

LESSON PLAN

Teaching housework-related vocabulary to elementary-level adult ESL learners

Teacher: Assel Zhamankulova

Learners: Elementary-level adult ESL learners

Lesson focus: Housework vocabulary and speaking

Lesson aim: Learners will use common housework phrases to discuss and negotiate household responsibilities.

I would like to design a curriculum using the Backwards Design approach as a foundation. My rationale for choosing Understanding by Design (UbD) as a framework for this specific curriculum is that it aligns well with how I already structure my lessons and meets the needs of my learners. As outlined in Stage 1 of UbD, I always begin by identifying the goals and making sure students understand the aims of the lesson and the overall unit. This clarity is especially important for my group of adult ESL learners—who come from countries such as Spain, Italy, France, Brazil, China, and Uzbekistan—as they often feel more comfortable and secure when they know what is expected of them and what the ultimate objectives are.

I found the table in McTighe and Wiggins' (2012) article particularly useful, especially the section on transfer of learning. For this specific curriculum, a key transfer goal would be for students to talk about the housework they do and express their attitudes toward it. Many of my ESL learners live in shared apartments, so housework is not only a practical and essential part of their daily lives—it's also something they often have to negotiate with roommates. In addition to acquiring vocabulary and grammar, they need to develop new communicative skills to navigate these everyday situations. As the article states, "teaching should equip learners to be able to use or transfer their learning (i.e., meaningful performance with content)" (p. 4), and this goal really aligns with what I want my students to take away from the unit. In Stage 2, students apply what they've learned to authentic, real-world situations that I create in the classroom. For example, I designed an activity where students work in groups to negotiate who will take on which household tasks based on their personal preferences. This not only encourages collaboration and communication, which reflects the core idea of sociocultural learning theory by Vygotsky, but also shows how effectively they can transfer their knowledge to realistic contexts. In Stage 3, I reflect on and plan the specific learning experiences and resources that will help students achieve the desired outcomes. I carefully select activities, types of input, and scaffolding strategies that will support their success. I also think about how to start the lesson and what kind of hook I can use to draw students' attention from the very first moment. To ensure the listening activity is authentic, I recorded an audio with my male friend, avoiding the robotic, unnatural voices often found in ESL textbooks. Additionally, I prepare assessment activities that will allow me to gauge whether I've met the main objectives of the lesson. These assessments help me track students' progress and provide insight into whether the lesson has been effective in reaching its goals.

I also drew inspiration from the article *Understanding by Design* by Wiggins, G., & McTighe, J. (2006), particularly the section on making learning both engaging and effective. The content needs to be interesting and relevant to motivate students, but it also needs to help them accomplish "something of intellectual substance" (p. 195). This is why I chose to personalize the lesson by sharing a personal story about housework as a "hook" at the

beginning of the lesson. Additionally, I made sure to include both male and female perspectives in the dialogue to ensure the content is relatable and inclusive. Finally, the last speaking task closely mirrors real-life situations students may encounter with their flatmates or roommates, making the learning experience even more meaningful.

I was also very inspired by Cherbow and McNeill's (2022) article on epistemic agency, so I tried to design the lesson to ensure that students wouldn't just passively learn new words but actively engage with the language in ways that connect to their daily lives. Having students reflect on their own housework vocabulary, generating questions about cultural differences, practicing through role-plays, and then comparing how housework is viewed across cultures to deepen their understanding will help my learners take ownership of their learning, making it both engaging and meaningful.

I wanted to incorporate the idea of *repertoires of practice* described by Tzou and Bell (2010). Rather than assuming that textbook examples alone will resonate with my students, I began by learning more about their own home and community practices. I asked students to take photos of the kinds of housework they do at home, share which tasks they like and dislike, and describe how they approach these chores. By combining this personal input with the target vocabulary from the textbook, I aim to connect instruction more meaningfully to their lived experiences. Following Tzou and Bell's recommendation, this approach values students' everyday expertise and treats their backgrounds as important resources for learning, making the language lesson more authentic, motivating, and relevant

Being an ESL teacher with students from diverse backgrounds, I can't ignore Gholdy Muhammad's Historically Responsive Literacy (HRL) framework, which feels incredibly relevant today. I especially appreciate the focus on identity development and the idea that identity is "multilayered and shaped by the social and cultural environment" (Muhammad, 2019, p. 49). Previously, I viewed identity in terms of race, religion, and gender, but Muhammad's work encourages a broader exploration, considering how students see the world—through their roles, experiences, values, and cultural knowledge. To reflect this, I give my learners time and space at the start of the lesson to discuss the types of housework they did growing up, who taught them, and to compare housework tasks across the various cultures represented in the classroom.

I will be designing a curriculum for a lesson, revolving around a lexical set of housework phrases. In these lessons, students will have exposure to:

- Practicing their listening skills
- Speaking activities
- Working on individual word pronunciation
- Sentence intonation
- Understanding the pragmatics of using these phrases
- Semantics and morphology of the phrases

In terms of my lesson topic, I believe that teaching lexical chunks rather than individual words is far more beneficial for learners. Teaching collocations and phrases helps to develop their fluency and reduces the need for them to "grammaticalize" every phrase. Lexical chunks cannot be taught out of context, so I will include:

- A short listening activity to raise learners' awareness of connected speech patterns, sentence stress, and intonation.
- A speaking activity that is communicative, real-world related, and provides opportunities for engagement, error correction, and more coherent and cohesive speech.

My lesson is part of a series of lessons in Unit 4.

Unit 4 Title “Who does what”

The overarching goal for this unit is *“To develop learners’ ability to understand, discuss, and use vocabulary and grammar related to housework in real-life contexts through integrated reading, listening, speaking, and grammar activities”*.

Lesson 1 “Developing reading skills through texts about housework”

Students read two articles related to housekeeping - one talks about comparing doing housekeeping to physical exercises and the other about a new Spanish law that says that children must help their parents with housework. It is followed by a short speaking activity where students read a questionnaire and discuss people's answers.

Lesson 2 “Introduction of Housework related vocabulary”

My lesson on teaching housework related vocabulary

Lesson 3 “Grammar Presentation”

Introduction of present perfect “*yet, just, already*” in the context of three family members talking about housework. The pronunciation focus is on the letters *y* and *j* as in *yet* and *just*.

“Have you done the laundry? Not yet”

“Have you done the dishes? Yes, I have”

Lesson 4 “Developing listening skills in the context of a video blog about cleaning tips”

The unit ends with a listening activity featuring a video blog titled *The Lazy Person’s Guide*, which gives tips on how to clean quickly and efficiently. Students then answer post-listening questions and practice housework vocabulary by discussing the tips presented in the video.

References:

McTighe, J., & Wiggins, G. (2012). *Understanding by design*. ASCD.

Wiggins, G., & McTighe, J. (2006). *Understanding by design*. Pearson Education.

Cherbow, K., & McNeill, K. L. (2022). Planning for epistemic agency in storyline discussions: A revelatory case of student-informed curricular sensemaking. *Journal of the Learning Sciences*, 31(3), 332–358. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10508406.2022.2031050>

Tzou, C., & Bell, P. (2010). Micros and me: Leveraging home and community practices in formal science instruction. In K. Gomez, L. Lyons, & J. Radinsky (Eds.), *Learning in the disciplines: Proceedings of the 9th International Conference of the Learning Sciences (ICLS 2010) - Volume 1, Full papers* (pp. 1135–1142). International Society of the Learning Sciences.

Muhammad, G. (2019). *Cultivating genius: An equity framework for culturally and historically responsive literacy* (Chapter 2). Scholastic.

Lesson Plan

STAGE	AIM(S) OF STAGE	PROCEDURE
Lead-in	To set up the context To create a hook, engage the learners, activate students' schemata, give them an opportunity to reflect on their identities	Teacher says: “I come from a country where women do all the housework, including cleaning and washing. Men don't do any housework; they only work outside the home. For example, in my family, my father barely did any housework; he only took out the trash. My mom worked, walked with our dog, did the cooking, and handled all the household tasks. What about your families?” Teacher asks the learners to discuss the following 2 questions: 1) Who does the housework in your family? 2) What kind of housework did you do growing up? Who taught you? Teacher writes some of the students’ answers on the board. These answers will be used for the listening for gist/detail task. We compare how housework tasks are distributed among family members across different cultures, discuss what is the ideal distribution and why.
Listening for gist	To practise listening for gist and introduce the target language of the lesson	Teacher says: “I interviewed John, my friend and a colleague, about the housework routine in his family. Please listen to the dialogue (see Appendix 1) and answer the question: <i>1. Who does more housework in John's family: John or his girlfriend? The answer: John</i> Students listen (1 minute 30 seconds), check their answers in pairs to give them the opportunity to clarify misunderstandings before sharing with the whole class Open class check with the teacher

		2) When you make the bed, do you physically build it? – No Do you neatly organize the bed sheets, the pillow, make it tidy? – Yes 3) When you do the dishes, what do you wash? – dirty plates, glasses, cups. 4) When you do the laundry, what do you wash? Dirty clothes 5) When you do the ironing, is the iron usually hot or cold? – hot 6) What kind of clothes usually need ironing? - answers vary 7) When you mop the floor, do you use water? – Yes 8) When you clean the bathroom, do you clean only the bath? - No, we clean the toilet, the walls, etc.. At this point, I may elicit the word “sink” Focus on the form: Teacher elicits the part of speech for “take out “(verb),” the trash “ (noun = object). Teacher explains that some phrases consist of a verb + object Teacher asks the students to identify parts of speech for other 6 sentences. Teacher draws attention to “does”. Teacher says: You know that verbs change the form. This is an example of it. Teacher elicits why it is “does”, what is the form of “I”. – “do the washing up” Focus on Pronunciation Teacher: When you have a phrase with 2 words, there is usually 1 word which stressed and 1 which is not stressed. Teacher demos the first phrases: “take out the trash”. (stressed word is “trash”) Teacher asks why do think “<i>trash</i>” is stressed? – because this word is more important than take out. We take out “<i>trash</i>”, not your dog, or something else.
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	To connect housework vocabulary to students' lived experiences	The teacher asks students to show the photos they took at home and demonstrate to their partners what housework they do, what cleaning supplies they use, etc. The teacher then repeats the above procedure with all the phrases that were not mentioned in the dialogue but were suggested by the students.
Controlled Practice	To give learners an opportunity to practice using vocabulary in a controlled way To assess students' understanding of the target language	The teacher covers the words and leaves only the images on the presentation. The teacher asks students to remember what each picture shows. For the phrases suggested by the students, the teacher finds images on Google and displays them on the board as well.
Freer Speaking	To give learners an opportunity to practice using vocabulary in a freer way To give them an opportunity to apply what they've learned to an authentic, real-world situation To connect the lesson more meaningfully to the students' lived experiences	Teacher elicits/presents from students the following phrases (we can add more if students suggest): I don't mind... verb + ing It's ok with me, I can ...verb I absolutely hate verb + ing I would prefer to...verb Teacher says: "Now I want to think and decide individually if you love, like,, don't like or hate to do these household tasks." (handout 2) Teacher does one example on the board. Students work individually Teacher shows a picture of 4 men in an apartment and elicits the word "flatmates/roommates". Teacher says: "Now please imagine that you have moved into a new apartment. You and your partner are flatmates/roommates. You should decide who is going to do the housework.

		But you should remember that there are some housework chores that you like, don't like, hate to do/would prefer to do. You should negotiate with your partner. In the end you will report to us what you have decided." Teacher draws students' attention to the board and reminds them to use the useful language. Teacher demonstrates this activity with one of the students. Teacher monitors to deal with any emergent problems, to help the students with any grammar or vocabulary, to make notes for the feedback stage.
Feedback	To give the students an opportunity to report to the class To give the students an opportunity to use the target vocabulary To give students feedback on their performance To deal with emergent language	Each pair/group reports to the class. Teacher does some feedback on content. Feedback on language – Teacher writes good and bad examples of language use and asks the learners to decide which ones are right, which ones are wrong. Teacher deals with any emergent language at this point.

Appendix 1

A dialogue between John and I (used for listening for gist/detail)

Self-made

A: Hi John! Can I ask you a few questions about your housework routine in your family?

J: Yes, sure!

A: What housework do you normally do at home?

J: Well, I always take the trash out, practically every day. Because if I don't do that every day, it starts smelling. Also, I have to make the bed because I usually start my work later than my partner.

A: Who does the laundry in your family?

J: It depends, but usually my girlfriend does the laundry. I have some sort of allergic reaction to the laundry detergent.

A: Oh, poor you! Are you allergic to Fairy?

J: Unfortunately, no. So I have to do the dishes. I must say I sort of enjoy washing the plates and glasses. It gives me time to think about my life.

A: I heard that American people do not care about their clothes, that's why they are always crumpled. Is that true?

J: No! It is a stereotype! My girlfriend does the ironing every day! She irons shirts, trousers, even socks!!

A: Wow! That is a bit crazy! What other housework do you do?

J: You know, I have a dog and a cat. They always bring mud from the street so I have to mop the floor twice a day!

A: Ok, who cleans the bathroom in your family?

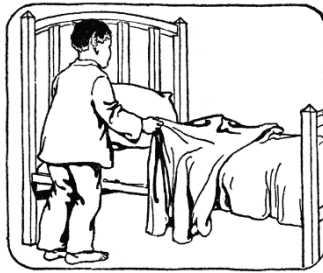
J: I don't mind cleaning the bathroom, so we usually do it together.

A: Ok, thanks, John!

Handout 1



- 1) I always _____ because if don't do that every day, it starts smelling.



- 2) I _____ because I get up later than my partner.



- 3) My girlfriend _____ because I have allergic reaction to the dish soap.



- 4) I _____ because it gives me time to think about my life.



- 5) My girlfriend _____ every day

6) I _____



twice a day

7) My girlfriend and I _____



together.

Handout 2 Self-made “Two roommates”

Take out the trash

Make the bed

Do the laundry

Do the dishes

Do the ironing

Mop the floor

Clean the bathroom

+ Any extra phrases suggested by
the students

I don't mind... verb + ing

It's ok with me, I can ...verb

I absolutely hate verb + ing

I would prefer to...verb