

## THE LANGUAGE TEACHING UNIT

The following teaching unit belongs to a wider “programmazione” planned by the “Collegio Docenti” and the “Consiglio di Classe” which have considered all the variables implied in the educational teaching process; therefore it takes into account not only the SS’ acquired knowledge (prerequisites) but also the social, economical and cultural background of the SS within the area where the school is situated.

The classroom is in a country area, where people usually express themselves in dialect which creates interference with the use of L1. The present unit is addressed to SS of the **1<sup>st</sup>/2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> year of “Scuola Media”**. The class consists of 20 SS, boys and girls, who show **interest and curiosity for the new subject/ whose interest is fairly good/ whose interest is quite satisfying**.

Since the “Programmi Ministeriali” state that “the principal objective of foreign language teaching is the pupils’ awareness of the importance of a foreign language as a means of communication .....”, the T follows an approach which allows SS to use the language for meaningful and communicative aims.

**ADDRESSEE: class and possible term:1<sup>st</sup> year “ scuola media”, 2<sup>nd</sup> term/ 1<sup>st</sup> class high secondary school**

**TITLE: title of 1<sup>st</sup> dialogue/text**

**DOMAIN: personal/public/educational/occupational**

**THEME: past experiences, free activities, hobbies, interviews, school subjects, jobs, family, routines, new acquaintances, shopping, weather, etc.**

**PREREQUISITES: SS can use Structures, Functions and Vocabulary necessary to start the new teaching unit (simple present, personal pronouns:subject/object, likes and dislikes, adjectives: possessive..., some time and space markers (today, here) and some linkers (and,but, because.....), vocabulary referring to ..... (food , drinks.....), some cultural aspects of everyday life in Great Britain (working hours, week-ends, food and drinks, housing,.....)**

**COMPETENCES: SS can talk about plans/about daily routine/future plans/holidays  
SS can make suggestions/invitations/ SS can ask and talk about availability**

**DESCRIPTORS: SS can understand a timetable/short simple texts**

SS can understand **time and distances**

SS can get factual information from **a brochure**

SS can interact in an **informal/formal** conversation about **plans, intentions, arrangements /likes and dislikes**

SS can understand/write a **(simple) letter of invitation/simple personal letters**

The descriptors test the specific competence on the topic and show the ability level acquired in the language skills T wants to check. **ALL THE DESCRIPTORS MUST BE VERIFIED IN THE TESTING PHASE.**

**TEXTS: dialogues, letters, a page of a diary, passages taken from a book or a magazine, an interview, a postcard, a song, phone calls, radio announcements (on weather forecast,.....), a ticket, recipes, a programme on cooking recorded on BBC, etc.**

**AIDS AND MATERIALS: text -books, cassettes (native speakers), cassette recorder, blackboard, pictures, handouts, realia, videos, language laboratory/multi-media laboratory, photos, maps,.....**

**VOCABULARY: new vocabulary to be learnt (verbs connected with cooking, new words referring to food and drinks, time expressions, means of transport,.....)**

**LANGUAGE EXPONENTS: new grammar structures such as simple past, “What +to be+Noun+like”, interrogative adjectives, negative and interrogative forms, numbers, “some/any”, prepositions, idioms....**

**ESTIMATED TIME: 10/12 hours**

**STRATEGIES FOR CORRECTION:** -mistakes in oral interaction are corrected at the end of the exchanges if they do not compromise comprehension and, of course, communication. If they do, the T's intervention occurs during interaction.

- As far as written production is concerned, the T can correct all the mistakes, or guide SS to self correction by means of a series of fixed symbols: for example, S = incorrect spelling, T = wrong tense. For example: I have arrived yesterday. **T**
- Even if this strategy requires more time, it enables the teacher to exploit SS's mistakes to obtain deeper acquisition. Whenever the T finds general difficulties, he/she provides a remedial task for the class. In some cases the T can suggest individual alternative procedures to help low ability SS to reach the same objectives.

## **DEVELOPMENT**

### **Phases**

**WARMING UP:** SS are supposed to make hypotheses, inferences and predictions.

SS are invited to look at the pictures, to answer a few questions (**Who are the people in the pictures? Where are they? What are they doing? WH-questions**) in order to make hypotheses. Then the T draws the SS' attention to **the title** and elicits all their previous knowledge from the students concerning **food and drinks, British cakes and parties**.

These activities are meant to give students the opportunity to link the new information with previous knowledge of the world and of the language as well as to give the teacher the opportunity to check the students' prerequisites and to build up their motivation by eliciting their own interests and personal experiences. In this way the SS are involved in the learning process.

**Other activities: brainstorming on the topic: SS write sentences/words (what they know/what they need to know), key-words which can be introduced by means of visual aids and realia:**

**T: Look at the picture. It's a/an ..... SS look, listen and identify what the T shows them; flow charts.**

**INPUT:** SS are supposed to pay attention, concentrate, infer, select information and verify hypotheses.

The dialogue the T is going to play is realistic because it deals with people and subjects of everyday life. This allows SS to feel acquainted with the situation which arouses curiosity and interest then. The dialogue will be played a few times.

Before playing the tape, T gives a simple task (**pre-listening**) to be carried out during the first listening with the following aims:

- a- to focus the SS' attention on the oral message
- b- to facilitate general comprehension
- c- to encourage them, the fact they are able to grasp the elements requested by the T, gratifies them and helps them to go on.

The activity suggested is simple to carry out and quick to correct, T writes on the blackboard the following grid/chart:

	<b>true</b>	<b>false</b>
<b>Bob is speaking</b> <b>Bob is at home</b> <b>He is watching TV</b>		

SS copy the grid from the blackboard

**1<sup>st</sup> listening:** T plays the tape once and SS listen without script to the dialogue which is recorded on a cassette and spoken by native speakers. SS listen to the dialogue and put a tick in the correct box. Then SS check in pairs and afterwards the T or a S ticks the grid/chart on the blackboard.

**Other activities: yes/no questions**

**2<sup>nd</sup> listening** (without script) SS are supposed to answer WH- questions such as: **Where is Bob? What is he doing? Who is he talking to? .....**

**Other activities: grids(tick specific words mentioned in the dialogue, multiple choice , ordering sequences,.....**

**3<sup>rd</sup> listening** (without script) followed by a choral repetition. The teacher invites SS to listen again without script to avoid interference due to the non-correspondence between written words and pronunciation; in order to train pronunciation, stress patterns and intonation, T requires them to repeat each exchange (with pauses) **in chorus, then in rows, and , at the end , individually.**

**4<sup>th</sup> listening** (with script) SS open the book and follow the script while listening so that they can associate sounds to words to realize the difference between spelling and pronunciation. Then SS can practise reading aloud from the text. T divides SS in small groups and asks them to practice the dialogue on their own. While SS practise in pairs , T goes around and checks the performances of as many pairs as possible getting immediate feedback on each S's effort and helping to correct mistakes of intonation and pronunciation.

Finally, SS act out the dialogue and play the different roles in order to get into the situation and to repeat the new structures.

**HOMEWORK**

**Other possible activities: retelling the story, cloze texts, gap filling exercises, chunk tests (for example, jigsaw)**

**Other strategies: selective attention, hypotheses making, grouping information, ordering, inference-deduction, identifying relations between information, taking notes/ key-words, monitoring comprehension**

**This phase could be carried out in the linguistic laboratory.**

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or

**1<sup>st</sup> reading:** skimming (ex. choosing a title) and extensive (gist); finding out the topic/global meaning, the aim of the text, the characters, ordering sequences

**2<sup>nd</sup> reading:** intensive/scanning or instrumental (grids, questions, multiple choice, true/false)

As for strategies and activities see above.

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**ANALYSIS:** skill-getting step. SS are supposed to activate strategies such as: deduction-induction, grouping information (spidergram), recognizing patterns, identifying goals and functions, finding out how the language works.

SS acquire new structures by discovering grammar rules. They are requested to underline all the expressions used in the **text/dialogue to make suggestions**. After that they are supposed to circle **the replies expressing agreement or disagreement** so that they fill in the following chart:

SUGGESTIONS	AGREEMENT	DISAGREEMENT
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....

SS are asked to highlight **“some”** and **“any”** in the text with a different colour and to complete the following sentences taken from the text:

- 1- There’s ..... bread and cheese.**
- 2- Is there ..... sugar?**

Then they are supposed to complete the following rules:

..... **is used in affirmative sentences**

..... **is used in negative and interrogative sentences**

**NOTE**

**\*\*Some is also used in requests and offers in the interrogative for, for example, “Can I have some coffee?” “Do you want some coke?”**

As far as the vocabulary is concerned SS are supposed to fill in **the chart/ spidergram with all the words related to food and drinks:**

FOOD	DRINKS

**Or a spidergram**

**FOOD DRINKS**

In this phase SS are led to reflect on functions, grammatical structures and vocabulary presented so far. The procedure chosen is the guided inductive method, that is: SS discover the rule through discussion of examples with their teacher and with their classmates.

T guides SS to formulate hypotheses which govern language correcting and integrating if necessary. This is not a teacher's explanation but a SS's discovery supervised by the T. The pedagogical principles motivating this approach are the following: a- SS realize they are contributing actively, b-They are stimulated to think and to reach some conclusions, c- learning by personal efforts and discovery lasts longer, d- teacher/ class interaction is favoured.

SS generalize, formulate conclusions guided by the teacher. This procedure is suggested by the "Programmi Ministeriali": "Grammatical generalizations.....should be derived from actual use of the language in context and not from grammatical abstractions or rules".

**Other strategies: associating, analysing expressions (contrastively), translating, semantic mapping**

**Other activities: matching new words with their meanings, grids, charts, spidergrams.**

**In this phase you could have a cultural analysis:** different models (**breakfast, pubs, .....**): cultural references are important since the language is a reflection of the socio-cultural context. This activity is motivating because it arouses SS' curiosity. T carries out this phase by means of realia (**slides, brochures, tickets.....**)

**PRACTICE:** First of all, it is worth stressing that analysis and practice can be recursive phases. Analysed structures must be practised. Skill-using step.

SS practise structures formally, review, repeat, substitute, transform, identify goals and relation.

In this phase you can have: **repetition (to practice stress, rhythm and intonation patterns), substitution (new lexis with a known structure) and transformation (to manipulate language forms: negative, interrogative....) drills, re-employment exercises and gap filling exercises.**

In this stage the functions, structures and vocabulary presented in the dialogue are fixed through activities and exercises which give SS the opportunity to practise and manipulate the presented items for themselves in guided activities within a context. In this way SS realize that what they are learning is of practical use and not mere knowledge to be stored away.

**A-Look at the pictures and make suggestions by using "shall we" as in the example:**

Picture(cinema)

picture(play cards)

picture(play tennis)

Example:

Shall we ..go to the cinema?...

Shall we.....

Shall we.....

B- Work in pairs and agree / disagree on the previous suggestions

Example: Shall we go to the cinema? .....That's a good idea/ Sorry, I can't . I'm tired

.....  
.....

C- Look at exercise A and make suggestions by using "why don't we" instead of "shall we" as in the example:

Shall we go to the cinema? .....Why don't we go to the cinema?.....

.....  
.....

D- Insert " some " or "any" in the following sentences:

- 1- She has got ..... books in her bag
- 2- Are there.....apples in the cupboard?
- 3- There aren't ..... bananas
- 4- .....

E- Work in pairs and circle the odd word out:

Banana	apple	bread	orange
Carrot	potato	onion	milk
Coke	lemonade	water	sandwich

.....

This exercise is meant to broaden SS' knowledge of words connected with food and drinks

F- Fill in the gaps by using one of the words in exercise E.

- 1- There are some ..... (picture: apples)
- 2- There isn't any ..... (picture: milk) in the fridge
- 3- There aren't any ..... (picture: carrots) in the kitchen

.....

G- Re-order the following words and make sentences:

- 1- we why to cinema don't go the?
- 2- are books there the on table any?
- 3- play shall have we tennis?
- 4- .....

Other strategies: ask for repetition, clarification and elaborating new material to acquire

Other activities:multiple choice, sequences, matching , grid, re-writing, listening....

These activities could be carried out in the multimedia laboratory.

**DIAGNOSTIC TEST:** Similar oral and written exercises are proposed in order to check SS' acquisition of the new structures and vocabulary. It also becomes a sort of self-evaluation for them. T will reinforce SS' abilities by proposing new exercises especially in the areas where SS have found more difficulties. This is performed in class and if necessary T will give SS homework to practise further more. Of course, this test is not evaluated.

**As far as strategies and activities are concerned see the previous phase: practice.**

**EXPANSION:** activity sequence: texts related to the topic of the teaching unit in different situations are introduced. T can propose **a listening comprehension, a reading comprehension, a writing activity , an interaction.**

Examples of new material can be: **similar but different texts, a song, a game, a recipe, a radio announcement, a video, .....**

As far as strategies are concerned they are the same used in the other phases according to the activities performed; moreover SS are supposed to organize, to set goals, to plan, to self-evaluate, to take risks, to ask for clarification and help.

As far as activities are concerned T can use the same used in the other phases proposing freer and freer activities to get SS more involved in the situation. Some activities could be: **note taking, discussion, summary, from the text given to a different kind of text, group work, problem solving, survey, letter writing, translation, role play, producing articles, E-mail.....**

In this case **a recipe taken from an authentic English recipe book** is introduced. First SS are to carry out a task (**pre-reading activity**) to motivate them: T asks: **“Do you like cakes?” .....**

Then SS are invited to get the gist first and then to get detailed information . After that they should use reading techniques such as skimming/scanning and **fill in a grid , to do a multiple choice exercise and to answer a few questions.**

**Grid**

<b>INGREDIENTS</b>	
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

**Multiple choice: circle the right answer**

- 1- What is the main ingredient? A- flour B- eggs C- butter D- oil
- 2- When do you have to add water? A- at the beginning B- in the middle C- never
- 3- .....

**Answer the following questions:**

- 1- How many phases are there? .....
- 2- When can you serve this cake? .....
- 3- .....

Then a recorded **BBC programme on cooking** is proposed to SS in the **language laboratory**.

They are invited to make hypotheses, to concentrate on details, to compare different settings.

SS are supposed to watch the video without sound for a few seconds and to make predictions about what they are listening to. For example: **“What recipes are they going to present?”** (pre-listening).....

Then they will watch and listen at the same time in order to verify their hypotheses. They should complete a **flow chart about a recipe**.

.....( about actions, ingredients,.....)

FIRST	IN THE MIDDLE	THEN
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	.....
.....	.....	
	.....	

After that they will watch and listen again in order to **complete some sentences**:

- 1- **Before starting you have to**.....
- 2- **This is a** .....**cake**
- 3- .....

**Groupwork.** After this activity SS are invited to work in group at home, to find a recipe and propose it in a role play in class. In this way cooperative learning is favoured.

**TESTING:**(see descriptors) **Testing must match with descriptors.**

DESCRIPTORS: SS can understand and interact an informal conversation about the organization of a party; SS can get factual information from a recipe;SS can talk about availability by using “some” and “any” correctly; SS can understand and write a short recipe.

The last phase of the teaching unit requires some activities for testing, to check, on the one hand, if SS have achieved the planned objectives and, on the other hand, if the T’s methodological techniques and procedures have been effective or are to be modified.

This final testing takes place at the end of a learning process during which SS have already had the opportunity to try out their ability to use the language (by means of roleplays, pair work, etc.....) and the T has received feedback about the quantity and quality of SS' acquisition.

In preparing the tests, T takes the following criteria into account: relevance, acceptability, comparability, economy and reliability.

In this case testing has been divided into two parts: the first part referring to oral skills and the second referring to written ones: they will be carried out in different moments.

**FIRST PART**

1. **Listening comprehension: a dialogue between friends similar to the first text introduced in this unit.**

SS have to fill in a grid

PEOPLE INVITED	FOOD FOR THE PARTY	DRINKS FOR THE PARTY
<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>	<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>	<p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>

- 2-**Oral testing. Roleplay. Act out the following situation: you and your friend are going to organize a party.(similar to the text introduced in this unity)**

**SECOND PART**

- 1- **Reading comprehension: a short recipe. SS have to do a multiple choice exercise focusing on details.**
- 2- **Complete the following sentences by using “some” or “any”:**
  - 1- Have you got ..... pens? Yes, I have .....
  - 2- Tom hasn't got..... sugar
  - 3- We have got ..... friends in Australia.
  - 4- .....
- 3- **Writing: Look at the pictures. Find the list of ingredients necessary and complete the chart. Then write the instructions for the recipe.**

<b>CHOCOLATE CAKE</b>
<b>Ingredients:</b> 1. 2. 3.

<b>Picture</b>	<b>picture</b>	<b>picture</b>
.....	.....	.....
<b>picture</b>	<b>picture</b>	<b>picture</b>
.....	.....	.....

**EVALUATION** criteria: tests are considered average if they get 60% right answers. T should have a grid with different elements that he/ she is going to take into account in order to have an objective evaluation.

**Listening:** SS recognize details, identify the most relevant information, infer information, opinions and attitudes.

**Reading:** Ss recognize words and phrases, obtain specific information, distinguish the main ideas, get the meaning and the implications of grammar structures, recognize relations of one word to another within a sentence

**Writing:** grammar accuracy, SS organize the text according to the requested aim, select functions and notions, produce a certain number of messages, use the lexical items learnt appropriately.

**Oral testing:** length and complexity of the sentences produced, grammar accuracy, appropriateness and fluency, personal skill in using language autonomously.

**REMEDIAL WORK:** after the collective correction of the test exercises similar to the ones in the practice and testing phases will be proposed if necessary.

At this time T has located the areas of difficulty and the SS who need remedial work and so he/she will organize alternative strategies and further activities to obtain the objectives not yet achieved.

For these activities a multimedia laboratory would be useful because it allows SS to work individually according to their needs and learning pace. At the same time those who do not need remedial work could do extra work to deepen their knowledge

**Note:** The language teaching process is meant to be carried out from receptive to productive skills and from simple/guided to freer/ more difficult exercises.