



## Lesson 13: Self / Social

This lesson is about the way we see ourselves and the way others see us. It contains ideas for students to think about when they are meeting people socially. It also makes suggestions about how to make a better impression socially. Note: some of the suggestions here (for example, maintaining eye contact when talking to people) are based on what is generally considered acceptable in western culture. In some cultures, different rules may apply, and the opposite can sometimes be true. Try to remain sensitive to these cultural differences and allow students the opportunity to discuss them.

**Level:** Pre-intermediate and above (equivalent to CEF level A2 and above)

**Time:** 60-90 mins

### How to use this lesson:

This lesson is designed to be done in class, with the exercises leading to extended discussion (see guidelines below). If you are short of time, the reading text with the multiple-choice questions can be set for homework since most of the more difficult vocabulary will have already been covered in the lesson. The final exercise can also be done at home, giving students the opportunity to look over the lesson and compile their lists.

## Worksheet A

### 1. Questionnaire: Circle A, B, C or D

Students should be able to fill in the questionnaire in 3-4 minutes. Explain any difficult words or phrases as students will need these for the other exercises. Those who finish quickly can compare their answers with another student. When they have all finished, elicit a variety of answers for each question and conduct a class discussion involving as many students as possible. You may wish to use some of the following ideas based on each of the questions.

- Q.1. Ask students what they think is 'normal' or 'healthy'. Some students may feel that more than one answer describes them. Ask them to explain why.
- Q.2. Try to get students to put into words how they feel when talking to strangers.
- Q.3. Ask students what they think if other people look them directly in the eye, look at the floor, etc.
- Q.4. Point out that questions like this are often the first step towards self-awareness. Be sensitive to class members who might be very shy. You might want to point out that shyness is often quite normal even in much older people.
- Q.5. This question focuses students' attention on how confident we feel with others. Some people might automatically assume they have done something wrong or something has been said. Others will be more confident and might assume that the other person is simply having a bad day. Remind students that we can't always be responsible for the way others feel. Ask them if they would mention a situation like this to the person who ignored them. If so, what would they say?
- Q.6. Arguments and misunderstandings can sometimes be the result of poor communication or social behaviour. Ask students to talk about the causes of misunderstandings. Keep the conversation general so that no one is put in a difficult position.
- Q.7. Making friends is a complex issue. While remaining aware that some of your students might find this a sensitive subject, ask the class to suggest ways in which we could meet people and make friends. Ask them what they look for in a friend (honesty, someone you can trust, someone who makes you laugh, etc). You could also ask about friends your students already have. How did they meet? What was their first impression of their friend?
- Q.8. If students don't mention it themselves, remind them that a conversation is a two-way affair and each person should have the chance to express his or her opinions. Ask how often this happens in reality. Is there anything we can do to help conversations go more smoothly?

### 2. Match the behaviour to what people think

This exercise focuses more closely on how the way we speak and our body language can appear to others. Allow 2-3 minutes and ask students to draw lines connecting the two columns. Explain any phrases that students are not familiar with. Point out that there are no 'correct' answers, and that the lines might link to more than one item. There is also a blank space in case students have different ideas.



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Elicit a variety of suggestions and, in each case, ask others if they agree. Be prepared for differences of opinion here. The important thing is that students express their ideas in English. Encourage them to explain their thoughts. You should elicit sentences such as:

*When you look down at the ground, people think you are not telling the truth.*

*When you smile a lot, people think you are being friendly / nervous / not telling the truth. etc.*

### Worksheet B

#### 3. Read the article and answer the question

This task can be given for homework. If you do it in class, students will need 10-15 minutes in order to read the text and choose the correct answers. You may wish to tell early finishers to compare their answers with a partner. Check the answers and ask students to point out which part of the text helped them find their answers. Deal with any problems students had in finding the correct answers.

#### Answers

- 1 C
- 2 A
- 3 B
- 4 B
- 5 D

#### 4. What do you think about the advice?

Encourage students to discuss the issues raised in the passage. Ask them if they think they would find any of the advice useful. You could also ask if they disagree with any of the advice and, if so, why. Aim to involve the whole class in the discussion and encourage them to use words and phrases from the lesson.

#### 5. What advice would you give?

This final task can be done for homework if there is not much time. If you do it in class, students will need 5-10 minutes to look through the advice given in the lesson and to compile their lists. They should aim to have between five and ten points. When they finish, allow a few minutes for students to compare their lists.

As a follow up activity, after checking students' lists for accuracy and relevance, you could ask them to role-play a counselling session as follows:

Tell each student to write down 2-4 problems that they have with their social life (they need not be real or personal, but should be based on the material in the lesson), e.g.

*I have difficulty making friends.*

*I hate talking to strangers.*

*I worry that I sound too shy in conversation.*

*I never know where to look when I'm talking to people.*

Students then take turns acting out a counselling session, with *Student A* presenting their 'problems' one at a time. *Student B* then addresses each one using the advice they have written in their lists or suggestions they think up on the spot. Students can then change roles. Aim to listen to as many pairs as possible but only intervene if they are having difficulty.

When the pairs have finished, ask the class to tell you about any interesting problems or solutions that came up.



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### Worksheet A

#### 1. Circle A, B, C or D.

##### Questionnaire

##### Q.1. Which of the following best describes you?

- A I'm happy on my own.
- B I hate being alone.
- C I love being with my friends.
- D I like being with friends but I like quiet time too.

##### Q.2. How do you feel about talking to strangers?

- A You hate doing it.
- B You'd rather not do it.
- C You don't mind doing it.
- D You enjoy doing it.

##### Q.3. When you are talking to someone, do you look

- A at the floor.
- B behind them.
- C directly in their eyes.
- D in the general face area.

##### Q.4. What first impression do other people have of you?

- A You are friendly and confident.
- B You are friendly but a little shy.
- C You are normal and polite.
- D You feel very uncomfortable meeting new people.

##### Q.5. You say hello to someone you know and, instead of being friendly, they walk away. What do you think?

- A You think you've done something to upset them.
- B You think someone has been telling lies about you.
- C You think they must have a problem.
- D You feel angry for the rest of the day.

##### Q.6. How often do you have arguments or misunderstandings with people?

- A almost never
- B not very often
- C quite often
- D all the time

##### Q.7. How easy is it for you to make friends?

- A very easy
- B quite easy
- C quite difficult
- D very difficult

##### Q.8. Are you a good listener? Which of the following best describes you?

- A Sometimes I talk very little and I just listen.
- B I usually can't wait to say what I want to say.
- C I take turns listening and talking.
- D I don't always pay much attention to what the other person is saying.

#### 2. Match the behaviour to what people think. You can use the items more than once.

##### When you ...

- look down at the ground
- smile a lot
- don't stand up straight
- speak too fast
- speak too loudly
- speak too quietly
- fold your arms or cross your legs
- stand too close to the other person

##### ... people think you are...

- not telling the truth.
- being friendly.
- lazy.
- nervous.
- hiding something.
- threatening them.
- only interested in yourself.
- [your own ideas]



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### Worksheet B

#### 3. Read the article and answer the questions.

##### How to improve your social skills

There are lots of things you can do to improve your social skills. It's a good idea to start by thinking about yourself and taking a long look in the mirror. Try to see yourself the way others see you. Do you stand up straight? Do you look friendly or nervous? Practise speaking – it doesn't matter what you say. Is your voice confident? Do you speak too fast or too quietly? Some people prefer to film themselves talking and then watch the video to see how they look. Others ask a friend or relative to tell them how they come across.

The next step is to practise short conversations in real-life situations. Each time you speak, it's a chance to improve your social skills, so try it with shop assistants, neighbours, strangers, colleagues and fellow students. Think about the way you talk, the way you look and the way you stand or sit. Try making small changes, like speaking a little more slowly or clearly, looking directly into the eyes of the other person, or standing up straight and unfolding your arms – simply smiling more can help! In most cases, you will see a difference in the other person and they will take more notice of you. When you get the chance to have a longer conversation, don't forget to be a good listener too. Follow these basic rules:

- ▶ Ask the other person about his or her opinions or interests.
- ▶ Talk about things you like doing or things that interest you.
- ▶ Keep it light – don't make the conversation too personal.
- ▶ Be honest – don't say things just to try to make a good impression.
- ▶ Remember to smile and look interested in what the other person says.

Finally, remember that all conversations have to end. Sometimes a short conversation is more suitable for the situation. If someone ends the conversation and you have enjoyed talking, say something like, "I hope we get the chance to talk again".

#### 1 When you practise talking in front of a mirror, ...

- A you should speak quietly.
- B it's important to let others see you.
- C think about what other people see.
- D you should film yourself.

#### 2 At the end of the first paragraph, the phrasal verb 'come across' is closest in meaning to ...

- A look.
- B tell.
- C ask.
- D watch.

#### 3 What should you try to do when you are talking to neighbours?

- A Keep the conversation going as long as possible.
- B Change the way you speak, look, stand or sit.
- C Include other people in the conversation.
- D Ask them what they think of you.

#### 4. What do you think about the advice in the passage? Have you tried any of the things mentioned? Do you think they would help? Why / Why not?

#### 5. Imagine you have a friend who finds it difficult to talk to people. What advice would you give him/her? Write a list of your suggestions and compare notes with a partner.

#### 4 What advice does the writer give for longer conversations?

- A Talk about personal details.
- B Show interest in the other person.
- C Talk about yourself as much as possible.
- D Find out if the other person is being honest.

#### 5 What point does the writer make in the final paragraph?

- A You need to know how to end a conversation.
- B Some people talk about unsuitable things.
- C You will not enjoy every conversation.
- D Not all conversations will be long.