

Unit 19 Identifying the different components of a lesson plan

■ How do we identify the different components of a lesson plan?

Choose the comparison that you think best describes a lesson plan.

A lesson plan is like ... an instruction leaflet a photograph a story a road map
a computer programme a series of road signs a written summary something else?

A lesson plan is a set of notes that helps us to think through what we are going to teach and how we are going to teach it. It also guides us during and after the lesson. We can identify the most important components of a lesson plan by thinking carefully about *what* we want our learners to do and *how* we want them to do it.

The main components of a lesson plan show us what the lesson is for (the **aims**) and what the teacher and the learners will do during the lesson and how they will do it (the **procedures**). Other components help us to think about possible problems and remind us of things we need to remember about the learners. So a lesson plan is most like a road map or a series of road signs, i.e. something that shows us where we are going and how we are going to get there – although we may sometimes find that during the journey we have to take a different route!

Here are some ways a lesson plan helps the teacher.

<i>Before the lesson</i>	Writing down the aims and the procedures for each stage of the lesson helps us to make sure that we have planned the best possible sequence to enable us to achieve those aims .
<i>During the lesson</i>	The plan can also help the teacher to check timing – the amount of time we plan for each stage – and to check that the lesson is following the sequence we decided on.
<i>After the lesson</i>	We can keep the plan as a record of what happened, making any changes necessary to show how the lesson was different from the plan. We can then use the plan and notes to help plan the next lesson. (At this stage, the plan may be more like a photograph, a story or a summary, giving us a record of the lesson.)

Module 2

■ Key concepts

A lesson plan can include the following headings. Which ones do you think should always appear? Which ones may only appear sometimes?

<i>Lesson plan headings</i>	
Level and number of learners	who we are planning the lesson for
Timetable fit	how the lesson is connected to the last lesson and/or the next one
Main aim(s)	what we want learners to learn or to be able to do by the end of the lesson
Subsidiary aims	other things we want learners to be able to do during the lesson because they lead to the main aim
Personal aims	aspects of our own teaching we want to develop or improve
Assumptions	what we think learners already know or can already do related to the aims
Anticipated language problems	things that learners may find difficult
Possible solutions	action we will take to deal with the anticipated problems
Teaching aids , materials, equipment	useful reminders of things to take to the lesson
Procedures	tasks and activities for each stage
Timing	length of time needed for each stage
Interaction patterns	ways in which learners work at different stages, i.e. individually, in pairs, in groups, as a whole class
Homework	

It is usually a good idea to anticipate possible problems and solutions, but in a revision lesson we may not need these headings. Also, we may not have personal aims for every lesson, and we may not always give learners homework!

■ Key concepts and the language teaching classroom

Look carefully at this example of part of a lesson plan which aims to introduce and practise language for giving advice. Then read the points below.

<i>Timing</i>	<i>Procedure</i>	<i>Subsidiary aims</i>	<i>Aids and materials</i>	<i>Interaction pattern</i>
5 minutes	Ask students who they ask for advice if they have a problem.	Warmer/lead-in: to get students talking and introduce the topic	–	Pairwork
10 minutes	Discuss typical problems for young people; elicit language to ask for and give advice.	To create context To revise modal auxiliary verbs To elicit/introduce vocabulary	Magazine pictures Whiteboard	Teacher → whole class
5 minutes	Show headlines for students to guess the content of letters to the advice page in a teen magazine.	To get students ready for reading To predict content To use students' own knowledge	OHP	Teacher → whole class
15 minutes	Students read different mini-texts, then summarise the content of the letters.	To check predictions Intensive reading To introduce the structure 'If I were you, I'd...'	Photocopies of six problem page letters	1st group work ↓ 2nd group work (new groups)

- When we make a lesson plan, we need to ask ourselves how the procedures we have planned will help to achieve our aims and to make sure there are strong connections between the different stages.
- We also need to consider **variety**, i.e. how we can use different activity types, language **skills** and interaction patterns. Learners of all ages need different activities in a lesson, but this is especially important for younger learners.
- During the lesson we should teach the learners, not the lesson plan! We must be prepared, if necessary, to change our plan while we are teaching. If we have a clear plan, we will be more aware of what we are changing and why. We can include some different possibilities in a lesson plan, e.g. an extra activity to use if learners take less time than expected to complete a **task**, and this can help if we are not sure how well parts of the plan will work.

See Unit 18 for identifying and selecting aims and Unit 20 for planning an individual lesson or a sequence of lessons.

Module 2

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITY (See page 173 for answers)

Some of the teacher's notes for this lesson plan are missing. Put the notes A–E in the correct places in the plan.

<i>Lesson plan headings</i>	<i>Teacher's notes</i>
Timetable fit	1
Main aim(s)	2
Subsidiary aim(s)	3 To listen for detail to a model story
Personal aim(s)	4
Assumptions	5 Students can already form tenses accurately
Anticipated language problems	6 Students may use present tenses
Possible solution	7
Procedures	8

- A To enable students to use past tenses accurately and put events in order in simple narratives
- B Students listen to the model story, then in groups, plan and write their own stories
- C Use gestures to remind students to use past tenses
- D To follow on from work on past tenses and to prepare for the storytelling project
- E To make sure that board writing is clear and readable

REFLECTION

Think about these comments from teachers. Which do you agree with and why?

- 1 Written lesson plans are helpful when you first start teaching, but experienced teachers don't need them. I plan all my lessons in my head.
- 2 Lesson plans don't help me teach because I always try to respond to learners' needs during the lesson.
- 3 Writing a lesson plan is the important thing. I always have a written plan, but often I don't look at it while I'm teaching.