BRITISH COUNCIL

The Climate Connection

Lesson plan

Sports in (climate) crisis

Sports and games; the climate crisis

Face-to-face lesson plan

Suitable for use with learners of English aged 13-17 at CEFR level C1 and above

#TheClimateConnection
www.britishcouncil.org/climate-connection

Sport in (climate) crisis

Topic

Sports and games; the climate crisis

Learning outcomes

- Effectively explain the environmental impact of major sports events
- Discuss environmental impacts and action we can take, e.g. have an impact on, play a role, raise awareness, etc.
- Use a 'problem tree' to better understand possible causes of and solutions to the environmental impact of sports events
- Discuss the causes and consequences behind these issues as well as possible solutions

Age group and level

Aged 13-17 at CEFR level C1

Time

100 minutes. This can be done over two lessons

Materials

- The lesson plan
- Presentation
- Student worksheet (one for each student)
- Reading text (one for each student)

An online lesson plan and materials are available.

Introduction

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

Learners will discover the impact of major sports events on the living planet and the impact of global heating on sports. They explore possible solutions and compromises that the world of sport might

need to take to lessen its impact. It would be a suitable lesson to supplement a unit in the coursebook on sport, or at the time of a major sports event.

Procedure

Stage	Instructions
1. Warm-up (10 minutes)	• Write 'racket sports' on the board as an example of a category of sport. Elicit other categories of sports and write learners' ideas on the board. You can display **slide 2**. **Examples**: athletics, motor sports, winter sports, team sports, water sports, fighting sports, sports played on a court/a pitch/a table/on grass. • Put learners into pairs. Explain that they are going to play a game of 'Vocabulary tennis'. • They choose a different category from the board for each round or 'rally'. They take turns to 'serve', which they do by simply naming a sport in that category. • Players return each 'shot' by naming another sport in the category. If a player can't think of a sport that hasn't yet been mentioned (in other words, if they run out of ideas), they 'miss the ball' and lose the point. • The game is scored in the same way as tennis, i.e. 'love' – '15' – '30' – '40' – game. Ask two students to demonstrate with racket sports to ensure everyone understands the rules, e.g. tennis, badminton, squash, etc.
2. Introduce the topic (10 minutes)	• Ask learners to think of any sports that might damage the environment, and to think of reasons why. Use Think, Pair, Share. • **Think**: Learners come up with ideas individually. • **Pair**: Learners share their ideas in pairs. They need to justify their idea. • **Share**: Then they share their ideas with the whole class. Accept all reasonably argued suggestions and write them on the board. • Example: International football – teams and fans fly to matches. Air travel has a large carbon footprint
3. Read about the connection	• Hand out the article and ask the learners to do two things: – find out how many of their ideas on the board appear in the text

between sport and the climate crisis (10 minutes)	– identify the connections between sport and climate change described in the article. • Monitor and offer help with unknown vocabulary where necessary. Answers: Sports, specifically major sports events, have an impact on the climate because they are the cause of significant carbon emissions. Global warming also affects many sports because the increase in extreme weather events causes disruption and difficulties for athletes.
4. Gist comprehension task (10 minutes)	• Ask learners to read the article again and do Activity 2. Explain that for each paragraph, they must choose the sentence that best summarises it, i.e. the main point of the paragraph. You can use **slides 4 and 5** to set up this activity • Put learners in pairs to compare answers before nominating them to share with the class. Answers: 1b, 2a, 3c, 4c, 5b
5. Study collocations (15 minutes)	• Explain that the article contains a number of useful words and expressions for talking about the environment, climate crisis and what we can do to help. • Ask students to skim through the article and find a few, encouraging them to identify useful chunks, e.g. harness the power, not just harness. Nominate learners to suggest a few and write them on the board. • Point to Activity 3 and explain that each missing word is in the text in the indicated paragraph and that they are in order. You can also set this activity up using **slides 6-15.** • Remind them to look carefully at the words before and after, and to make a note of any useful collocations • Instruct learners that the form of the words may be different. E.g. Consumed/ consumes

	• When learners have finished, invite them to the board to write the answers in their collocations or show the relevant slide. Highlight the collocates. Answers: 1. power (the lights in your home / a 60W bulb) 2. harness (clean energy from … / power generated by …) 3. (household) consumes (electricity) 4. (recognise your / a lack of recognition of) responsibilities 5. (have a positive/negative) impact (on the living planet / on sports) 6. (likely to) face (a temperature rise / higher temperatures) 7. (global) heating 8. (play a) role (a ~ to play) 9. raise (awareness of …) 10. (ways to reduce) emissions This could be the end of lesson one.
6. Causes, consequences and solutions (20 minutes)	• Tell the class they are going to explore some of the causes and consequences of this issue in order to come up with some solutions. Explain that one tool that is sometimes used when problem solving is a 'problem tree'. • Display **slide 16** or hold up your copy to show the learners how it is organised, with the problem stated at the top, and the causes and consequences broken down and identified. Tell them that breaking down problems in this way is a clear way to begin finding solutions for each consequence. • Point to Activity 4 on the worksheet, or display **slide 17**, and the expressions in the box. Use the example sentence to show how these expressions can be used to show relationships between causes, consequences and solutions. • Check learners understand which expressions introduce causes, which consequence and which can be used to talk about solutions. You can do this using a simple example of a cause, rain, having a consequence, cancelling a picnic, with umbrellas as a possible

solution, e.g. The picnic is cancelled due to rain (so *due to* introduces rain, the cause).

Answers:

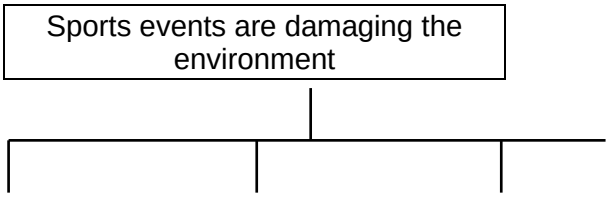
Expressions which introduce a cause: *due to*, *thanks to* …

Expressions which introduce consequences: As a result; Consequently; means there will be; This has the effect of; can/will lead to; can cause

Expressions to talk about solutions: would avoid the need for; would protect people from; would mean

- Put learners in pairs and tell them to make sentences about the problem tree to describe the negative impact of the climate crisis on sport. Monitor to check that learners are using the expressions correctly.
- When they have finished, invite learners to describe the problem tree using the sentences they have written.
- Suggested sentences:

***Consequently**, more water will be needed for grass surfaces like golf courses.*
*Global heating **has the effect of** rising sea levels. **As a result,** some coastal installations are disappearing.*
*Dry ski slopes **would avoid the need for** snow.*
*Night-time events **would protect athletes from** extreme temperatures.*
*Extreme weather events **can cause** delays and cancellations.*
***Thanks to** hurricanes and other extreme weather events, buildings and other sports installations may be damaged.*
*Non-grass courts **would mean** water wasn't needed to maintain them.*
*Increasingly, athletes are suffering from heatstroke **due to** rising temperatures.*

7. Create a problem tree (20 minutes) OPTIONAL	• Remind the class that the article describes a two-way process, and that sports are affecting the climate just as the climate is affecting sport. Show the beginning of a problem tree for this separate issue by drawing the problem and a connection to possible causes:  • Ask students to complete the new problem tree in pairs. You can elicit one or two causes from the class to get them started with ideas. Remind them that the article and previous discussion might help them. Explain that they don't have to think of solutions just yet, but if they have finished, they can start to discuss these. Suggested answers: *Causes*: athletes and fans travelling to play and watch events far from home; plastic waste from buying and throwing away sports equipment and clothes; building stadiums and other large installations with concrete has a high carbon footprint; quantity of water used to maintain golf courses, tennis courts, etc.; motor sports consuming petrol and encouraging people to buy new, faster cars. *Consequences*: global heating, sea levels rising, air and noise pollution, extreme weather events; etc. • Put pairs together into groups of four. Give them two minutes to compare their problem trees and share ideas. Nominate individuals to describe what they have written on their problem trees using the language of cause and consequence.
8. Discuss solutions (15 minutes)	• Elicit some major sporting events, such as the Olympic Games, Winter Olympics, Paralympics, Football/ Baseball/ Rugby/ Kabaddi World Cups, tennis tour, Grand Prix, etc.

- Write on the board: 'It is 2050. Humanity is united in its fight against global heating and environmental destruction. What changes will the world of sport need to make to be part of the solution?'
- Put learners in groups and explain that they are the organising committee of a major sporting championship. Elicit from each group a championship they would like to represent.
- Once they have agreed, they should hold a meeting to identify three environmental problems created by the sport and the event. Then they must identify possible ways of reducing the carbon footprint and environmental impact of the sport and event, and propose five action steps that they will take. Encourage them to think big!
- Give groups 10 minutes to come up with ideas. Remind them of the language they can use to talk about solutions and the strength of breaking down the problem into specific issues using their problem trees. Monitor each group to help them with ideas and the language to express them.

  Suggested ideas for your reference (you may decide to suggest one or two of these if groups are struggling to think of solutions):

  - If competition was organised into more local tournaments rather than world championships, this would avoid the need for so much travel.
  - More second-hand shops selling used sports equipment would save a lot of plastic.
  - Motor sports like Formula 1 could reduce its carbon footprint if it used electric cars.
  - Golf courses could be converted into wilderness parks with small paths between the trees, and lost balls could be located by Bluetooth. The greens would be made of artificial grass.
  - Some sports might be banned as damaging for the environment, such as hunting, horse racing and fishing.

9. Present solutions (5 minutes)	• Ask a spokesperson from each group to present their solutions to the class. Encourage learners in other groups to ask questions and challenge. At the end of the presentations, ask if they optimistic about the future of sport.
10. Homework	• Learners choose their favourite sport or a sport they know well and think of three ways that it could become more sustainable. They present their ideas in class or as a one-minute talking heads video. There is a homework worksheet to provide scaffolding if needed.
References	Think, Pair, Share is part of a collaborative classroom strategy: https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/community/magazine/how-can-i-make-my-classroom-more-collaborative • Sources for reading text: https://www.edie.net/library/Rio-2016-Olympics-sustainability-carbon-emissions-air-and-water-quality/6719 https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/jan/13/will-gadd-we-were-climbing-ice-that-isnt-going-there-next-week-climate-change https://greensportsblog.com/the-gsb-interview-amy-steel-netballer-climate-analyst-and-climate-activist/ https://www.independent.co.uk/sport/tennis/australian-open-2014-melbourne-meltdown-forces-atp-consider-rule-change-9068610.html

Contributed by

Daniel Barber, Edited by Suzanne Mordue