

Lesson plan: Life Skills: thinking creatively

Try this sample lesson from *Open Mind* Pre-intermediate B1 level, which helps develop creativity through a series of fun tasks.

Level: Pre-intermediate / CEFR B1

Time: approx 45-60 minutes

How to use this lesson:

The lesson can be used for the whole class, who can work in small groups. Print out the [provided Student's Book pages](#) so each student has a copy.

Step 1: Understand the problem. (Ex. A)

Step 2: Try different ways of generating ideas. (Ex. B, Ex. C)

Step 3: Identify the best solution. (Ex. D, Ex. E, Ex. F)

Lead-in

Elicit situations in which the students are or have been required to think creatively. Write their ideas on the board. Ask them how they usually get ideas to solve a problem (e.g. *brainstorming, working with other people, research using the internet*). Emphasise the importance of evaluating the ideas and identifying the best one, depending on the circumstances.

A

- Put the class into groups of four or five. Make sure they understand the situation – that they are a member of a product design team.
- Ask them to read the question carefully and then find the answer in the email. Ask them to check the answer with the other members of their group.
- Check the answer with the class. Elicit what *crazy ideas* are (strange or unusual ideas).

ANSWERS

to think of / design features and apps for a new smartphone

B

- Ask the students to read the steps that explain how to do this exercise. Demonstrate it to the whole class first. Open a dictionary and choose a noun at random (it will probably be easier for you if you pretend to choose one at random but have, in fact, thought of one beforehand, e.g. *light*).
- Brainstorm different ways this word could relate to the new smartphone, e.g. using the example *light*, the smartphone could have a *flashlight* feature; it could have a screen that lights up for longer periods than usual so you can read it easily in the dark, etc.
- Emphasise that during the brainstorming phase, the students should listen to all ideas and not criticise or question them. They will have the opportunity to evaluate the ideas later.
- Refer the students to the **How to say** it box. Encourage them to use these phrases when brainstorming their ideas. Point out the model conversation and how the word *dog* has been used.
- Point out that the students can use the words listed in the book if they don't want to use a dictionary, or if they don't have a dictionary.
- Remind the students that the smartphone will already have features such as a camera and text messaging function.

- Ask the students to work in their groups to do the exercise. If they find it difficult to come up with ideas, help them by giving one or two suggestions. For example, choosing the word *holiday* might lead to: a function that tells you when you have been in the sun for too long; a function that allows you to send messages about your holiday to your blog; a function that automatically translates what you say into different languages.

C

- Explain that looking at a problem from the perspective of different types of people (e.g. a young person, an old person, someone who travels a lot) is a very effective way of generating ideas.
- Direct the students to the photos of the four people, and ask them to work in the same groups to brainstorm what each of them might want in a new smartphone.
- Ask the students to look at the language in the **How to say it** box. Encourage them to use this language in their discussion.
- Encourage the students to think of as many ideas as possible and to write them in a list.

D

- Ask the students to work in the same groups to answer the questions. Monitor while the students are working and make sure they are using English.

E

- Ask the students to stay in their groups and look at the list of features they wrote down in Ex. D. Tell them to choose the three features they think are the most useful, the most creative and the most innovative.

F

- Ask the students to choose one member of their group to report their ideas back to the rest of the class.
- Give sufficient time for each group to report back.
- Summarise the features on the board, e.g. *calculator, sports results service, mini-dictionary*. Ask the whole class to vote on the three features they think are the best.

REFLECT

- Ask the students to read the **Reflect** question.
- Give them some time to think about different situations in the domains of **Study and Learning** and **Self and Society** and where the skill of *Thinking creatively* would be useful.
- Elicit the following ideas: planning interesting and unusual social events or holidays, reorganising or decorating the home, making structural changes to a house, planning creative writing tasks, etc.

Lesson plan and Teacher's notes taken from Unit 11 of *Open Mind* Pre-intermediate and *openMind* 2nd edition Level 2. Click on the links below to download other sample units.

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