

Lesson Plan

Teacher		Institution	
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Level of learners	Number of learners	Assignment	Lesson length
Advanced	16	Idioms (School and Education)	60 minutes

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1. Aims of the lesson

Main aim

By the end of the lesson the Ss will have used idioms (“be the teacher’s pet”, “be of the old school”, “pass with flying colours”, “mind one’s p’s and q’s”, “make the grade”, “be as easy as one, two, three”, know something like the back of one’s hand”) to talk about their experience in the context of school and education.

Subsidiary aim(s)

To activate vocabulary concerning school subjects and school-related events (parent-teacher meetings).

Professional aim(s)

To maximise student talking time and to reduce teacher talking time.

2. Analysis of target language

→ **be the teacher’s pet** (idiom) /bi ðə 'ti:tʃə(r)z pet/ be a student that everyone thinks the teacher likes best

→ **be as easy as one, two, three** (idiom) /bi əz 'i:zi əz wʌn, tu:, θri:/ be extremely simple or intuitive

→ **be of the old school** (idiom) /bi əv ði: əʊld sku:l/ be traditional, having qualities that used to be more common in the past

→ **pass with flying colours** (idiom) /pɑ:s wið 'flaɪɪŋ 'kʌləz/ be extremely successful, to achieve something that is difficult

→ **make the grade** (idiom) /meɪk ðə greɪd/ succeed, reach the desired standard

→ **mind one’s p’s and q’s** (idiom) /maɪnd wʌnz pi:z ən kju:z/ make an effort to be especially polite in a particular situation

→ **know something like the back of one’s hand** (idiom) /nəʊ 'sʌmθɪŋ laɪk ðə bæk əv wʌnz hænd/ have very good and detailed knowledge of something

The words listed above appear in the interview I am using to introduce all the lexis connected to “school and education”. I will convey meaning through a matching exercise, which will allow Ss to discover the meaning for themselves. Then, I will check understanding by highlighting examples from the text and asking Ss CCQs. Form will be tackled once we establish that these are idioms i.e. expressions that cannot be understood as separate words, but must be learned as a whole. I will point to the form of the verbs and the pronouns “one” and “something”, which will need to change according to the context. Pronunciation will be tackled as I will focus on the link between words as well as on the weak forms of some words (“as”, “and”, “of”).

3. Potential problems and solutions with target language

Problem	Solution
1. Some Ss may use “mind one’s tongue” instead of “mind one’s p’s and q’s”.	1. I will explain that these are synonyms (along with “mind one’s language”) but for today’s lesson we are just going to focus on the p’s and q’s idiom.
2. Some Ss might think that “make the grade” means “barely graduating”.	2. I will tell them that this idiom means being successful, meeting the desired standard.
3. Some Ss might not pay attention to the possessive pronoun “one” (i.e. mind one’s p’s and q’s) and how its form needs to be changed according to the context.	3. I will remind Ss that “one” is just a possessive pronoun used to refer to a particular person.
4. Some Ss might not realise that they need to change the pronoun “something” with another word (i.e. another pronoun or a noun) in the restricted and freer practice stage(s) of the lesson.	4. I will elicit answers from Ss and, if necessary, explain that we need to change the word “something” with another in order to allow personalisation.
5. Some Ss might pronounce the definite determiner “the” the same way when it’s encountered before consonant sounds (/ðə/) and vowel sounds (/ði:/).	5. I will model and drill pronunciation chorally and individually.
6. Some Ss might not pronounce the possessive ‘s in “the teacher’s pet”.	6. I will use drilling and insist on the fact that the sound /z/ must be heard in both “the teacher’s pet” (and “mind one’s p’s and q’s”) to show possession.

4. Timetable fit

This lesson is connected to their previous one entitled “My English Learning History and Beyond”. If during our first encounter we compared two different types of English classrooms (traditional and modern) and we discussed likes and dislikes as well as easy and difficult aspects of learning English, during this diagnostic lesson we will focus on seven idioms connected to the same topic i.e. school and education. Because this is an English course and all adult students are looking to improve their grammar and vocabulary for both personal and work-related reasons (but they do not yet know each other very well), the topic is appropriate, as they can easily make connections between their past school experiences and this one. Moreover, they will benefit from this lesson as they will have the chance to take part in similar types of activities (but on different topics) in their future lessons.

5. Assumptions made

Language and skills

This being a lesson on idioms related to the topic of school and education, I assume the students will have some general knowledge about the topic. Some idioms (such as “be the teacher’s pet”) might even be familiar to them but I don’t think they have ever had the chance to use them in context. On the other hand, I assume that other idioms (“mind one’s p’s and q’s”, “pass with flying colours”, know something like the back of one’s hand”) are not part of their everyday vocabulary. Differently put, this is the purpose of the lesson: to integrate idioms into their vocabulary so that the students could use them outside the classroom.

Topics, materials and activities

I suspect all adult students will respond positively and actively to the topic of the lesson as most of them have families and children. Even as former high school students, one still remembers aspects connected to a parent-teacher meeting or to a parent-principal meeting, not to mention the events that you experience as parents nowadays. Although I’m sure that they will have no trouble in working individually for some exercises or for the first part of some exercises, I have no doubt that the most enjoyable parts for them will be connected to the freer practice stage of the lesson.

6. Procedure

Stage name & aim	Timing & Interaction	Procedure	Anticipated problems	Solutions
<p>Lead-in</p> <p>To engage the students in the context of the lesson</p>	<p>2-3 mins.</p> <p>T-Ss; Ss-T</p>	<p>The T greets the Ss and they greet back. She asks questions such as “How are you?”, “Are you looking forward to your last lesson today?”, etc. She then shares her screen, projects 2 photos and asks Ss if they remember what they talked about last week and what they think they’ll talk about in this lesson. Ss’ answers might vary. She then tells them that they are going to focus on vocabulary and speaking.</p>	<p>1. Some Ss might not remember the topic tackled last week.</p> <p>2. Other students might not be familiar with the topic as they were not present during the previous lesson.</p>	<p>1. I will elicit answers from their colleagues, and, if necessary I will give them hints.</p> <p>2. I will introduce them into the context of the lesson by nominating those who attended the lesson.</p>
<p>Reading</p> <p>To introduce the selected idioms in the context of the lesson</p>	<p>3-4 mins.</p> <p>T-Ss; Ss-T</p>	<p>The T tells Ss that they are going to read part of an interview about an elective course (exercise A). Ss will answer the question “How do Marisa’s colleagues feel about her joining the ‘Help others-Help yourself’ course?”. She will allow around 2 minutes and then she will elicit answers from Ss in the MR.</p>	<p>1. Some Ss might not be able to read the text as they are not using their PC/laptop.</p>	<p>1. I will prepare a print screen and send it to them in the chat so they could zoom in the text as much as they need to.</p>
<p>Highlighting and Clarification</p> <p>To clarify meaning, form and pronunciation of "be the teacher’s pet”, “mind one’s p’s and q’s”, "be as easy as</p>	<p>12-14 mins.</p> <p>T-Ss; Ss-Ss; Ss-T</p>	<p>The T asks Ss to look at exercise B (convey meaning), where they will have to match the columns in order to form idioms. She will tell them that there is one extra letter which they will not use. She will also use a demo for the first point i.e. “be the teacher’s”, explaining that it matches with “pet”. She will then give around 2 minutes for the Ss to do the same for the other six points. They will check their answers in the MR.</p>	<p>1. Some Ss might choose “know something by heart” instead of “know something like the back of one’s hand” for the matching exercise.</p> <p>2. When tackling form, some Ss</p>	<p>1. I will tell them that we use a different verb with “by heart” (i.e. “learn”), but remind them that this idiom is not part of our lesson.</p> <p>2. I will circle them, in this</p>

Stage name & aim	Timing & Interaction	Procedure	Anticipated problems	Solutions
one, two three", "be of the old school", "know something like the back of one's hand", "pass with flying colours", "make the grade"		<p>After that, the T asks Ss to look at exercise C, where she will project examples from the interview (one at a time) and ask CCQs to check meaning (see annex 1). Then, the T will draw the Ss' attention to the words in bold and she will highlight form. First, she will explain that idioms are expressions that cannot be understood as separate words, but must be learned as a whole. Then, she will draw the Ss' attention to the form of the verbs and pronouns in these idioms.</p> <p>Finally, the T will tackle pronunciation by insisting on the link between the words and the weak forms of "as", "and" and "of" in the selected idioms.</p>	<p>might have difficulty in identifying the pronouns.</p> <p>3. Some Ss might be confused about the phonemic transcription.</p>	<p>way raising awareness.</p> <p>3. I will make constant connections between the written and the spoken form of weak sounds.</p>
<p>Restricted Practice</p> <p>To practice accurate use of the selected idioms</p>	<p><i>7-9 mins.</i></p> <p>T-Ss; Ss-Ss; Ss-T</p>	<p>The T asks Ss to look at exercise D, where they will have to complete the sentences with the correct form of the words in the box. She will use a demo for the first point and then she will allow Ss around 3 minutes to work individually in the MR and, once they finish, they will check their answers in BRs. Back in the MR, the T will project all answers and will ask Ss to see if there are any differences. She will also elicit answers from Ss to clarify why their choices are (in)correct.</p>	<p>1. Some Ss might need more time for the individual part of the task.</p> <p>2. Some Ss might not be able to join BRs.</p>	<p>1. I will give clear time limits and, if necessary, I will extend the time-limit.</p> <p>2. When I set up the BRs I will identify the one(s) who are unable to join and ask them to work together in the MR or ask another S to work with them.</p>
<p>Freer practice</p>	<p><i>10-12 mins.</i></p>	<p>The T will focus on exercise E as she will ask Ss to imagine that their 'active' child has caused trouble at</p>	<p>1. Some Ss might not fully understand the task.</p>	<p>1. I will ask ICQs to check understanding.</p>

Stage name & aim	Timing & Interaction	Procedure	Anticipated problems	Solutions
To allow the students to integrate the selected idioms into their everyday language use	T-Ss; Ss-Ss; Ss-T	<p>school. The principal asks them to come to school. The Ss, as parents, will try to convince the principal that the child deserves another chance. Ss have to use as many idioms as they can.</p> <p>The T will send the Ss to BRs and for about 6 minutes, they will share their ideas in the chat. Back in the MR, the T will elicit answers from Ss.</p>	<p>2. Some Ss might need more time to accomplish the task.</p> <p>3. Some Ss might not be able to join BRs.</p>	<p>2. I will set the BRs to 7 minutes, instead of 6.</p> <p>3. When I set up the BRs I will identify the one(s) who are unable to join and ask them to work together in the MR or ask another S to work with them.</p>
<p>Flexi stage – freer practice</p> <p>To personalize the TL</p>	<p><i>10-12 mins.</i></p> <p>T-Ss; Ss-Ss; Ss-T</p>	<p>If there is time left, the T will ask Ss to prepare an intervention for their ‘active’ child. This time, the Ss will prepare a speech for their child as they will try to make him/her realise that a change in behaviour is needed. Again, Ss have to use as many idioms as they can.</p> <p>The T will send the Ss to BRs and for about 5 minutes, they will share their ideas in the Zoom chat.</p> <p>Back in the MR, the T will elicit answers from Ss.</p>	<p>1. Some Ss might not fully understand the task.</p> <p>2. Some Ss might need more time to accomplish the task.</p> <p>3. Some Ss might not be able to join BRs.</p>	<p>1. I will ask ICQs to check understanding.</p> <p>2. I will set the BRs to 6 minutes, instead of 5.</p> <p>3. When I set up the BRs I will identify the one(s) who are unable to join and ask them to work together in the MR or ask another S to work with them.</p>

Stage name & aim	Timing & Interaction	Procedure	Anticipated problems	Solutions
Delayed correction To help the Ss learn from their mistakes and to encourage them to use correct language	4-5 mins. T-Ss; Ss-Ss; Ss-T	While monitoring the BRs, the T collects a few examples of impressive and faulty language and writes them in a Word document. She will share her screen and she will praise correct and/or impressive use of language. She will also ask Ss to correct some sentences/phrases, if need be. The T congratulates the Ss and thanks them for their participation in the course.	1. Some Ss might not identify the mistakes in the selected examples. 2. Some Ss might correct the sentences/phrases which do not need to be changed.	1. I will elicit answers from their colleagues. 2. I will raise awareness and elicit answers from Ss.

7. List of lesson materials

PPT – created by Iuliana

Photos taken from *Google Images* (Photo 1 - <https://www.expresscomputer.in/guest-blogs/has-covid-19-transformed-the-traditional-classroom-learning-pattern-in-india/54353/> ; Photo 2 – <https://www.edsurge.com/news/2017-09-11-to-prepare-kids-for-their-futures-incorporate-technology-into-core-curriculum> ; Photo 3 - <https://educationnorthwest.org/resources/resources-building-teacher-student-relationships>).

The interview (exercises A+C) – created by Iuliana

Matching exercise (exercise B) – adapted from Evans, Virginia, et al. “Live and Learn (Language Focus).” *Upstream*, Express Publishing, Newbury, 2018, pp. 170.

Restricted practice exercise (exercise D) – adapted from Evans, Virginia, et al. “Live and Learn (Language Focus).” *Upstream*, Express Publishing, Newbury, 2018, pp. 170.

Freer practice exercise (exercise E) – created by Iuliana

Flexi stage exercise (exercise F) – created by Iuliana

Idioms (School and Education)

Iuliana Dode



Today:

Vocabulary ✓
Speaking ✓

A: Read part of an interview about a course implemented at San Francisco City College and answer the question:



How do Marisa's colleagues feel about her joining the 'Help yourself-Help others' course?

We are here with David, a dedicated teacher and next to him, there's Marisa, a student of San Francisco City College, who used to have trouble in understanding Chemistry. David offered to help her as he knows the subject like the back of his hand and doesn't take no for an answer. Marisa still believes that she won't make the grade, but David is convinced that she'll pass with flying colours. He is of the old school and has a firm belief that every school subject can be as easy as one, two, three as long as you work diligently and practice daily. That's precisely why David has implemented the 'Help others-Help yourself' elective course this semester, which has as aim overcoming difficulty with different school subjects. Marisa, were your school friends supportive about you joining this course?

"Well, some of my colleagues have noticed that I had difficulty in understanding Chemistry properly and they used to taunt me. Even now, after beginning to understand it, I learned to enjoy the subject, not to mention that Mr. D. is an amazing teacher, they're sometimes saying that I am the teacher's pet. Of course, that's not true, but I know better and they know it. I try to mind my p's and q's around them because I'm aware that they're only joking. But most of my friends were really supportive. They encouraged me in every possible way".

B: Match the two columns. There is one extra letter which you do not need to use.

Work individually for about 2 minutes.

- | | | |
|---------------------|---|--------------------------------|
| 1. be the teacher's | → | a) p's and q's |
| 2. be of the | → | b) one, two, three |
| 3. pass with | → | c) the grade |
| 4. mind one's | → | d) pet |
| 5. make | → | e) by heart |
| 6. be as easy as | → | f) like the back of one's hand |
| 7. know something | → | g) old school |
| | → | h) flying colours |

C: Look at these examples from the interview.

- Marisa's colleagues are saying that she is **the teacher's pet**.
- Every school subject can be **as easy as one, two, three**.
- David is **of the old school**.
- Marisa tries to **mind her p's and q's** around her colleagues.
- David knows the subject **like the back of his hand**.
- David is convinced that she'll **pass with flying colours**.
- Marisa believes that she won't **make the grade**.



Idioms = expressions that must be learned as a whole 😊

- be the teacher's pet
- be as easy as one, two, three
- be of the old school
- pass with flying colours
- make the grade
- mind one's p's and q's
- know something like the back of one's hand

Let's pronounce these idioms:



as easy as one, two, three / əz 'i:zi əz /



be of the old school / bi əv /



mind my p's and q's / pi:z ən kju:z /



the back of one's hand / bæk əv /



D: Use the idioms, in their correct form, to complete the sentences.

be the teacher's pet, be as easy as one, two, three, be of the old school, mind one's p's and q's
know something like the back of one's hand, pass with flying colours, make the grade

Work individually for about 3 minutes.

Check your answers with your partner.
You have 2 minutes.



1. The children jeered their classmate in the school yard, with the cruel chant of "Suzy is the teacher's pet....."
2. Now Dean, if you're coming to see your sister in the school play you're to be quiet and mind your p's and q's.....
3. Don't mind your father. He is of the old school..... and believes that some jobs are just not meant to be done by a man.
4. Everybody here is fine and Steve has just finished his finals which he passed with flying colours.....
5. If you don't study harder there is no way that you will make the grade.....
6. I've been studying this list of historical dates for hours and I know them like the back of my hand..
7. There's nothing to geometry, it is as easy as one, two, three.....

E: Imagine the following situation:



Your 'active' child has caused trouble at school this week. The principal kindly asks you to come to school and have **a polite discussion**.

While you're waiting to be invited in the principal's office, make a **list** to convince him/her that your child deserves **a second chance**.

Use as many idioms as you can 😊

Work in **pairs** and **write** your ideas in **the chat** 😊



You have 6 minutes.



Extra!

F: You leave the principal's office
and you ***go home***:



Prepare an ***intervention*** for your 'active' child.

Try to convince your child to ***change*** his/her ***behaviour***.

What do you have to say to him/her?

Use as many idioms as you can 😊



Work in **pairs**.

You have around 5 minutes.

