

The lessons are designed for use with students with an English level of C1 or above, although many elements are appropriate for high B2 level students and groups with some B2 students in them.

The basic form of each lesson is

- warm-up task
- vocabulary tasks
- picture exercise
- listening and watching 2 film extracts
- quiz
- discussion
- language round-up

Each lesson is structured in the same way. As a result, it gives the students a familiar format to follow once they have used the first lesson. Additionally, once the teacher has given one lesson, the preparation is reduced and the lesson is more easily manageable.

The aims of the lessons are

- to use English as the language for discussing and analysing important topics
- to focus on the meaning and form of related vocabulary
- to practise the full range of skills students need in English at this or any other age – namely; speaking, reading, listening, writing, pronunciation, fluency

- to encourage a deeper investigation of the subjects by the students using internet resources related to the themes and language of the lesson
- to explore themes which are often deemed too controversial for the classroom for publishers of coursebooks and examination boards, but which nevertheless are important and stimulating for high school students

The lessons are designed to be viewed easily on a screen – either via a projector or on a monitor or laptop screen. That said, the lessons can be printed out where conditions require it.

Notes on how the lesson can be used

The suggestions given below are for each exercise.

The format of the exercises is essentially the same throughout the seven lessons.

The ideas and the lesson itself are designed for use in a fifty-minute lesson. As a result, the teacher can select what is appropriate for fitting into such a time frame. There is also the possibility to use one lesson over two fifty-minute classroom lessons – incorporating revision, review, extension and homework elements, for example.

The answers to the exercises are given at the end of each lesson.

Exercise 1

This introduces key vocabulary.

The vocabulary is given in various forms – verb, noun, adjective – thus the teacher has the opportunity to check other forms.

The translation of the words into the student's own language will help check understanding.

There is also the chance here to practice using the words in a simple way, in an exercise in pairs or groups.

Exercise 2

This introduces the topic in an engaging way.

It allows the students to express an opinion on the subjects which are in the lesson.

It also allows the teacher the chance to hear the range of vocabulary on display and make some corrections of errors as appropriate.

Exercise 3

This focusses on meaning and definitions of words.

It gives the students practice in formats in (online) dictionaries – useable in self-study.

The material can also be used to give students practice in asking for words which they can explain but don't know the actual word for - e.g. "it's a verb which is the opposite of love...but I've forgotten the word...it's how I feel about spinach for example...and it's a bad thing of course" – answer "hate"

The teacher can ask the students to write their own definitions.

The teacher can get students to play a definition guessing game where one student describes a word and the other student has to guess what it is.

Exercise 4

This practises word forms. There is a focus on accuracy.

It is an exercise which will encourage good habits in the students generally.

There is also an element of seeing the words in context at the end of the exercise.

The teacher can encourage the students to use the different word forms in their own examples.

Exercise 5

This puts the language in a wider context.

It focuses on word families – synonyms, collocations.

The exercises can be easily added to by looking at collocations and synonyms of other words.

The use of the language in examples is also highly recommended.

Exercise 6

This is a picture task.

It introduces visual material into the lesson, giving the opportunity for description and comparison.

Each exercise involves matching information with pictures.

The second part of the exercise is a discussion based upon the pictures presented.

The exercises can be used to check and enrich vocabulary, as well as practising language for description and speculating – both skills which are of great value in examinations.

Exercise 7

The aim here is to watch the film and practice connecting reading and listening skills in two languages in a realistic context.

To this end, a number of questions are given relating to what will be watched.

The questions should be given before watching the film and expected / possible answers identified.

The students then watch the film to check the answers to the questions – although the aim of watching the film is not exclusively to identify 100% of answers.

Ideally, the students will watch the film twice – once to identify answers – the second time to check them.

The follow-up to the film is for the group as a whole to check answers and discuss the contents of the film.

Exercise 8

The aim here is to watch the film and practice connecting reading and listening skills in two languages in a realistic context.

To this end, a number of questions are given relating to what will be watched.

The questions should be given before watching the film and expected / possible answers identified.

The students then watch the film to check the answers to the questions – although the aim of watching the film is not exclusively to identify 100% of answers.

Ideally, the students will watch the film twice – once to identify answers – the second time to check them.

The follow-up to the film is for the group as a whole to check answers and discuss the contents of the film.

Exercise 9

This is a quiz designed to engage the students and check and enrich their knowledge of a few interesting things connected with the subject of the films and lesson.

It can be done in groups, pairs or individually.

The answers are given.

Linguistically, it gives the chance to practice language connected with speculation and degrees of doubt.

Exercise 10

This is a discussion on the subjects of the film.

The questions can be used simply as questions, but can also be used to practise various formats for debate.

The teacher has at their disposal a dozen or so questions to ask. The questions can be used selectively.

The questions which are not used during the lesson can be used in the following lesson for revision.

The questions can also be used as the basis of a written homework if the teacher thinks it is appropriate.

Exercise 11

This is a simple summary of the lesson.

It focusses on key points from the lesson.

Students have the opportunity to share what has interested them particularly during the lesson.

Should the teacher wish, the points in this part of the lesson can serve as a bridge into homework exercises or review points for subsequent lessons.

Notes on how the homework – self-study can be used

The homework - self-study is designed to be used by the students independently of the classroom environment.

The teacher can use the work of students at home in the lessons – e.g. presentations of language, ideas and writing, or the creation of visual material such as posters.

The self-study material can additionally be used within lessons should the teacher wish.

Exercise 1

Encourages students to recall and review language from the lesson.

The students can be encouraged to build up a personal glossary of language over the seven lessons.

Exercise 2

Three basic questions that require the student to extract essential, although minimal, information from the film.

Exercise 3

The students are directed to watch the film and take brief notes as they watch.

It is practise of a skill the students will already be familiar with.

The emphasis is on note taking itself and not accuracy per se.

Exercise 4

This exercise is a writing exercise.

It is designed in such a way that the students express clearly and simply their thoughts on the issues raised in the lesson and while watching the film.

The exercise is repeated over the seven lessons and will allow for a collection of writing on the seven films.

Furthermore, it will give practice which, with teacher input, may lead to a better quality of writing from the student.

The teacher has the option of focusing on specific writing skills if they wish – e.g. punctuation, linking words, proofreading.

Exercise 5

Two links are given to the students – one a Youtube film – the other a link which leads to a written article or text.

The idea is to introduce the idea of further study and lead into exercise 6.

Exercise 6

This gives the student six keywords and some familiar platforms on which to try them out.

The students are then encouraged to make a list of their own keywords (derived from their own personal interests) to investigate.