

## E-lesson inspirations

These are not lesson plans; there is no prescribed sequence of steps. Instead, you can pick and mix activities depending on your specific teaching situation and your lesson aims. The activities are built around a video clip and they all focus on global issues. Decide if your students should watch out of class or in class, and if you want them to watch the whole video, or just a section. You can of course listen/watch first and be inspired to come up with your own ideas!

**Title:** Mind in a Jar

**Internet** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QNmMH6tqiMc>

**Overview:** The metaphor of a jar full of water and coloured sand is used to show the way different emotions and states of mind affect the way we see things. The power of meditation to calm the mind is illustrated.

**Topic:** mindfulness, states of mind, emotions

**Level / context:** lower intermediate upwards, suitable for upper-primary

**Duration:** 1.13 min

### PRE-VIEWING ACTIVITIES

**'Simon Says'** Play this game the usual way: ask your students to stand up and follow your instructions. The trick is: your students should only carry out your instructions if you start with 'Simon says..'. If a student makes a mistake, they are out of the game and sit down. Include the following instructions: *Go to sleep! Wake up! You're angry! You're stressed! You're in a hurry! Breathe! Relax! You're happy!*

*Note:* You might need to demonstrate your instructions first. At the end, you can pose a Group Challenge: Are they able to recall all the instructions? Put them on the board as they call them out. You can indicate the number of instructions you gave. Next, students can also take the role of the teacher and you can have further rounds of 'Simon Says'.

**'Brainstorm states of mind'** You can help by eliciting, demonstrating different states, giving the initial letter to jog their memory. E.g. *happy, sad, tired, relaxed, angry, afraid, cold, hot, stressed, lonely, peaceful, upset, disappointed, curious, excited, thoughtful, shy, confident.*

**'Predict 10 Words'** Tell your students that you will now watch a clip called 'Mind in a Jar'. Ask them to predict 10 words that the clip will contain.

**'Key lexis'** Check understanding of key vocabulary, language chunks. E.g. *jar of water, mind, sand, thought, feeling, pick, breathe, observe, rest, meditate, settle, it feels right, to be in a hurry, feel stressed, feel angry, feel upset, bottom of the jar*

### **WHILE VIEWING ACTIVITIES**

**'Echo listening'** Pause the clip after each unit of speech and ask your learners to hear the echo with their inner ears. This focuses their attention and increases retention.

**'Pick a colour'** Stop the clip when you hear *'Pick a colour of sand that feels right for your feelings and thoughts.'* Give them 5 seconds to focus on their thoughts and feelings, pick a colour and write it down. Then listen to their colour choices.

### **POST-VIEWING ACTIVITIES**

**'Feelings Line-up'** Ask your students how they are feeling at the moment – give them a few seconds to direct their attention inwards and find an adjective that describes their present state. Then they do a Feelings Line-Up: they queue in alphabetical order telling others only the initial letter of their adjective. One by one, the group tries to guess everyone's adjective. Students are encouraged to show their emotions with facial expressions and body language.

*Note:* It's OK for several students to choose the same adjective. It might be a good idea to ban 'tired'; if it's their first choice, ask them to go deeper into themselves. At the end, you can take 3 deep Group Breaths, and ask them to let go of any negative emotions.

**'Key lexis'** Check understanding of key vocabulary, language chunks. E.g. *jar of water, mind, sand, thought, feeling, pick, breathe, observe, rest, meditate, settle, it feels right, to be in a hurry, feel stressed, feel angry, feel upset, bottom of the jar.*

**'Show & Tell'** Bring a jar with water, some coloured sand, spoon, and a bell and do the 'experiment'. You can narrate the story as you go along, eliciting key words from the students. *The jar of water is our (mind). And the different colours of sand are our (thoughts and feelings). What kind of thoughts do you have when (waking up)? Pick a colour of sand that feels right for your (feelings or thoughts). This is how our minds are when we're in a hurry, (stressed, angry, or upset). Can you see things clearly in this (state)? Let's breathe with the (bell), and observe all the sand as it slowly settles (to the bottom of the jar). This is what happens to our mind when we (meditate). We're mindful of our body and our (breathing). What is the water like (now)? The thoughts and feelings can still be there in our (minds), but rest peacefully at the (bottom) because we know how to return to our (breathing) to calm them.*

*Note:* The words in brackets above are particularly suitable for being elicited.

**'Student Narrators'** *Play the video without sound and ask students to be the narrators. First they can just read the text. You can cut up the text (see above) into separate chunks, number them, and give them out to students.*

**'Follow-up discussion'** Individually students write their own definition of 'mindfulness'. Then invite volunteers to read out their definition. Appreciate, comment on interpretations, differences as you see fit. Follow-up questions: What are situations when breathing mindfully can be helpful? What else can help you to calm down? In the 'Mind in a Jar', feelings and thoughts were at the bottom of the jar. What else is there in our minds?

*Note:* You will also find longer videos on mindfulness with this clip embedded. Some illustrate the 'mind in a jar' activity with a real group of kids choosing and adding their own coloured sand.