

Holidays

Topic

Holidays and holiday activities

Learning outcomes

- Review and learn vocabulary for talking about holidays and holiday activities
- Practise speaking and listening skills
- Study and contextualise past simple forms
- Share a meaningful object to create interest
- Use past simple forms in a personalised context

Age/level

Aged 5-8 CEFR level A1–A2

Time

110 minutes. This could be done over two lessons

Materials

- Presentation
- some holiday realia for stage 1
- a souvenir from a holiday for stage 8
- The learners will need a pen or pencil and paper or a notebook.

Introduction

In this lesson learners talk about holidays and holiday activities. They initially meet vocabulary through a pre-lesson task, then they practise and extend the vocabulary through listening and speaking activities. Next they are introduced to some past simple forms and consider how to categorise them before practising them with some simple games. They also show the class a souvenir from a past holiday and use the past simple forms to write and speak about a previous holiday.

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

Before the lesson	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prior to the lesson, decide which types of holiday you are going to cover. Then choose one and prepare some realia you can use to elicit it in stage 1, e.g. sunglasses, a reading book, sun cream, flip flops, etc., for a seaside holiday. • Before the lesson, or for the previous lesson's homework, ask learners to play the following game on LearnEnglish Kids. This word game has audio for each language item and you can encourage your learners to listen to the audio as well so that they are also exposed to the pronunciation of the words. https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/word-games/holiday-activities • Before you start the lesson: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Test your microphone and camera to make sure they work. - Make sure that you have the accompanying PowerPoint open and shared.
At the start of the lesson slide 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Welcome the learners as they arrive: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Check that you can all hear and see each other. - Check that they can see the first slide. - 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. <p>Tips:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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. - 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.
1. Warmer – introducing the topic (5 minutes) slide 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generate interest by showing the learners your holiday realia and eliciting what you have, e.g. sunglasses, a reading book, sun cream, flip flops, etc., if you have prepared for a seaside holiday. Ask them what they think you're going to do (go on holiday) and elicit specifically what type of holiday (e.g. seaside holiday).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the learners if they've ever been on a seaside holiday and brainstorm other types of holidays you can have, for example camping, skiing, adventure, sightseeing, staycation, cruise, theme park, etc.
2. Generating vocabulary (10 minutes) platform whiteboard or blank document	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elicit from the learners different activities you can do on holiday, such as those they will have met in the word game they did before the lesson, but making sure you have examples of activities from each of the holiday types that were brainstormed. • Write the activities on the whiteboard (if the platform has one) or on a blank document that you screen share. Elicit a physical action to represent each activity. • Play a game of Simon says with the activities and actions. After a few rounds, ask some of the learners to take the lead role and give the instructions. • Now ask learners to identify any activities which can be done on more than one type of holiday, for example <i>have a picnic</i> could be both a seaside holiday and a camping holiday activity.
3. Speaking practice (10–15 minutes) slide 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play a guessing game. Ask learners to decide what type of holiday they like best (or would most like to try) and to keep it secret. The other learners ask yes/no questions to work out what it is, such as <i>Can you go swimming? Do you stay in a hotel? Do you need sun cream? Is it cold?</i> You can decide how many questions they are allowed to ask before making their guess as to what it is. You could play this game in breakout rooms, if the platform you're using has this function, and your learners are comfortable and responsible when working in breakout rooms, or as a whole class with the learners in teams. Either way, demonstrate the game first with your own favourite type of holiday and getting the learners to ask you questions. • If you choose to use breakout rooms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One learner is nominated to be the first to be asked questions. After the set number of questions has been asked, the other learners write their idea on a piece of paper and all show the camera at the same time. The initial learner then says if anyone is correct. Repeat with the other learners. - 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. - 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.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Before you bring learners back to the main room, visit each breakout room briefly and announce that they have two more minutes before you will bring them back. After two minutes, bring all the learners back. • If you choose to play as a whole class with the learners in teams: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ask all the learners to message you privately in the chat what their favourite type of holiday is, and make teams accordingly, e.g. all the learners who say 'seaside holiday' are a team. - The other teams take turns to ask questions. Make sure that when it's a team's turn again, a different learner from that team gets to ask a question. All the members of the first team get to say <i>yes</i> or <i>no</i> to each question. - After the set number of questions has been asked, all the learners write their idea on a piece of paper and all show the camera at the same time. The first team then say if anyone is correct. If you wish to award points, then each team can receive points according to how many members guessed correctly. Then play again with the next team. • Slide 3 shows some language you could display to support the learners during the task although you may wish to provide different or extra examples.
<p>4. Contextualising the structure and categorisation (10–15 minutes) platform whiteboard or blank document slides 4 and 5</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Now tell the learners that you want to tell them about your last holiday. What type of holiday do they think it was? What do they think you did? Ask the learners to guess. • Write a few sentences about what you did on the whiteboard (if the platform has one) or on a blank document that you screen share. Underline the past simple forms. Ask learners why they're different, e.g. why you wrote <i>went</i> instead of <i>go</i> and elicit it's because you're talking about the past. • Slide 4 has a selection of infinitive forms and the corresponding past simple forms, although you may wish to prepare your own. Ask learners to try and match them up. If your platform has an annotate function, learners could draw lines to match. Otherwise they could write the words in their notebooks. • As you check and confirm the answers, drill the past simple form for pronunciation. • Finally, ask learners to help you categorise the past simple forms into two groups, but don't tell them how. Ask for ideas about how they could divide them. Any method they suggest is valid but you can also encourage them to group according to those ending in <i>-ed</i> and those that do not, for example by asking them to think about the spelling. Slide 5 has the same selection of past simple forms although again you may wish to prepare your own.

<p>5. Task set up – finding an item (5 minutes) slide 6</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depending on the format of your classes, this activity can be set for the learners to do in the break time or as homework for before the next class. • Ask learners how we can remember a holiday and elicit ideas such as with photos, postcards or souvenirs. Ask them what kind of things they like to get as souvenirs, they can be shop-bought or things you find or keep, like seashells, tickets, etc. • Tell learners to find a souvenir from their last or favourite holiday and to find out what it's called in English so that they can show everyone after the break or in the next lesson. <p>Note: This could be the end of lesson 1</p>
<p>6. Past simple forms language practice (5–10 minutes) platform whiteboard or blank document</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play a team game to help practise the past simple forms, for example noughts and crosses. Draw a noughts and crosses grid on the whiteboard (if the platform has one) or on a blank document that you screen share and put learners into two teams. For reference write the names of who is in each team on the whiteboard/document. • Each team takes a turn to choose a square. Ask the team whose turn it is to unmute their microphones, while the other team mutes. Say <i>Last holiday I ...</i> and mime a holiday activity. The team must complete the sentence. Encourage the team to discuss and confirm amongst themselves that they all agree before giving their answer. If they're correct, they win the square. Continue with the teams taking turns.
<p>7. Warmer – language review (10 minutes) slide 7</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If this is the start of a lesson, play a quick game or two of bingo to review the past simple forms. Ask the learners to draw a grid of nine squares on paper or in their notebooks. Then ask them to choose any nine of the past simple forms you've covered and write one in each square. Slide 7 has the same selection of past simple forms although again you may wish to prepare your own. • Invent a simple story about a holiday you or someone had, and start telling it, e.g. <i>Two years ago my sister and I went to Australia. In Sydney, we stayed in a hotel. We went sightseeing and saw ...</i> • As you tell the story, learners need to listen and cross off the past simple forms when they hear them. Learners who get three in a row shout <i>bingo</i>, but keep telling the story so that multiple learners can get a bingo, until someone gets all nine, when they can shout <i>mega bingo</i>.

<p>8. Personalisation and language expansion (10 minutes) slide 8</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask the learners to get the souvenir they found ready. Find your own, show it to the camera (you could 'spotlight' yourself if your platform has this function) and tell the learners about it as a model, for example what it is and why you like or chose it. • Each learner then shows and tells the class about their own souvenir. Feed in any language they need, eliciting what you can from the other learners first, and write the language as well as the words for the souvenirs on the whiteboard (if the platform has one) or on a blank document that you screen share.
<p>9. Writing practice (10 minutes) slide 9</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Now ask the learners to think about the holiday where they got the souvenir. They need to write some sentences about the holiday, e.g. where they went, what they saw, what they did, what they ate, etc. Each learner should write a minimum of three sentences. Fast finishers can write more or you can ask them to draw pictures to illustrate each of their sentences. • Ask each learner to show you via the camera each sentence after they complete it for feedback, rather than showing you them all when they've finished, in order to help stagger the checking and feedback process.
<p>10. Speaking and listening practice (15–20 minutes) slide 10</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 can also be done as a whole class activity with learners responding in the chat facility. • Tell the learners that they need to find other learners who have the same sentences as them, but it should be a different learner for each sentence. To do this, they need to read their sentences to each other and say when something is the same as them. For example, if one learner says <i>I went to Turkey, I took photos and I ate ice cream</i>, and another learner also wrote <i>I took photos</i> as one of their sentences, then they can say <i>Me, too!</i> or <i>I took photos too!</i> Then the two learners can write the other's name next to that sentence. • To create the sense of a mingle for the activity, explain to learners that you are going to put them in breakout rooms in small groups of three or four, but every few minutes you're going to change the learners' rooms, so they need to speak and listen as much as they can each time. • You could do this in an organised way, or if your platform has this function you could randomise the occupants of the rooms each time. In this way, you can change the rooms fairly quickly each time to keep the pace of the activity up and create a sense

	<p>of immediacy, and if all learners have not said their sentences each time there is a good chance they will meet some or all of their current 'roommates' again in another room.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • 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. • Before you bring learners back to the main room, visit each breakout room briefly and announce that they have two more minutes before you will bring them back. • After two minutes, bring all the learners back. Ask them to share any sentences they couldn't find someone for, and who they thought had a fun or interesting holiday. • If you don't have or choose not to use breakout rooms: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Learners can take turns to say the sentences about their holiday. The other learners need to listen and write in the chat facility <i>I ... too!</i> for each sentence that's the same as one of theirs. - After all the learners have spoken, they can read through the chat and find names to write next to their sentences. - Ask them to share any sentences they couldn't find someone for, and who they thought had a fun or interesting holiday.
<p>11. Cooler (10 minutes) platform whiteboard or blank document</p> <p>OPTIONAL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To finish, play a few rounds of <i>Stop the bus</i>. If you're not familiar with how to play you can read about it here: https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/stop-bus-0 • Draw a <i>Stop the bus</i> table on the whiteboard (if the platform has one) or on a blank document that you screen share and add your categories. You might like to make one of the categories 'holiday activities' or 'past simple forms'. It can be a good idea to think in advance about which letters you will give to ensure you can think of answers for each category. • Give the letter for the first round and the learners write the words until they can 'stop the bus'. • Although usually a team game, learners can play individually and you can adjust the rules to help make sure everyone is supported. For example, you can allow some learners to only think of the words instead of having to write them down, you can set the requirement to having to get words for any three of the five categories instead of

	<p>them all, the first three (or more) learners to say <i>Stop the bus!</i> can be the winners instead of just the first, or you can award an extra winner's place to the learner with the most unusual or longest word in a category even if they didn't complete the other categories.</p>
<p>12. Setting homework (5 minutes) platform whiteboard or blank document slide 11</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask learners if they've ever been on holiday with their class or a club they belong to or similar. Did they enjoy going on holiday with other children instead of their family? • Ask them to imagine that in the last school holiday, you all went on holiday together as a class, and it was the best holiday ever! Where did we go? What did we do? Brainstorm ideas as a class and write them on the whiteboard (if the platform has one) or on a blank document that you screen share. Encourage their imaginations! • Tell learners that their homework is to write a postcard that they sent to a friend at the end of the class holiday, saying what they did on each day of the holiday. You might like to show them an example first, for example the postcard here: https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/writing-practice/postcard-london
<p>At the end of the lesson slide 12</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Praise the learners for their participation and work and tell them you're looking forward to seeing them again in the next lesson. • Make sure they know how to exit the platform and wait until they all leave before leaving yourself.
<p>Further ideas and resources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If feasible, you could ask the learners to send you a scan or a photo of their postcards, and you could post them on a virtual 'wall' using a tool such as Padlet. • The LearnEnglish Kids website has lots more activities related to holidays: https://learnenglishkids.britishcouncil.org/category/topics/holidays There are stories, videos and grammar chants as well as a worksheet and a fun tongue twister. There are also colouring pages, flashcards and a 'Your turn' where learners who are registered on the site can write comments.