

The Climate Connection



Lesson plan

Buy. Use. Toss.

Shopping and services: responsible consumption

Face-to-face teaching lesson plan

Suitable for use with secondary learners of English

CEFR level B1 and above

#TheClimateConnection

www.britishcouncil.org/climate-connection

Buy. Use. Toss.

Topic

Shopping and services: responsible consumption

Learning outcomes

- Use words related to waste and recycling
- Practise the passive voice in the past
- Write an autobiography from the point of view of an item of rubbish
- Develop an action plan to reduce plastic use

Age and level

13-17 (B1)

Time

90 minutes approximately or two shorter lessons

Materials

- Copies of student worksheet OR presentation
- Clean rubbish e.g. empty drinks containers, magazines, food containers, batteries, boxes (optional). Rubbish could be from home, school, or from learners' homes. If using, share the items out into several bags, one for each group of three or four learners.

Introduction

This lesson is part of the Climate Action in Language Teaching series of engaging lessons about the climate emergency and biodiversity loss. It explores different topics connected to the crisis.



In this lesson, learners will think about what happens to the things we throw away. They categorise some rubbish into ‘necessary’ and ‘luxury’ products, then answer questions about the last item they threw away. They read the ‘autobiography’ of a plastic bottle and write their own story in the same style. Finally, they discuss the extent to which other people’s waste is their responsibility and the responsibility of all, and agree on practical ways to reduce plastic waste in the world at three levels: personal, local and national/corporate.

It would be a suitable lesson to supplement a unit in the coursebook on shopping and services, or when practising the passive voice in the past.

Procedure

<p>1. Introduce the topic (10 mins)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Option 1: Put learners in small groups and give each a bag of rubbish items. Option 2: Ask learners to think of typical items that they might find in their bins at home and write them on the board. Ask learners to put the items into two groups: ‘necessary’ items and ‘luxury’ items. Clarify the meaning by naming or showing items of yours that you consider necessary or luxuries, e.g. an old tube of toothpaste (necessary) and a chocolate box (a luxury?). Invite groups to show or name their objects and say why they categorised them as they did. Make a distinction between the object and the packaging; for example, water is necessary, but is the plastic bottle holding it necessary? Encourage discussion about this and ask learners to think of alternatives, e.g. a reusable bottle from home.
<p>2. Answer questions about a recently thrown away item (10 mins)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tell learners to recall the last item that they threw away and write it at the top of a page in their notebooks. Give yours as an example, e.g. new computer mouse packaging. Option 1: Display presentation slide 2. Option 2: Dictate the following questions, which the learners write down. Write on the board any words they may not know how to spell.



	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is it made of? Where is the material from? 2. Where was it manufactured? 3. How did it travel from there to you? 4. How long did you use it for? 5. What did you do with it when you threw it away? 6. What happened to it after that? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Answer the 6 questions about your item. Make it clear that you are making educated guesses about some of the information: • Put learners in pairs and ask them to take turns asking each other the questions about their item. Reassure the class that they if they don't know the answer, they can guess. • After a few minutes, nominate some individuals to talk about their partner's item of rubbish and what they decided about its 'story'.
3. Predict the story (5 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain that learners will read an 'autobiography' of a plastic water bottle. Make sure learners know what an autobiography is, and that autobiographies are told in the first person, 'I'. • Option 1: Display presentation slide 4. Option 2: Read the first line of the story aloud: The first thing I remember is coming out of a very hot machine. I was in a long line of hundreds of bottles the same as me. • Ask some learners to guess what will happen in the story.
4. Order the events of the story (15 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Option 1: Hand out one worksheet to each learner or pair / small group of learners. Option 2: Display presentation slide 5. • Tell learners that the story was mixed up at the printers when they were printing the book, and that they have to put the story back in the correct order from the start of the bottle's 'life' to the end of the story.



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put learners in pairs and give them five minutes to order the story. Go around to check they have got the sentences in the correct order, helping where necessary. When most learners have finished putting the story in order, get everyone's attention and review the following words: a bin lorry, a rubbish dump, a shopping basket, a drinks can, a rubbish bag, a bin, a label. Option: Display presentation slides 6-17. Show the pictures and ask learners to find the words in the story. Nominate learners to read each part of the story in the correct order. Answers: 1 = The first thing I remember ... (given); 2 = I was filled ...; 3 = I was wrapped ...; 4 = We were taken ...; 5 = After a few days ...; 6 = Two days later ...; 7 = I wasn't there ...; 8 = I didn't get ...; 9 = I was thrown away ...; 10 = The next day ...; 11 = On the journey ...; 12 = I floated ...; 13 = And that's where ...
5. Focus on past passive structure (5 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Option 1: Write the following sentence from the story on the board: I was filled with water and given a label. Option 2: Display presentation slide 19. Ask learners, 'Who filled the bottle with water?' (Someone at the factory. / We don't know exactly. / It isn't important.) Remind them of the structure if necessary: was/were + past participle. If learners need to practise the structure, ask them to find further examples in the story and display presentation slide 21.
6. Write a mini autobiography (15 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain to learners that they are going to write an autobiography of an item of rubbish that they threw away and discussed earlier in the lesson. Put learners in pairs and tell them to choose one of their items to write about. Go around and make yourself available for help with language. Encourage them to use their imagination to fill in the gaps in their knowledge. Ask fast finishers to design a book cover for their autobiography.



7. Read and present (15 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the learners to pin their stories on the walls around the classroom. Learners walk around the room and read the stories. Option: If you have a large group, put learners into groups of three or four. Tell them to read their stories out to one another. • As learners read or listen, they should choose the story they think is the most realistic, personal or emotional, and the most interesting or funniest. • Invite some learners to briefly share a story they chose and to say why.
8. Discussion (10 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask learners the following questions, encouraging discussion and different points of view. Avoid giving learners your point of view: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – How long is the life of the bottle? (about 400 years) – How much of that time is useful? (e.g. a few days holding the water, a few minutes in the customer’s hands!) – How much is a bottle of water? – Does that include the cost of cleaning it up in 400 years’ time? – What problems are caused by having lots of plastic in the oceans and in the countryside? (e.g. plastic breaks down into small pieces, which are eaten by animals; it can poison the water; plastic bags can choke animals who eat it; etc.) – Whose responsibility is it to clean it up? The people who buy the products, the companies who insist on selling their products in plastic or the governments for allowing companies to use plastic in this way?
9. Make an action plan (10 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write on the board, ‘What can we do to reduce the amount of plastic on the planet?’ Put the learners in groups. • Tell each group to discuss the question and decide on three areas of action that would be effective. Explain that one area should be at the personal level, i.e. what they can do in their lives; one should be at the local level, i.e. what can change in their school or local community; and one should be at the



	<p>national, economic or political level, i.e. what they can do to help make bigger changes in society.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit each group and find out about their ideas, helping them with language to express their ideas where necessary. • Suggested answers for the teacher's reference <p>Things we can do to reduce plastic include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – (at the personal level) refuse to use single-use plastics; use a refillable water bottle; recycle more effectively at home; choose products with paper or card packaging over products with plastic packaging; consume less – (at the local level) create a recycling system at school; collect rubbish in the area; organise a clean-up of a park – (at the national, economic or political level) sign petitions to stop plastics; complain at supermarkets about their use of plastic; write to big companies; organise campaigns to stop buying products or supporting irresponsible companies. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite spokespeople from each or some of the groups to summarise their ideas. Ask the class to choose one action from their action plans to carry out this week! In the following lesson, make sure you follow this up by asking learners what they did, how it went, whether they will carry on, and so on. Congratulate learners for making a positive change for sustainability!
Homework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners research how a product such as plastic, tetra Brik™, cardboard for packaging, old electronics, etc. is either produced, recycled or disposed of. Search terms include: 'How is _ made?', 'What happens to recycled _?', 'Where does my rubbish go?'

Contributed by

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