

A birthday party – lesson plan

A birthday party**Topic:** Celebrations**Level:** E2 / Access 3 / A2**Time:** 90 minutes**Aims**

- To develop learners' ability to listen for gist and grammatical detail
- To give practice at identifying and using irregular past tense verbs
- To give practice at discussing a topic

Introduction

This lesson is based on a video about a child attending a birthday party in the UK. It provides learners with a chance to listen for information and then use their own knowledge and experience to take part in a discussion. This lesson is suitable for learners who have already been introduced to the past tense.

Self-access resource - <http://esol.britishcouncil.org/content/learners/skills/speaking/birthday-party>

Tip – If possible, bring in some examples of suitable birthday cards, birthday candles etc.

Before the lesson:

- print out one copy of **Resource A** (6 items of birthday vocabulary and corresponding images). These flashcards will be used for a mingle activity at the start of the class. There are a total of 12 flashcards with this lesson, related to the subsequent listening activity, but you could add more relevant items if you have more than 12 learners in the class.
- print out and cut up **Resource B** (discussion prompt cards), one set per group (3 - 4 learners)
- print out and cut up **Resource C** (sentences to order), one set of strips per pair
- **Resource D** is differentiated. Print one copy per learner of either **D1** - learners produce past form independently OR **D2** - past forms are included for learners to match with the infinitive OR **D3** - as D2, but shortened text.

Procedure**Warmer (10 mins)**

- Give learners one flashcard each (**Resource A**) and tell them to find the learner who has the corresponding word/picture card. This activity can be organised in several ways: learners can be given a flashcard at random, or tutor-nominated to differentiate for learners with stronger/weaker literacy.
- Ask learners to go back to their seats and conduct brief content-based feedback, then elicit the topic of the lesson - a birthday party. Encourage any learners who may contribute relevant vocabulary/knowledge at this point, but keep the feedback focussed.

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Task 1 – Discussion - birthday celebrations (15 mins)

- Tell learners they will work in small groups to talk about how people celebrate birthdays (check this word is understood).
- Say that one learner should pick a card and read it to their group, then the whole group should discuss. Remind learners that there are no right or wrong answers, and they should listen as well as speak.
- Put learners into small groups, give out **Resource B** and monitor the discussions, noting down common errors.
- Conduct brief feedback, asking groups to share what they talked about as well as correcting any errors noted.

Task 2 – Listening: ordering events (20 mins)

- Tell learners they will watch a video showing what children do at a birthday party in the UK. Learners should just watch and listen during the first viewing.
- Play the video without pauses, then ask volunteers to give brief feedback on what they've seen, to check general understanding. Ask for the name of the boy whose party it is. *Answer: George*
- Next, put learners in pairs, give out **Resource C** and tell learners that they will watch the video again and put the events in the correct order. It may help to read aloud two of the sentences from Resource C and elicit which event happened first, demonstrating how the sentence strips should be placed in order according to the video.
- Play the video and monitor the activity. If learners find the activity challenging, play the video again, pausing at suitable points.
- Conduct feedback by nominating learners to read aloud an event, encouraging peer-assessment.

Differentiation

- Pair learners with weaker listening skills with stronger learners.
- Nominate learners with weaker speaking skills to read aloud the event sentences during feedback.

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Task 3 – Past tense verbs (20 mins)

- Before you introduce the next task, collect in learners' copies of Resource C, as learners will check their answers to the worksheet (Resource D) by watching the video, to focus on listening skills. To change the focus to using reading skills, see differentiation suggestion below.
- Point out that the video uses verbs in the past tense, as it talks about something specific that happened in the past, which has now finished. Elicit some examples from the video. Remind learners that past simple verbs can be regular (-ed) or irregular.
- Introduce the activity in **Resource D**, explaining that there are two stages: first, put the verb into the past form, then put the past form into the correct gap in the text. Use the first verb to demonstrate what learners should do.
- Learners can complete the activity individually or in pairs if more support is needed. Monitor and encourage peer-correction.
- Bring the class back together and check the answers by playing the video, pausing after each verb is heard.

Differentiation

- The answers to the worksheet can also be checked by reading the text. To focus on reading skills, ask learners to cover up their copy of Resource C rather than collecting it in, so they can uncover the text to check their answers. In this way, some learners can focus on reading and some can focus on listening.
The following differentiated worksheets are included:
 - **D1** - learners produce past form independently (for stronger learners) OR
 - **D2** - past forms are included as a prompt for learners to match with the infinitive OR
 - **D3** - as D2, but a shortened text with fewer gaps to fill (for weaker learners).

Task 4 – Discussion using past tense verbs (15 mins)

- Open class, invite volunteers to talk about a birthday party they have been to (a party for a child or an adult) and encourage them to describe what happened. Check for use of the past tense, and correct, sensitively, as necessary.
- Put learners into small groups and tell them to talk about a party they went to. Draw attention to this as an opportunity to practise using the past simple.
- Monitor, then close the task by correcting errors noted and highlighting examples of good language / interesting vocabulary used.

Cooler (10 mins)

- Divide the class into two or three teams. Write the past irregular form of the verbs from task three on the whiteboard (adding others as appropriate, depending on your class). Call out the infinitive of one of the verbs, and the first team to shout out the corresponding irregular form gets a point. (Instead of shouting out the answer, a member of each team can come to the board and the first person to hit their hand on the correct verb gets a point.)
- For a stronger class, put the infinitives on the whiteboard and call out the past forms.

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Extension activities / Homework

If you have extra time, highlight the difference in pronunciation of the regular -ed verbs from the video: arrived, played - /d/ or wanted, decided - /i:d/. You could put two columns on the whiteboard, one for /d/ and one for /i:d/, write the four verbs at random on the board and ask learners to categorise them. You could provide a spoken model to help them do this, or play the video again.

If learners have access to a computer, they can complete the speaking and listening activities that accompany the 'birthday party' video on the ESOL Nexus website:

<http://esol.britishcouncil.org/content/learners/skills/speaking/birthday-party>

