



LESSON
PLANNING
GUIDE

 THE
TEFL
INSTITUTE



A GOOD TEACHER CAN
INSPIRE HOPE, IGNITE THE
IMAGINATION, AND INSTILL
A LOVE OF LEARNING.

BRAD HENRY

IN THIS GUIDE, WE WILL CONSIDER WHAT IS INVOLVED IN PLANNING AND PREPARING A SUCCESSFUL EFL LESSON. THIS GUIDE WILL BE ESPECIALLY USEFUL FOR NEWER TEACHERS BUT ALSO FOR MORE EXPERIENCED TEACHERS WHO WANT TO PLAN MORE EFFECTIVELY.

While many experienced teachers often write only a minimally structured lesson plan as they have developed a set routine for how they approach each lesson, it is recommended that newer teachers develop the habit of writing and following a detailed lesson plan for at least the first 6 months to a year. This requires discipline but will help you develop your teaching skills over time.

In addition to lesson planning, it is also useful to reflect on your lessons after each class, making notes on what went well and what could have been better. Even the most experienced teachers think about problems that occurred during class and how they might best be corrected.

Though lesson planning is time-consuming, it is a good idea to save every lesson plan you write.

These plans can then be recycled when teaching similar topics or learner levels.

We will look at different aspects of a lesson plan in detail, including lesson aims, context, target language, class profile, assumptions, anticipated problems and solutions, materials and board work.

We will also look at how to stage a lesson considering stage aims, timing, procedures and interaction patterns.

We will look at different lesson plan models and the advantages of using these for different types of lessons. We will look at longer-term planning using a syllabus or timetable to help structure a series of lessons.

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LESSON PLANNING

WHAT IS LESSON PLANNING?

If you are new to teaching, preparing and planning a formal lesson plan can sound very daunting. Newer teachers often find it takes time to plan lessons at the beginning of their careers and this can be initially frustrating.

Effective teachers go on planning and preparing their lessons throughout their careers, even if their plans are very informal and planning time is reduced.

For students, evidence of a plan shows that the teacher has devoted time to thinking about the class, showing a level of professionalism and commitment to their students' learning. Lack of planning reveals the opposite.

We can define lesson planning as follows:

- Lesson planning is essentially a thinking skill, training teachers to imagine their lessons before they happen. You can never predict everything that will happen in a lesson and how students will respond but, by planning effectively, you will be better able to cope with whatever happens in the lesson.

- A lesson plan should not be a rigid route map of what must happen in the lesson but a guide to achieving the lesson aims, giving the lesson a framework or overall shape. Effective teachers think ahead, having a destination in mind they want their students to reach and knowing how to get there.
- Producing a formal written lesson plan before a lesson trains teachers in 'planning thinking'. It is a useful tool for teachers to analyse what they are going to teach, how they are going to teach it, which materials or techniques they will use and how they can cater for their students needs and learning styles.
- Although it is useful to consider different stages of a lesson and think about timing, lesson stages should be more than a series of timed activities. There should be a clear link between stages and to the main aims and objectives of the lesson.
- Though experienced teachers may take less time to plan and be more able to think on their

feet in class, lesson planning is essential for all teachers, new or experienced.

- Teachers should have their lesson aims clearly in mind before they approach the planning stage. In student-centred lessons, the aims should reflect what the students will be able to do by the end of the lesson. When planning it is a good idea to start planning the last stage of the lesson first and then work backwards to make sure aims are achieved.
- A lesson plan is a flexible, working document, designed to teach your students and adapted to their needs. When lesson planning, think about the students you are going to teach. Make sure some activities can be extended and personalised and have some extra activities 'up your sleeve' that can be dropped in if necessary. Over-planned lessons can become extremely rigid and dull as often too much attention has been spent on the plan.