

Lesson: A Day at the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History

Grade level: B1 (CEFR)

Subject: English

Prepared by: Efthimios Mavrogeorgiadis

Overview & Purpose

Students are asked to visit the virtual Smithsonian Museum of Natural History to learn about life in the past and practice extensive, skim, and scan reading.

Teaching Method

- Student centered
- Cooperative learning

Objectives	· Extensive reading · Skim reading for general ideas · Scan reading for details · Practice speed reading · Learn vocabulary associated with a natural museum · The activity could be linked to practicing Simple Past	Materials & Resources · ICT room · Website of the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History · Worksheet
Activity and Method Description	· Students are divided in groups and are asked to elect a group leader that will organize their work · Teacher uses the interactive board or a projector to display the virtual tour of the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History and explains how students can navigate it · Students are handed the attached worksheet and encouraged to follow the instructions · Students discuss the worksheet and share the workload assigned · Students visit the virtual tour of the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History and perform the tasks needed to complete the treasure hunt · Fastest team wins the hunt	
Assessment	· The worksheets can be collected and results evaluated · Students can be asked to work in groups to present their favorite museum room and the exhibits they saw in it · Students can be asked to write a short report on the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History · A vocabulary quiz based on the worksheet can be done in class or on line.	Additional Notes
Teacher Guide	· Students will probably come across a lot of unknown words they might want explained. The teacher should not focus on vocabulary as part and parcel of extensive, skim, and scan reading is to guess the meaning of unknown words and learn to extract meaning. · The activity might require more time than what is normally available at school. It could be modified to make it fit a normal school hour or students could be allowed to continue the activity at home and e-mail or post the result on a forum thread to claim the prize. · The teacher should familiarize him/herself with the virtual tour of the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History to be able to answer student questions and drop hints to students if they find the task too difficult to complete.	

Summary	Extensive reading involves reading a large amount of texts with a focus on meaning. Skim and scan reading are also important though often overlooked skills that should be conquered by any student that studies a foreign language. This activity is expected to make this usually boring task of reading for gist more attractive to teenage students who are especially keen on science or history. Acting as a giant book, the virtual tour of the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History offers a variety of rooms to visit, different exhibits to admire, and texts to read. After demonstrating to students how to navigate the virtual tour, teachers give them tasks to complete, much like they do when they visit a museum on an ordinary field trip. In this case, the tasks aim to encourage students to look for general information (skimming) that guides them to the area of the museum where they need to scan the display windows and the associated exhibit plaques for specific information. The information they collect is then used in a word game where they pick and mix letters to come to the final answer that allows them to win the “treasure hunt” (which could be anything from a good grade to a large piece of chocolate bar). The activity can be linked to other language-learning tasks such as talking about the past, learning animal vocabulary, etc. or used in an interdisciplinary context (CLIL) to promote subject as well as language learning.
Literature	Donoghue, Mildred R. (2009). <i>Language Arts: Integrating Skills for Classroom Teaching</i>. Los Angeles: Sage Publications. Iwahori, Yurika. (2008). Developing reading fluency: A study of extensive reading in EFL. <i>Reading in a Foreign Language</i>. 20 (1), 70-91.

Lesson: Making Passive Voice Fun

Grade level: B1 (CEFR) Subject: English Prepared by: Efthimios Mavrogeorgiadis

Overview & Purpose Passive voice has always been a difficult subject to teach. The activities proposed in this lesson plan aim to teach passive voice while making it seem attractive and easy to grasp.	Teaching Method · Student centered · Inquiry-based learning
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Objectives	· To teach simple passive voice forms · To help students learn how passive voice is used · To introduce the use of gerund as a subject · To remind students of cooking vocabulary they have already learnt	Materials & Resources
Activity and Method Description	· Worksheet A is distributed to half the students in the class and Worksheet B to the rest. · The basic rules of forming Present Simple Passive are explained to the students. · The teacher points out that one of the uses of passive voice is to help us focus on the action rather than the agent and describe procedures. · Students are asked to watch the “Quick and easy breakfast recipe for kids and teens” [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IE50VzCkVLk] and convert the corresponding task in their worksheet into passive voice. · When the students have completed the task, they check their answers with the help of the presentation file. · The use of gerund as subject together with the standard expressions “is not allowed”, “is forbidden”, “is prohibited”, and “is not permitted” is explained to the students as they appear on public signs. · The teacher tells the students that they are going to play a pantomime game. Students are called to the whiteboard and shown a school rule that they are not allowed to break (e.g. no talking in class). Then, they go on to perform a pantomime act pretending that they are breaking the rule. The rest of the class need to guess what is going on and use one of the expressions above to tell the student what the rule is (e.g. talking in class is not allowed). · The teacher explains to students that passive voice is often found in textbooks. · Students are asked to form pairs (matching a student A to a student B) and complete the Geography Quiz. Once they are both finished, they ask their partner the questions they have formed and note down the answers. · When the students have completed the task, they check the questions and their answers with the help of the presentation file.	· Worksheet A & B · Presentation file · Interactive board or projector
Assessment	· The worksheets can be collected and results evaluated · A quiz based on the worksheet can be done in class or on line.	Additional Notes

Teacher Guide	· This lesson plan is meant to teach passive voice usage mainly. So, there is no need to get into details about the position of the different elements (subject, agent) in the sentence unless there is a special difficulty related to the students' L1 that renders this necessary. · Students should be given the time to practice their listening and observation skills while watching the "Quick and easy breakfast recipe for kids and teens" video. To do that, the instructions given in the worksheet can be shuffled and students will have to put them in the correct order before converting them to passive voice. · To consolidate learning, students can be asked to use passive voice to write down another online recipe video, write their own posters of classroom rules, or create their own geography quiz as homework.	
Summary	Passive voice has traditionally been taught with a focus on formation and syntactic rules. This lesson plan brings passive voice usage to student attention. Bringing together a variety of methodologies (association by observation, pantomime, and pair work), students are introduced into the three main uses of passive voice. · Describing a process using passive voice comes out naturally from students once they realize that the agent is irrelevant or that mentioning him/her is repetitive. Watching a video while performing the task allows the students to identify with the observer's role and learn by doing rather than simply carry out a drill. Furthermore, the cooking video used allows students to remember vocabulary learnt in previous lessons. · Pantomime is used to present prohibitions in passive voice. Prohibitions are usually associated with negative memories or emotions in student minds. Bringing kinesthetic learning into play allows students to relax and absorb language more effectively. At the same time, students have the opportunity to express themselves artistically and become aware of how they communicate with their peers using body language. · Scientific language where passive voice is used to express abstract ideas is something that teenagers find difficult to associate with even in their mother tongue, let alone a foreign language. However, since they are familiar with geography from school and as passive forms are often used to talk about geographic features or information pertaining to a specific country, completing a geography quiz catches student attention. Moreover, introducing a competitive framework in a pair-work setting, keeps the activity under control, allows the students to concentrate on the task at hand, and motivates them to outdo their partners.	
Literature Gardner, Howard (1983), <i>Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences</i> , Basic Books, ISBN 0133306143. "Passive Voice," The Writing Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, http://writingcenter.unc.edu/handouts/passive-voice/ (accessed December 23, 2014)		

Lesson: Life, the Universe and Everything

Grade level: B2 (CEFR)

Subject: English

Prepared by: Efthimios Mavrogeorgiadis

Overview & Purpose

This topic and accompanying activities offer teachers and students the opportunity to get acquainted with the Big Bang theory and mankind's place in it.

Teaching Method

- Student centered
- Cooperative learning
- Inquiry-based learning
- Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)

Objectives	· To increase students' knowledge of subject content · To develop students' knowledge of the origin of the Universe · To develop all four language skills within a content-based context · To allow students to become aware of their place in the universe · To help students develop arguments about their purpose in life	Materials & Resources
Activity and Method Description	· Brainstorming: The teacher asks the questions below and writes the students' ideas on the whiteboard. - o Why is it important for us to learn about the origins of the universe? - o What do scientists believe today about the origins of the universe? · The students are asked to watch the video entitled "Introduction to the Big Bang" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dMBqa5BdN_8) on the projection screen and identify similarities to the answers they gave in the preceding brainstorming session. · The students are asked to form pairs and watch the video again on www.toe.gr. This time they need to take a closer look and complete the first activity of the accompanying worksheet. · The students' answers are checked in plenary session. The teacher writes all astronomical objects mentioned by the students on the whiteboard. · The teacher asks the students if they know who came up with the Big Bang theory. · Students are then invited to watch the video entitled "Hubble's Revolution" (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vsL-JNCjAK0) - o What's the name of the person who came up with the Big Bang theory? Edwin Hubble · Students are divided in groups of four and asked to watch the video again, study the "Background Information" of the "Big Bang Balloon" worksheet, and answer the questions in Activity 1. · The students are asked to return to a plenary session where they compare their answers. · Students are told that they will perform an experiment to confirm Hubble's findings. · The instructions given in the "Big Bang Balloon" worksheet are read and explained. · Students are given the needed materials and form groups of four again to	· Teacher's website · Worksheets · Presentation files · Interactive board or projector · ICT room · Balloons · Markers · Measuring tapes

	perform the experiment and answer the questions on the “Big Bang Balloon” worksheet. · Once students have completed the experiment, they return to plenary session to compare their results. - o Do the dots farther from “home” move “faster” than the ones closer? - o What is the “Big Crunch”? - o What would we observe if the “Big Crunch” occurred? · The teacher asks the students to guess how big the universe is (diameter: 93 billion light years). · The teacher goes on to explain what a light year is: - o Light in the vacuum travels at a constant speed, i.e. 299,792,458 m/sec. - o Because distances in space are unimaginably huge, we estimate distances using the distance travelled by the light in one year as a basic unit of measurement. - o Students are asked to calculate how many meters a light year is. - o $365.25 \text{ days} \times 24 \text{ hours} \times 60 \text{ mins} \times 60 \text{ secs} = 31,557,600 \text{ secs}$ - o $31,557,600 \text{ secs} \times 299,792,458 \text{ m/sec} = 9,460,730,472,580,800 \text{ m}$. - o In how many years would a car travelling at 100 km/h cover a light year? - o $94,607,304,725,808 \text{ hours} = 10,792,528,488 \text{ years}$ - o What is a light month? A light day? A light hour? A light minute? A light second? · The students are asked to form pairs and do the “Macrocosm-Microcosm” quiz on www.toe.gr. It is pointed out that they should try to guess any answers they don't know and repeat the quiz until they get all answers correct. · When the students have finished with the quiz, they are asked to do the second activity of the accompanying worksheet. · The students are asked to return to a plenary session where they compare their answers, watch “The Observable Universe” video (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HiN6Ag5-DrU), and comment on what they see (video paused at key points). The students should be encouraged to use the vocabulary and definitions learnt to explain what they see. · The students are asked to update the answer they gave in question 6 of Activity 1 bearing in mind what they have learnt in Activity 2.	
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	- o What do you think came first in the universe? - o What came next? - o What kind of structure was the last to appear? · The students are asked to read “The Answer to Life, the Universe and Everything” excerpt from the Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy and watch the accompanying video. - o Discuss in groups: “What is the ultimate question you would ask Deep Thought?”	
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Assessment	• The worksheets can be collected and results evaluated • A quiz based on the worksheets can be done in class or on line. • Students can be asked to add subtitles or narration to a “Big Bang video” that is available online (e.g. “A Brief Timeline of EVERYTHING” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I_Om5TNJVmE, “The Observable Universe” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HiN6Ag5-DrU, etc).	Additional Notes
Teacher Guide	• This lesson plan is meant to stretch across 3-4 teaching hours. As new concepts are introduced, students should be given time to understand and absorb them. • The teacher should familiarize him/herself very well with the concepts taught and the latest developments in astronomy to be able to answer student questions that arise for the material taught. • The teacher should support the students with their learning endeavor at all times and offer technical support when needed. • Depending on their background, younger students might find some concepts difficult to grasp. More activities might be needed in class or at home to facilitate learning.	
Summary	As a dual-focused educational approach, Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) might be difficult to handle and much more demanding on teacher and students alike. However, the rewards for the students are broader and more satisfying than simply studying language out of its natural context. Moving alongside the basic CLIL principles, this lesson plan tries to combine cognitive engagement and lower-order thinking with language learning and social interaction among the students. A simple experiment is also included to encourage problem solving initiatives and higher-order processing skills. Knowledge is presented in a factual manner with online and in-class activities that aim to conceptualize it. Multimodality is used extensively as the same concepts are presented in textual, visual, and aural form while students also give them a spatial dimension with the experiment performed.	
Literature Coyle, Do, Hood, Philip, Marsh, David (2010). <i>CLIL: Content and Language Integrated Learning</i> . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Deller, Sheelagh and Price, Christine. (2007). <i>Teaching Other Subjects through English</i> . Oxford: Oxford University Press.		