Speed Dating

The purpose of this activity is to provide an opportunity for students to repeat grammatically correct questions, and respond to questions appropriately. This activity can be spread out over several class periods, or can be used as a long exercise. It is time consuming, so it’s best to plan ahead.

Progression of lesson:

First, introduce the idea of a “blind date”. Have students guess what the meaning might be. Explain that it has nothing to do with vision, but that you have not seen the person before.

Create a web diagram and have students think, pair, share ideas related to dating. You should try to guide the conversation to highlight things people want to know about the person. Separate out the physical attributes with the deeper questions, such as religion, employment, background...

Work with students to form grammatically correct questions on the board. It’s important that these questions are open ended rather than yes/no questions. Have students, in pairs, complete additional questions, following the patterns you have established on the board. Write selected questions on index cards, and divide the class in half.

Move the tables out of the way, and place a circle of chairs in the center of class, for half of the students. Have the first half of the class sit in the chairs and hand them one of the index cards with a question written on it. Arrange chairs around the center circle, so that each person sitting has a partner.

You can choose to give each partner a roleplay idea, so they are acting like someone else, or you can choose to let them be themselves. I frequently allow them to answer for themselves, but I tell them that they can be creative and become anyone they want to be. Some students have a lot of fun putting together a new personality.

Set a timer. Every 2-4 minutes (depending on the level of the class and the depth of the questions you’ve created), the students on the outside of the circle rotate. The students on the inside of the circle repeat the same question for each new partner. Once the students in the outside circle have made a full rotation, students switch places, and the activity continues.

In a classroom of 14 students, the speaking portion of this activity (particularly with higher level students) can take close to 1 hour. I find it’s important to have both halves of the class do each portion of the activity on the same day, even though it is time consuming.

Extension/Alternative options:

The first round of “speed dating” can be asking a friend about the person they are “setting you up with”. This moves the conversation from YOU to HE/SHE.

Also, it’s possible to give students different role play cards so that you can get them to speak about activities that they may not otherwise use in their conversations.

Below is a speed dating lesson found online that works in a different way.

**Speed-dating lesson: Student worksheet**

**Activity 1: warm-up (15 minutes)**

**Speed-dating questions**

1. How many different ways can you think of meeting a partner?
2. Have you ever heard of speed-dating?
3. Look at the definition from the Macmillan English Dictionary. What do you think  about this idea?

**Speed-dating definitions speed-dating noun [U]**

A method of meeting a potential romantic partner by briefly talking to a series of individuals at an organized event, and indicating whether you are interested in seeing any of them again.

*The Macmillan English Dictionary*

**speed dater noun [C] speed-date verb [I,T]**

‘Busy British men and women are participating in a novel new way of meeting prospective partners; speed dating. Single men and women attend an event, usually in a bar or a club. During the event, they will have the opportunity to meet a series of potential partners. As the term speed-dating suggests, they only have three minutes to impress each person before rotating to the next.

**Activity 2: Reading (15 minutes) Pre-reading vocabulary**

Match the words on the left with the definitions on the right:

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|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1 A craze | a to replicate |
| 2 To spawn | b a slow way of getting to know someone romantically |
| 3 Mr or Ms right | c to become widely dispersed |
| 4 Courtship | d STH that rapidly becomes popular |
| 5 To spread | e a suitable partner |

  

                

**Reading: The origin of speed dating**

The concept of speed-dating originated in Los Angeles, California in 1999. It was invented by a rabbi to help singles in the Jewish community find a partner. Originally singles were given eight minutes together, to make an impression before moving on to the next potential partner. At the end of the rotation they wrote down who was hot and who was not, and in the case of a good match contact details were exchanged.

The concept was soon exported, and took off in London in 2000. The craze soon spread all over the UK, and spawned Speed Dating Agencies and an Internet Site for finding Mr. or Ms right. The eight minute limit is supposedly based on science. It is the time required for our hormones to tell us whether the person opposite us is a potential mate. In our increasingly busy lives, where traditional courtship rituals are disappearing this time limit has now been further reduced to only three minutes, about the same time it takes us to brush our teeth.

**Activity 3: role-play: (30 minutes) Conversation questions**

1. Would you like to take part in this type of event? Why, why not?
2. What type of questions would you ask?
3. How would you present yourself?
4. Look at the extracts from the personal column of a newspaper which your  teacher has brought to the lesson. In pairs select the most interesting person and think about the type of questions you would ask this person on a date.

**Classroom activity**

You are going to take part in a speed-dating event with your class. Your teacher will give you a profile sheet with your personal details. The speed dating session will follow the following format:

1. You have three minutes to impress a partner, ask questions and test the chemistry. Your teacher will circulate and take notes.
2. After three minutes you will change partners. When you have spoken to everybody in the class, you will write down on a piece of paper your chosen date or dates.
3. Let’s find out if we have any matches! Your teacher will provide feedback on your use of language.

You now have 10 minutes to study your profile sheet or photograph and prepare for

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your three minute presentation. Think about the type of questions you might ask, or be asked. Ask your teacher for any words you do not understand.

**Activity 4: summary: (15 minutes) Homework**

Imagine you went on a date with one of your classmate’s profiles. Write about the experience.

 

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**Appendix 1: profiles MEN Seeking Women**

**Profile A: REX**

You are in your thirties but you don’t want to settle down yet. You take great care about your appearance. You like sports and action films. You work for an advertising agency. You like going to the pub, restaurants and the cinema. You smoke 20 cigarettes per day, but don’t admit to it easily. (You can add some of your own ideas.)

**Profile B: ANDY**

You are an engineer and a workaholic(you love your work and spend about 14 hours a day there.) You like travelling, when you have the time. You are forty years old and you are divorced. You are looking to find a permanent partner. (You can add some of your own ideas.)

**Profile C: PETER**

You work for a bank, and you are a little bit shy. You are 25 years old. You like long walks in the countryside and yoga. You would like to start a family. (You can add some of your own ideas.)

**WOMEN seeking Men Profile A JANE**

You are recently divorced. You have 2 children, so you would like to find somebody who likes children. You are 30 years old, sporty and attractive. Your ex-husband was a workaholic so you want a man who is less committed to his job. (You can add some of your own ideas.)

**Profile B SANDRA**

You are 25 years old , but you find men of your own age immature. You like going to the cinema and theatre. You do amateur dramatics and are attracted to outgoing (extrovert) men. You hate smoking. (You can add some of your own ideas.)

**Profile C HELEN**

You are 35 years old, dynamic and definitely a career woman. You don’t want your new boyfriend to interfere with your work too much. You like going to the gym and buying the latest fashions. (You can add some of your own ideas.)

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**Appendix 2: Profiles**

Your teacher will distribute a photo or image. Imagine what this person is like. Write your profile below:

|  |
| --- |
| Name: |
| Job: |
| Interests: |
| LOVES: |
| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |
| LIKES: |
| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |
| DISLIKES: |
| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |
| HATES: |
| 1. |
| 2. |
| 3. |

 

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**Speed-dating lesson: Teacher’s notes**

**Aims**:

**Class size:**

**Level**: **Age: Time: Resources:**

a) Practise speaking and revise adjectives to describe character. b) Revise question formation structures.

six +, preferably an even, equal number of males and females.

Intermediate + Teenagers and adults About 1 hour or 90 minutes for a large class.

* Speed-dating student worksheet
* Profiles Appendix 1 and 2
* Personal ads column from a newspaper (not provided)
* A video clip from ‘Friends’ (optional)

**Activity 1: warm-up (15 minutes)**

**Stage 1**

The best way of introducing the ‘dating’ theme would be to show a clip from a series like ‘Friends’. There are plenty of suitable scenes. Alternatively you could show a scene that you are familiar with from a movie like ‘When Harry Met Sally’, or even some video footage from one of the numerous dating game shows like ‘Blind Date’. If you don’t have a TV, Video, DVD, you could bring in the ads from the personal column of a newspaper. You will need one anyway for the preparation task prior to the role-play.

**Stage 2**

**Activity 2: Reading (15 minutes)**

**Pre-reading**

Ask students to complete the exercise to introduce the new vocabulary*.* (Answers 1d, 2a, 3e, 4b, 5c)

**Reading**

As students to read the text and answer any queries about vocabulary.

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* Question 1)Possible answers include: at work or school, through friends or flatmates, blind dates, dating agencies, small ads, computer dating and speed dating.
* Question 2) Students’ own answers.
* Question 3) Look at the dictionary definition. You could talk about  good dictionary usage and selecting a learner’s dictionary. You may need to explain the abbreviation system.

  

                

**Activity 3: role play: (30 minutes) Conversation questions**

This is where you introduce the personal ads column if you haven’t already done so in the warm-up. The objective is to revise and reinforce question formation.

1. After students have looked through the ads in pairs and selected a ‘date’, they think about the types of questions they would like to ask them and write them down.
2. Circulate to check structures and if necessary you can run through a few examples on the board. This is essential preparation for the role-play.

**Role-play**

1. Distribute a profile to each student. Depending on how well you know your students, their age and interests you may need to adapt the profiles in Appendix 1. Some sensitivity may be required. If you have more than six students you will need to write more profiles. (See alternative below.)  NB: Emphasize to students that they are playing a role, so they should not participate in the activity as themselves.
2. Monitor students during the preparation, help with any unknown words and question formation.
3. Presentations and meetings: students have three minutes with a colleague. Indicate when their time is up then ask them to change partners.
4. Circulate and make notes on good and not so good language for the feedback section at the end.
5. After the presentations, ask students to make their choice or choices which they should write down on a piece of paper.
6. Collect the papers and read out the results.

**Activity 4: summary: (15 minutes)**

You could offer a prize for the person with the most dates. Provide feedback on language use. If you have time you could ask students where they would go on their dates, if you have any matches. For homework students describe their imaginary date.

**Alternative**

Alternatively you could hand out a photo (not someone well known) cut out from a magazine/brochure (or even friends or family). Ask students to completely invent a profile using the form in Appendix 2. You would therefore need to extend the preparation time for the speed-dating presentations to 15 or 20 minutes. If you do this you might like to do an example on the board.

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