Houses: Lesson Plans and Activities

Prepositions
Chores

Home Alone: A Scary Story

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Dear colleagues,

This month, The Teacher’s Magazine is full of ideas to work on the topic houses. For very young learners, there is a lesson plan to create a toy house, while for young learners, there are activities to work with vocabulary and to describe a bedroom. For teenagers, there are lesson plans on chores, unusual houses and a scary story called *Home Alone*.

In the Global Culture Section, you will find ideas to work on the International Children’s Day. There is also the last part of How To Teach Pronunciation, this time devoted to teenagers and adults.

We hope you enjoy this issue and make the most of it!

The Teacher’s Magazine team
In this article, pronunciation activities for teenagers and adult learners will be given, as well as useful theory and practice to apply with these two target groups.

Justification

Adult English language learners approach the learning of pronunciation from a very different way compared to young learners. Their goals, needs and levels of English are also diverse. Their needs depend on a variety of factors that may include for what purposes and how frequently they use the language. Teachers should predict and tackle pronunciation problems that are common to students with the same native language.

Age has been believed to be a key factor determining success in learning a second language, but there are studies which reveal that age reflects differences in the situation of learning rather than in the capacity to learn. That is to say, adults can become highly-proficient speakers of a second language. It is true that age influences language learning because it is associated with social, psychological and other factors that concern second language proficiency; but it is not because age limits the possibility of language learning in older students. Research suggests that environment and motivation are important factors in the development of pronunciation (Marinova-Todd, Marshall & Snow, 2000).

Tips for teaching pronunciation

There are differences among young learners, teenagers and adults which are fundamental when teaching pronunciation. Teenagers and adult learners are more vulnerable to criticism than young learners and do not have so much confidence in their abilities, and they need to be praised (McKay, 2006).

Teachers have to encourage learners to speak English outside the classroom, giving them tools such as structures for those interactions. Teachers can guide students to develop communicative competence and cultivate positive attitudes towards accuracy and fluency. Teachers should create a positive classroom atmosphere and teach English pronunciation to be intelligible. A good idea is to develop a list of
pronunciation and adults

pronunciation features notes to give learners feedback. The same list can be used when students are giving a presentation or working together as a group; the teacher can use the checklist to make a note when a student is not understood, or when most of them are making the same mistake (Grant, 2010).

For beginners, teachers can present listening activities for students to compare question intonation in English and in their native language (for instance, listening for rising intonation in yes-no questions), and then imitate dialogues, perform plays and watch videos (O’Brien, 2004). Students can learn the difference between stressed and unstressed syllables (Dalton & Seidlhofer, 1994; Field, 2005) recognizing where stress falls by learning the rules of parts of speech and word stress. Another way of practising pronunciation is by doing exercises on recognizing weak, unstressed syllables.

When teaching new vocabulary, the teacher should point out where stress falls. Moreover, words with similar stress patterns can be taught together, since it is easier to remember. A list of words can be provided, and the students state the rule. Also, teachers can supply words, and students should break them into syllables and figure out where word stress lies. Teachers can make board games to play in pairs, in which students work out the quantity of syllables in the words. Students can make their own versions of the game to play against their partners (Hancock, 1998).

A useful pronunciation activity is to work with homophones to practise identifying and distinguishing the spelling of words. The teacher can dictate words, and then get students to compare answers and see if they wrote the same words.

To teach vowel sounds, the teacher can do a silent dictation. By mouthing the sounds, students can guess what the words are.

To learn through games, there is a website which offers a wide variety of exercises. For example, phonemic hangman, phonemic charts, puzzles and phonemic readers, among other exercises.

In advanced levels, teachers could discuss how pronunciation might change according to the region in which English is spoken.

Liang (2003) proposes different strategies to teach weak vowel forms:

- introduce the topic through grammar categories of function words such as articles, pronouns, auxiliary verbs and prepositions.
- present drills with strong and weak forms where students should underline only weak forms.
- stimulate real-life conversations paying attention to the weak forms they have been practising.

Using audio tapes or podcasts of speakers of different varieties of English is a way of giving learners meaningful exposure to variation in pronunciation, and this could be helpful to increase their communicative competence (Florez, 1998).

Although the teaching of pronunciation has been almost forgotten by many teachers of English, it is a vital area to language learners. Teachers should never stop doing research on pronunciation, and apply the new theory to their teaching practice bearing in mind the different target groups (young learners, teenagers and adults).

Silvana Schneider

Sources and References
- http://www.tinyteffeacher.co.uk/teacher/pronunciation.html
- cambridgeenglishonline.com/phonetics-focus/
- www.b1uk/learning/langlit/sounds
Although there still exists a tendency to believe that household tasks are the expected domain of adults, researchers have proved this idea wrong. Developmental Psychology has explained the potential benefits of giving children the opportunity to participate in domestic activities.

Promoting kids’ help around the house is important since it aids their development as individuals. Involving children in household tasks at an early age can have a positive impact later in life, as the Associate Professor of Family Education at the University of Minnesota Marty Rossman states. Contributing at home will result in happier children with a high self-esteem and a stronger sense of responsibility.

As educators, EFL teachers can promote this theory by making students aware of the importance of gaining autonomy and independence. Below, you will find a variety of entertaining activities to develop in the English language classroom.

Warm-up activity
• Introduce the topic by asking questions such as Do you help at home? If yes, why? If not, why not? What’s your favourite chore? What chores don’t you like doing?

Activity 1
• Students complete photocopyable activity A on page 8 to label the drawings of household tasks. After they have completed the activity, tell them to fold the page so that they can only see the drawings, and ask the whole class to name aloud the chores they remember.

Activity 2
• Teacher asks students to say aloud their least favourite chore and write a list of them on a cardboard. Then, students read the poem _How Not To Have To Dry The Dishes_ by Shel Silverstein available at https://shelsilversteinpoems.wordpress.com/2011/06/18/how-not-to-have-to-dry-the-dishes/. Students try to make their own version of the poem changing the phrase ‘dry the dishes’ for their least favourite chore.

Activity 3
• After reading the poem, students imagine a ‘magical chore robot’ and draw it. Then, they describe it mentioning which chores it can do and give it a name. To inspire students, the teacher may explain that there is an animated sitcom called _The Jetsons_, whose character _Rosie the Robot_ is in charge of all the household tasks. Students can search for a picture of Rosie on the Internet or watch an episode of _The Jetsons_ on YouTube.

Activity 4
• Students complete photocopyable activity B on page 8 to learn vocabulary related to cleaning products. For this activity, students will need to look at the drawings in activity A, point out which element is needed to perform each chore and match their names with drawings.

Activity 5
• Students create a survey, and ask their family and friends which domestic tasks they regularly do, their favourite ones, and the ones they don’t like. Once you have the results handed in, make a pie chart showing the statistics on cardboard, or using googledocs students can share them with their classmates.

Activity 6
• Ask students to cut out pictures of parts of the house in magazines or newspapers at home and bring them to the class. They will need at least 3 images per student to play in pairs.
Students cannot see their partner’s pictures. Student A asks questions to student B such as Can you use an iron? Can you use a vacuum cleaner? etc. until they guess the item needed to do the household task related to the part of the house in the picture. Student B answers the questions until student A guesses the correct item. Then, student A asks questions to guess the part of the house in the picture asking questions such as Are you in the kitchen? Are you in the living room? etc. until they guess.

**Final task**

- Students play a mime game to consolidate the vocabulary learned. You will need to have ready cards with as many chores as you wish. Then, divide the class into two groups. A student from one of the groups volunteers to select a card and mime the task written on it. The rest of the members of their team try to guess as quickly as possible. If the group says the correct chore within 1 minute, give it one point. Groups take turns until all the chores have been acted out. The group that gets more points is the winner.

Marcela Catimani Ferrer

**Sources and References**

- https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/growing-friendships/201303/chores-and-children
- https://shelsilversteinpoems.wordpress.com/2011/06/18/how-not-to-have-to-dry-the-dishes/
CHORES

A) Look at the drawings and label the chores with the words from the box.

- do the laundry • cook • iron clothes • make the bed • mop the floor • sweep the floor
- take out the rubbish • tidy up the room • vacuum • wash the dishes

1) .................................................. 2) ..................................................
3) .................................................. 4) ..................................................
5) ..................................................

6) .................................................. 7) ..................................................
8) ..................................................
9) ..................................................
10) ...............................................

B) Cleaning products.

1) Point out the cleaning product needed to do each chore in activity A.

a) ................................................. b) .................................................
c) ................................................. d) .................................................

e) ................................................. f) .................................................
g) .................................................

2) Match the drawings in activity 1 with their names.

- Vacuum cleaner • broom • trash bin • washing up liquid and sponge
- iron • bucket • washing machine

Key: A) 1) Take out the rubbish, 2) tidy up the room, 3) sweep the floor, 4) cook, 5) wash the dishes, 6) vacuum, 7) iron clothes, 8) make the bed, 9) mop the floor, 10) do the laundry; B) 1) a) 7, b) 1, c) 6, d) 10, e) 5, f) 3, g) 9; 2) a) iron, b) trash bin, c) vacuum cleaner, d) washing machine, e) washing up liquid and sponge, f) broom, g) bucket.
ROUTINES AT HOME

A) Brainstorming.
1) Do you help at home? Are you in charge of any chores at home? How do you keep your bedroom?
2) If your parents have a night out, does your mum prepare your meal or do you cook it yourself?
3) What are you allowed to do when your parents are out? Do you follow their suggestions? Do you do whatever you want?
4) Would you like to live alone? What do you hate of living with your parents? Is there any chore or habit that you would not do if you lived on your own?
5) What comes to your mind if I ask you to mention the things you would do if it weren't for your mum?


C) After reading the poem, answer the questions.
1) How does the mum feel? How does her son feel?
2) What does the writer try to show us with the two sides of the same coin?
3) How did you feel after reading the poem? Why? Did you find any differences or similarities with your own reality or routine?
4) Who do you feel more identified with? Why?
5) Do you consider that adolescents can help more at home?
6) What would be the best way to encourage teens’ cooperation at home?
7) “Everyone at home does something”, says your mum, “what can you do?” If you had the chance of choosing one chore, what would you do?

D) Read the poems again, and contrast mother’s and son’s views.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mother’s view</th>
<th>Son’s view</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>paint his room white</td>
<td>paint my room red and black</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

E) Write a dialogue.
1) How old do you think the mother and her son are?
2) What do you think is the mother’s name?
3) What is she like?
   a) perfectionist  b) me-first mother  c) unpredictable  d) best-friend mother
4) What is the son like?
   a) people-pleaser  b) peacemaker  c) rebellious  d) self-centered
5) Imagine an everyday situation between the mother and her son, and write a dialogue. Use the information from the above answers.

F) Final Task.
1) Encourage your students to read aloud, reread and record themselves with their mobile phones, computers, tablets, etc. Tell them the importance of fluency and rhythm.
2) Once students have recorded the poem, tell them to add some piece of music. They may use Audacity or any other audio-editing programme to edit their recording.

Sources and References
• Mitton, Tony. Things I’d do if it Weren’t for my Son and Things I’d do if it weren’t for my Mum in Jure et al. 2008. “Made to Measure. Argentina. A Selection of Works by British Writers with Activities for Young Learners”
THE PERFECT HOUSE

A) About you
a) Do you like your house?
   b) Is it perfect for you and your family? Why/Why not?

B) Choose Majo or Juan Pablo. Draw and describe the perfect house for them.

"My family is really big! I live with my mum, my dad, my sister, my three brothers and my granny. My granny is really old and she can’t go upstairs. My brothers really enjoy playing football. My dad has got a car. He loves it! My mum likes her flowers very much! I love playing video games."

"My family is really small. I live with my mum and my sister. We are very different. My mum enjoys cooking. My sister loves listening to music and playing the guitar with her friends. She has a lot of friends. I really like reading and looking for new books on the Internet."

C) Draw a house. Write about it.

This is ____________________’s house.

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What is the best way for children to learn? Of course, through playing! So, let’s invite them to make their own toy house to teach them vocabulary related to the rooms in a house and furniture.

You just need some empty shoe boxes, glue and scissors. Put the boxes together to build the house, and then students will decorate each room. They will paint the different rooms, draw windows and doors, make furniture out of small boxes or even use toy furniture to decorate the rooms.

Once the house is ready, the teacher can give a piece of furniture to each child, who has to say which room it belongs to and put it in there.

Another option is to play “the crazy house”, putting the elements in a wrong place, e.g. the bed in the kitchen. Children have to guess what’s wrong. At first, change only one or two elements, while children have their eyes closed. Then, add more crazy elements, or even ask the one who has guessed to change the pieces of furniture.

To teach and reinforce the names of the rooms, the teacher can include some real dolls or flashcards of family members and ask: Where’s mum? or Is Granny in the bedroom?, so as to also revise family words.

You can find photocopiable activities to work on parts of the house and furniture on pages 12 to 14.
IN THE HOUSE

NAME: ..........................................................

Cut out the drawings below, and stick them in the right room:
ROOMS IN THE HOUSE

Look at the picture and label each room.

- bathroom
- bedroom
- garage
- kitchen
- hall
- living room
- study

Key: a) bedroom, b) bedroom, c) bathroom, d) study, e) living room, f) garage, g) kitchen, h) hall.
WHAT ARE THESE?

Look at the picture and write the name of the following items.

1) 2) 3) 4) 5) 6) 7) 8) 9) 10) 11) 12) 13)

Key: 1) Cooker, 2) cupboard, 3) table, 4) chair, 5) sofa, 6) toilet, 7) bookshelf, 8) bed, 9) wardrobe, 10) lamp, 11) door, 12) window, 13) fridge.
PREPOSITIONS OF PLACE

A) Listen to your teacher and draw the mice.

B) Read the text and draw the room in your notebook.

This is my bedroom. The bed is under the window. The table is next to the bed. There is a lamp on it. The wardrobe is opposite the door, next to the bookshelf. There are a lot of posters hanging on the walls. Oops! Under the bed, there are my shoes!

C) Describe this bedroom.

Key: A) Text: The green mouse is under the table. The yellow mouse is on the chair. The red mouse is behind the fridge. The pink mouse is between the door and the table. The blue mouse is in the cupboard. The brown mouse is next to the stairs. C) Possible answer: The trainers are under the bed, the tablet and my book are on the bed. There's a cup on the desk, next to the computer. The chair is opposite the desk. The backpack is in front of the desk, the sock is in the wardrobe. There are some boxes on the wardrobe.
**“HEAD OVER HEELS”**

A very clever stop-motion animated film

A) Explain the possible connection between the expression “head over heels” and these picture.

B) We are going to watch a stop-motion animated film called “Head over Heels”.

1) What is “stop-motion”?
2) What do you think “Head over Heels” is about?
3) Guess who the protagonists are.
4) Decide if it is a horror, western, love or science fiction short film.

C) Watch the video at: [https://vimeo.com/54228768](https://vimeo.com/54228768), and answer these questions.

1) Why are the woman and the man upside down?
2) Why is the house floating?

D) Choose the right answer.

1) They have __________ for breakfast.
   a) apples
   b) eggs
   c) cake

2) The man fixes the woman’s __________.
   a) umbrella
   b) dress
   c) shoes

3) The house lands on the __________.
   a) Moon
   b) Earth
   c) Sun

4) The woman goes for a walk with __________.
   a) her husband
   b) her pet
   c) her son

E) Put the short film’s sequence of events in order.

1) They have breakfast.
2) They hug and, later, go for a walk.
3) They get up.
4) They break their picture.
5) She sees him and thinks about an idea to solve their “problem”.
6) They brush their teeth.
7) Their house lands.
8) She has no problem with the place’s gravity but he can’t go out.
9) He watches TV while she cleans the house.
10) He fixes her shoes.
11) She nails her shoes on the man’s floor (which is her ceiling).

F) Production time! Answer these questions to write a very simple short story. Then, choose the best one and create a short film based on it (You can use illustrations, pictures, signs, voice-over commentaries).

1) Who are the protagonists?
2) What are they like?
3) Where do they live?
4) What is their “problem”?
5) How do they solve it?
6) How does this story end?

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Key: A) The meaning of “head over heels” is “to be in love with someone very much.” Taken from: Cambridge Dictionary of American Idioms (2006) Last retrieved March 19, 2015 from [http://idioms.thefreedictionary.com/head-over-heels](http://idioms.thefreedictionary.com/head-over-heels); B) 1) Stop-motion is “a filming technique in which objects (such as clay models) are photographed in a series of slightly different positions so that the objects seem to move” (Taken from: [http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/stop-motion](http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/stop-motion); 2), 3) and 4) Personal answers; C) Answers may vary, all of them are correct; D) 1) b, 2) c, 3) b (we suppose so); 4) a: E) 3, 6, 1, 9, 10, 4, 7, 8, 5, 11, 2.
HOUSES: THEN, NOW AND IN THE FUTURE

For thousands of years, people have protected themselves from cold weather, extreme heat and never ending rains. They have found shelter in caves, or they have built the shelter themselves. Nowadays, according to the different cultures and different places of residence, people build diverse kinds of houses, depending on their needs, weather conditions, economic possibilities, ancient traditions.

HOUSES IN THE PAST
A) Interview your grandparents, an elderly relative or someone in their seventies/eighties/nineties from your neighbourhood.
Ask them about their houses when they were children: what rooms they had, what was different then, what they liked most about their homes.

1) This is the questionnaire. You can include other questions.

**Interview**
- When you were little, where did you live?
- What was that house like?
- Who did you live with?
- How many rooms were there?
- Which was your favourite room? Why?
- Was there a garden? Did you play there?
- ............................................................
- ............................................................

2) When you have done at least one interview, collect all the information, and share it with the rest. Together, complete the following chart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YOUR GRANDPARENTS' HOUSES</th>
<th>YOUR HOUSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In common...</td>
<td>NOT in common...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3) Drawing conclusions. Discuss these questions.
   a) What are the biggest changes?
   b) What is still similar today in your houses?
   c) What were most people's favourite rooms?
   d) Where did they play?
TODAY'S UNUSUAL HOUSES
A house wherever you want it, how you want it

B) "Battle of Houses"
1) In pairs, each student chooses one house and tries to win the battle.
   - Which house is ...better? / ...more beautiful? / ...more comfortable?
   - Why?

2) In pairs, one student compares the houses, and the other answers some questions. Then, change roles.

   Student 1: Compare the houses in pictures a and b. Consider similarities and differences.
   You can use:
   - In both pictures/houses, I can see...
   - In both houses/pictures, there is/are...
   - In the first house... but in the second one...
   - I imagine that...
   - I suppose...
   - Perhaps...

   Student 2: • Which house is your favourite and why?
   • Would you live there?
A SUSTAINABLE HOUSE, WHAT DOES IT NEED?
There is a house that was built to look after the environment and everyone's future in Buenos Aires, Argentina (and, fortunately, there are other houses like that one in other parts of the world). This house is a non-profit venture. It has different aims: to promote the rational use of materials, to show good environmental practice, and to use energy-saving methods. In general, it promotes sustainability.

It was built with the help of more than seventy companies, whose high-quality products and services are sustainable. It has a bioclimatic design, and it uses clean and renewable energies, such as thermal and solar energy. The family who lives there has a greenhouse and an organic farm. They sort and recycle their waste. They even have an astronomical observatory. And there is much more to see and learn from this house!

Information taken from: https://ar.linkedin.com/in/charlykaramanian

1) There is only one sustainable house in the world.
2) This special house in Argentina promotes sustainability.
3) It was built by a company that makes all the materials.
4) The family does not recycle their garbage.
5) They use more than one kind of energy.
6) Would you like to have a house similar to the one described in the text? Why?
7) What changes could you make to your house to make it similar to that sustainable house?

HOUSES IN THE FUTURE
D) Think about what houses will be like in 2100. Discuss these questions in small groups.
- What will houses have in 2100?
- Will everyone recycle their waste at home?
- Will houses have bioclimatic design?
- Will there be automatic doors or windows?
- Will there be small gardens in every house?
- Will everyone live in high buildings or houses?

FINAL PROJECT
E) Draw your dream house. Consider the following:
- bedrooms
- playground
- playroom
- office
- other rooms
- toilets/bathrooms
- swimming pool
- basement
- music room
- garden
- greenhouse/organic farm
- guest rooms
- attic

1) Prepare a short oral presentation for the rest of the class. Include the illustration and a description of your dream house. You can use: There is...; There are...; In my house, I have...
HOME ALONE

A) You are going to read a short story called Home Alone; what do you think the story will be about?

B) Read the story and check your predictions.

It was going to be a big night, and Dan could feel it. One word now echoed in his head: freedom. Freedom to do whatever he pleased, to eat anything he wanted. For the first time in his whole life, at the age of ten, his parents had decided to let him stay at home all alone.

Tonight’s outing was not meant to last too long, for they would only get some dinner. However, Dan was overwhelmed with joy. He knew very well that it was a huge decision his parents had made.

Mom had made it very clear that he would have to follow indications and that there would be no negotiations on this matter. In his ecstasy, Dan did nothing but nod to everything she said.

It was already dark outside. They were having dinner at their favourite restaurant and had a reservation at 8.30pm. They made a few recommendations, while they took their coats from the coat rack in the entrance hall, and then they were gone.

Immediately, he locked the front door with key and headed to the left wing of the house, where the kitchen was. He felt big. He felt, for the very first time, that he was in charge.

However, it was a few minutes later, that he was struck by reality. Even though he was in his house all by himself, mom had managed to let him know that she would be supervising every step he took.

Dan was about to lose control as soon as he saw all the post-it notes clattered up in the kitchen: on the cupboards, the fridge, and even the microwave. The list was endless, and so was Dan’s disappointment by this time.

However, his spirit was not to be broken so easily. He relaxed and tried to focus on the hours ahead. A grin on his face stated more than any word could possibly say. A healthy meal was out of the question tonight.
He took some bread from the pantry, and he darted to the fridge in search of the peanut butter and marmalade that mom had hidden at the very back of the vegetables compartment. He grabbed them carefully, and placed them on the counter.

The butter knife lay expectant on his left hand. Two slices of bread rested on a pearly white plate. As he spread the two ingredients on the bread, his mouth watered. In the fridge, there was also a six-pack of soda cans.

With dinner placed on a tray, he exited the kitchen, went past the dining-room and walked to the living-room. He would eat his not-really-healthy-but-savory meal sitting on his favorite armchair, watching TV, as he had always wished.

He grabbed the TV guide that lay on top of the mahogany coffee table in front of his chair, and scanned the movies that were about to begin. A horror film was to be found. A few seconds went by, and there it was. A film that for sure would make his blood run cold.

With the film reaching its climax, the boy had become a little restless. Some scenes had made him jump out of his seat every now and then.

Just when he thought he had gotten himself together, he was overpowered by an awful sensation that caused him to leave the couch and go to the kitchen. Once there, he checked all the windows were properly shut and drew the blinds. He was beginning to feel somewhat silly after such paranoia. Turning off the lights, he returned to the living room. That film would not defeat him.

No sooner had he sat down, than he leaped in fear. A door was slammed, footsteps faded into the distance. Dead silence. If this was his mind playing tricks on him, it had done a great job. Dan was on the verge of losing control.

A deep breath and he was on his way to the foyer. The noise, if real, seemed to be coming from the entrance.
So off he went to the beige cotton linen armchair that rested between two black soft-leather couches. Little did he know that the situation would only take a turn for the worse. One thing now invaded his mind: the TV set. He swallowed hard as he stared at its screen. It had been turned off. He refused to call his parents, and certainly would not give in to the obvious fact that he was panicking. He turned the TV on again, he switched channels and went for a comedy instead.

When the old wooden clock on the wall struck ten, Dan seemed to have regained some joy. Nevertheless, a few minutes later, his confidence was taken away once more. Another door had been slammed, and to his shock, the noise was coming from the first floor. Without putting any thought into it, he went up the stairs. The last steps seemed endless, let aside the long walk to the master bedroom at the end of the corridor, which door was shut.

Having failed miserably to open it in his first attempt, he took a deep breath, but almost choked when another door shut behind him. He turned around. His puny legs were shaking, his heart threatened to abandon his chest. It was the worst of nightmares, yet he was not asleep.

There was a guest room in front of his parents’ room, but he did not stop to check there. Little Dan tiptoed back to his bedroom, for its door had now been closed. Without hesitating, he pushed it open, in the hopes that this would scare his ghost away.

He pressed his tiny hand against the wall scanning for the light switch, and when the lights were on, an ounce of tranquility settled in his body. The closet, he told to himself. Monsters, if real, would always hide inside them. A bit of shame started to show for considering this option. He opened it. No creepy creatures in sight. He laughed out loud for the first time in this painful and never-ending night.
HOME ALONE

The bedroom door was suddenly shut abruptly and footsteps on the rug now approached him from behind. Tears rolled down Dan’s cheeks, his yelling attempts were muffled by a strange hand that now covered his mouth.

Downstairs, Dan’s parents were back from their night out. It was almost midnight, and Mom could not wait to see her baby. She darted to the living room in hopes to find him asleep on one of the sofas. Deep inside, mother knew that her child would not be in his room, sleeping in his own bed. She was ready to process the idea of imminent disobedience on his part.

Unfortunately, the smile on her face faded when she saw there was no one in the sitting room. She, a little bit off, went up the stairs. Her husband followed, voicing his son’s name.

As Danny did not respond to the calling, both parents were now shaky. They went to their own bedroom first. But once more, they were proved wrong. The bedroom was clear.

The bathroom was empty and so was the guest room. Dan’s room was the final stop. Mom and dad strode down the hall not uttering a word. The air was dense, almost impossible to breathe.

Standing in front of the bedroom, Dad stretched his right hand to reach for the knob. He turned it cautiously so as not to wake up the infant. He was there, where else if not? Mom squeezed her husband’s left hand. She turned on the lights to find the bed was still made.

The couple called the kid’s name again, but still, no replies. The poor woman had become a bundle of nerves. Unable to take control of herself, she burst into tears. Her husband tried to keep calm. He was torn apart, but could not show any grief. If there was a moment to collapse, this was not it.

He stroke his wife’s hair and held her in his arms. She seemed to have regained some strength by now. They both agreed on calling
the police and let them do their job. If the child was really missing, they would find him.

Dad took the cell phone out from one of his pants’ pockets and dialled 911. Once he finished talking to the police officer that was on the other side of the line, he hung up.

Back inside, Mom stood motionless, staring fixedly at a post-it note that was now in one of her hands, her face pale. Tears rolled down her cheeks. Dad went in and reached for the note. Reading silently, chills were sent down his spine.

He let the paper fall on the rug, its light brown colour now invaded by red stains. Fresh blood confronted them with the cruellest of realities. The note, its reading facing up:

"Home alone? Think again!"

The night was still. Police sirens were heard in the near distance. Mom shrieked in terror.

C) Read the story and answer these questions.

1) Why does Dan feel so happy at the beginning of the story?
2) Why do you think Mom and Dad found it difficult to leave Dan alone?
3) Dan’s mother is strict and overprotective. Find instances in the text that indicate that. Underline them.
4) Describe Dan’s mood changes throughout the story.
5) What do you think happened to Dan by the end of the story?

D) Vocabulary: Parts of the house and furniture.

1) Some words related to parts of the house and furniture have been written in bold type in the story. Classify them. Use a dictionary if necessary.

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<th>Parts of the house</th>
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E) Read the story again. What does the house look like on the inside? Make a sketch and name its parts.

Key: A) Suggested answers: 1) Strange things that happen to a boy while staying alone in his house; B) Suggested answers: 1) Because he is staying alone for the first time. 2) Because he is very young, 3) "Dan was about to lose control as soon as he saw all the post-it notes cluttered up in the kitchen", 4) At first, he was very happy, then he began to feel nervous and scared. 5) He was taken by a stranger; C) 1) Parts of the house: foyer, corridor, pantry, stairs, dining-room, bathroom, guest room, living room. Furniture: fridge, rug, closet, coffee table, coat rack, counter, light switch, cupboards, blinds, armchair.
What do people do?
- In some countries, children's arts and crafts are usually displayed at schools and public places in an attempt to raise awareness of Children's Day.
- Newspapers, magazines, blogs and even social networks promote this day.
- Traditional families have special dinners and celebrations at their houses.

Teaching sequence for Children
Level: Beginner
Pre-tasks:
- 1. Ask your students what makes them feel happy.
- 2. Tell them to make a drawing of themselves when feeling happy.

Tasks:
- 1. Show students the following video:
  https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rJR_Uzl6x4
- 2. Have students compare and contrast their drawings with the ones present in the video.
- 3. Ask students the following questions:
  a. Why do you think that children are holding hands around the globe?
  b. Do you know children from other places around the world? If so, are their lives similar to yours?

Follow-up tasks:
- 1. For the following class, tell students to find a song in their mother tongue which promotes children's rights.
- 2. Have students share their songs with the rest of the class.
- 3. Then, have them make drawings illustrating children's rights. You can find them at Unicef's website: http://www.unicef.org/photography/photo_crc25.php.
- 4. Display students' productions on the school walls.

Teaching sequence for Children
Level: Beginner
Pre-tasks:
- 1. Stick on the board pictures which show children doing different activities (singing, playing, dancing, etc).
- 2. Ask students the following questions:
  a. What are the children in the pictures doing?
  b. Why is play so important for optimal child development?

Tasks:
- 1. Have students watch the following video which summarizes article 31 by the United Nations High Commission for Human Rights: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5jRPWPHifA&feature=youtu.be
  **Comment:** Article 31 claims that play is highly important to optimal child development. Therefore, the right of every child to play should be granted by all means.
- 2. Have students listen to what professor Roger Hart states in the video, and answer why play is so important for children's development.
  **Comment:** Students may need to watch the video twice to grasp all the points that Roger Hart mentions.
- 3. Brainstorm on the board the different reasons why play is so vital during childhood. Students may come up with other reasons than the ones mentioned by Hart.

Follow-up tasks:
- 1. Have students design banners to raise awareness of the importance of play for children well-being.

For further activities on this day, see photocopiable activities on page 26.
A) Look at the pictures at http://www.shutterstock.com/s/%22child+labour%22/search.html, and answer the questions in small groups.

1) What are the children doing in each picture?
2) Is child labour legal or illegal where you live?
3) What rights do children have in your country?
4) Who is considered a "child" where you are from?

B) Match the sentences' halves in order to find out more about International Children's Day, and then discuss the questions below.

1) International Children's Day... a) ... Conference for the Well-being of Children in Geneva in 1925.
2) This day was proclaimed in the World... b) ...that they are responsible for protecting children and their rights.
3) There are other children's days in different countries... c) ...is observed on June 1st.
4) It is a day to celebrate, but also for adults to remember... d) ...for example, in Japan it is celebrated on May 5th, but in the USA, on the 2nd Sunday of June.
5) When do you celebrate Children's Day in your country?
6) Do you do special activities on that day? If so, which activities do you do?
7) Do you discuss children's rights on that day or on any other date?
8) How are children's rights protected where you live?

C) Find out about children's rights on this webpage: http://www.unicef.org/crc/cartoons/list.htm, and write a summary including the ones that called your attention or you did not know about.

D) EXTRA ACTIVITY. Watch the video “Amar: All Great Achievements require time” at https://vimeo.com/19890458, and discuss these aspects.

1) Why Amar has to do different jobs.
2) If this situation is similar where you live.
3) What the State does to prevent children from working.
4) Do you justify Amar's means to achieve his goals? Can you think of any other way?

E) Choose one of the following topics and, in small groups, produce a campaign. Use posters to inform other children and adults. Then, publish them in the school's halls.

- Children Labour – Children at work or children at school?
- Violence against children – How do we prevent it?
- Children's right for leisure activities – What does it mean?

Key: A) Personal answers; B) 1) ci, 2) ai, 3) di, 4) b); 5), 6), 7) and 8) Personal answers; C) Personal answers; D) Personal answers; E) Group productions.

*This video also appears in "Different School Days!" The Teacher's Magazine, February 2015. However, on this occasion, the suggested activities' aim is to analyse child labour and the situation in different countries/contexts.*
HOW DO PEOPLE LIVE AROUND THE WORLD?

A) Look at the following ten pictures of different houses, and guess where in the world they could be located. Describe what you see in the pictures, and think about the characteristics of the families that might live there.
HOW DO PEOPLE LIVE AROUND THE WORLD?
B) In the following text, there is some information about different types of houses found all over the world. Once you have read it, see which photograph is related to which paragraph.

- **Riad** is a traditional type of house found in Morocco. The translation of the Arabic word “riad” means garden, because every riad has an inner garden surrounded by the galleries of the house. This garden usually has a fountain or a small water surface that has a key function. Considering the hot and dry weather that prevails in Morocco, the hot air that flows in the garden is cooled by the water and acts as a natural air conditioner. Riads have clay or brick walls with very small exterior windows; the inner garden also functions as a meeting place and gives privacy to Islamic families.

- **Stilt houses** are built on high piles over a surface of water or on the shore of the sea, a lake or a river. They are primarily built in height in order to protect the construction from flooding, although in some cases it is also to keep out vermin. They are very typical in South East Asia in countries such as the Philippines, Singapore, Indonesia or Malaysia, although they can also be found in the Chilean island of Chiloé or in the United States. Stilt houses can be built with many elements, but they are always recognised by their gable roofs, made of wood, tiles or straw.

- **Loft apartments** are flats that were previously industrial buildings. The area used for lofts is usually restored and converted for residential use after a factory has moved or closed down. Their main characteristic is that the whole flat is one big room, where kitchen, living room and bedroom are not divided, except for the presence of some columns. Another typical feature of lofts is that the elevators are unusually big, since they were prepared for lifting machinery as well as several workers at a time. Lofts can be found in every large city with industrial complexes. New York, London, Paris or Berlin are some capitals that are famous for their lofts.

- **Chawl** is a type of building found in India, with an average of 3 to 5 storeys in height and approximately 20 tenements per floor. Its main characteristic is that all tenements in each floor share a common balcony, which encourages the interaction between neighbours. Tenements are very small and they consist of one room that serves as bedroom and living room, and a kitchen that serves also as dining room. Chawl inhabitants have to share bathrooms, considering there is only one bathroom per floor. This type of construction is known for a great interaction between neighbours and for creating a friendly atmosphere among people from different backgrounds: Hindus, Muslims and Christians.

- **Chum** is a type of tent that serves as temporary shelter for herders in Central Russia and Northern Mongolia. These herders have a nomadic way of life, so they move with their reindeer through the forest and near lakes. The tent has a conical shape, with a diameter of up to 10 metres. The structure is made of wooden poles, and its cover is made out of reindeer leather. Chums have a hole on the top that allows the smoke from the inner fires to leave the tent. As the herders move, they carry the structure of the chum on their reindeer and re-build it in other areas.
HOW DO PEOPLE LIVE AROUND THE WORLD?

- Rondavels are round huts usually found in Southern Africa, in countries like Lesotho, Swaziland, Botswana and South Africa. The walls are often constructed with stones, while the floor is finished with dried cow dung to make it even and resistant. The roof is made of straw that is sewn to a conical pole structure. Rondavels historically had one big room that served for all purposes. However, nowadays, interior walls are used to divide it into two or three rooms. In addition, they can be used either as family houses or holiday cottages for tourists.

- Bothy is a very small cottage usually found in the middle of the isolated mountainous areas in Scotland, Northern Ireland, England and Wales. The curious fact about these cottages is that they are uninhabited and left unlocked for climbers, fishermen or adventurers who are near the area and need shelter for a night. Bothies are empty and unfurnished, the only thing they provide is a fireplace. They are usually located near a source of water.

- Igloo is a shelter built with snow, generally constructed in the form of a dome. They have been built for hundreds of years by the people inhabiting Greenland and Northern Canada. In spite of being made of easily compacted snow, it has been proven that an igloo can be heated up to 16° C only with body heat, while outside the temperatures might fall to -45° C. The area known as the dome serves for living and resting, while on the front there is a long passageway that serves for storing wood, entering the igloo and temperature insulation.

C) Which of the texts answer best the following questions?

Which type of house:
1) is specially prepared for a specific type of weather?
2) is found only in Africa?
3) is completely empty most of the time?
4) was formerly used for another purpose?
5) can be dismantled and transported on the backs of animals?
6) is specially built to avoid problems caused by nature?
7) has one balcony and one bathroom per floor?
8) is equipped with a fireplace?

D) Place the following words in the appropriate blank.

Mike is very happy because he has rented a ..................(1) on the top of a building that has twenty ......................(2). From the window of his bedroom, he can see the ......................(3) of the churches and the ......................(4) tower of a castle far away. However, the view from his living room is quite different: the ......................(5) of a taller building blocks the view of absolutely everything. He still remembers how he lived when he was a child. He shared a ......................(6) with four other families, where the walls were made of ......................(7) and the floor was not ......................(8). Once in a while, they had to live without electricity for many days. Although his new home is still ......................(9), he can now enjoy the ......................(10) he did not have in his childhood house.

E) Read the sentences and re-write them with the correct information.

1) Stilt houses are built on ground level because the people that live in them are very short.
2) You can get lost inside a loft apartment since they have so many rooms.
3) Chawls are very big Indian houses for the richest Hindi families.
4) Moroccan families that own riads enjoy watching through their large exterior windows.
5) Inside an igloo you feel the same temperature as in the outside.
6) Whenever you want to use a bothy in the desert, you have to borrow the keys from the owner.
7) Tourists can never get near a rondavel because they might be attacked by a tribe.
8) People living inside chums cannot do anything to protect themselves from cold weather.

F) Choose one type of house you have read about, and write the pros and cons of living in it. Compare your text with that of a classmate, and see if you agree with the advantages and disadvantages you have chosen.

Key: A) Student's own answers; B) The houses are in the same order as in the text; C 1) Igloo / Riad, 2) Riad / Rondavel 3) Bothy, 4) Loft apartment, 5) Chum, 6) Stilt house, 7) Chawl, 8) Chum / Bothy; D) 1) flat, 2) storeys, 3) domes, 4) conical, 5) façade, 6) tenement, 7) clay, 8) even, 9) unfurnished, 10) privacy.
E) Sample answers: 1) Stilt houses are built on poles, 2) Loft apartments have no rooms, 3) Chawls consist of small apartments for poor families, 4) Riads have small exterior windows, 5) Igloos protect you from the elements, 6) Bothies have no keys, the doors are left open for people who may need them, 7) Rondavels may be built for tourists, 8) You can build a fire inside a chum.
A) Read and answer.

1) What can you find in a Speed-Flatmating event?
2) Where are the events?

Speed-Flatmating is the perfect way to find your new flatmate. It is important to check out the people before you share your house with them. If you come to a Speed-Flatmating event, you’ll have the chance to meet a lot of potential new flatmates in a very short time. You can discover who would be a perfect candidate, and who would be a big mistake. It really couldn’t be easier!

Where do we hold events?
We have many regular events in London. We have a large event in central Zones 1 to 3 and smaller local events in Camden, Clapham, East End, Hammersmith and Islington. We are planning events in other areas including outside London.

B) Read and answer with N (for Natalie) or P (for Paul).

Success Stories

Natalie, London
"I’m 26. Two years ago, I was looking for a flatmate for our 3-bedroom flat in Clapham. For us, it was more important to find a friend, not just a person. We didn’t put an add online. We found the right person in the event. I had a great evening. I made a couple of really good friends, and we got an awesome new flatmate! Now, I am looking for a new house, and I will try Speed-Flatmating again!"

Paul, London
"In the past, I had problems finding a nice housemate because I’m 43, and most flatshares are between 20 and 30 years old. I went to the Speed-Flatmating event and found a couple of other people who were in a similar situation. We met up the next day and spent time together. We started looking for a whole flat to share. Four days later, we found the right place! I really recommend these events. If you haven’t tried one yet, give it a go – you won’t regret it!"

Who...

1) thinks relationships are important to share a house?
2) had fun at the event?
3) is older than the rest of the flatsharers?
4) made friends?
5) found people with similar problems?
6) will go to a Speed-flatmating event?

Key: A) 1) meet a lot of potential new flatmates in a very short time; 2) in London; B) 1) N, 2) N, 3) P, 4) N, 5) P, 6) N.
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