

12



CARE
GLOBAL
TEACH
LOCAL!

MONTHS OF SOCIAL ISSUES

ELT CALENDAR OF SPECIAL DAYS

Margarita Kosior



CARE GLOBAL. TEACH LOCAL!

GISIG

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A note from IATEFL GISIG

365 days , 52 weeks, 12 months a year. That is a lot of time for things to happen, for the world to change, for people to make a difference. We all like to celebrate special days, remember those who sacrificed their lives for us, marvel at the resilience of the human spirit.

There are so many different, important days in a year. So many people and things that affect our lives. Sometimes in our day-to-day lives in the classroom, we want to teach our learners something different and meaningful, something that will engage them, teach them about the issues that are important and affect us. How do we bring these important issues into our classrooms in a sensitive and educational way, which will raise awareness and help develop understanding and empathy in our learners?

Look no further. *12 Months of Social Issues* helps you do this and much more. This very special teachers' resource book will help teachers across the globe to teach their students about some of these important events. IATEFL's Global Issues SIG is very proud to bring you Margarita Kosior's labour of love. A book that is very much needed in times of uncertainty and instability for educators, to help local communities and wider society shape a better future.

Varinder Unlu
IATEFL GISIG Coordinator

A note from the author

Although incorporating social issues into ELT is presently growing in popularity, more often than not it has the form of a mere one-off occurrence. The creation of an ELT calendar of special days, a pack of ready-to-use ideas (B1-B2 student materials complete with teacher's notes), is an attempt to turn global education into a more systematic effort. It is a compilation of lessons, one per month, focusing on a different special day (mostly UN and UNESCO) each time. In this way, this volume consists of 12 complete sessions.

The publication meets two basic goals: developing linguistic competence (receptive and productive skills, vocabulary and grammar) and raising awareness of important issues. Raising awareness is essential, especially today, in the days of crisis and instability. Since world crisis and instability both stem from and lead to the crisis of human relationships, a few of the lessons in the volume focus on nurturing such bonds and values. Stronger human relationships will inevitably lead to better collaboration, fewer conflicts and a better world.

It is, therefore, our duty as educators to make our students aware of social issues and global injustice, and to help them realise that their voices can be heard and that, when in unison, they will resonate even louder. To this end, the lessons in this volume do not only present important social issues, but also encourage students to take action, reach out to the wider community, and make a difference.

Margarita Kosior

The aim of this session is to:

- engage Ss in discussions on the topic of Planet Earth and on environmental issues;
- develop Ss' vocabulary related to the environment in the context of a reading passage;
- develop Ss' reading for gist;
- enhance Ss' critical thinking;
- enhance Ss' creativity and writing skills through writing a simple poem;
- enhance Ss cooperative skills; and
- trigger reflection.

What you will need: a copy of the handout for each student; access to the internet (ideally, one connected device per each small group students)

Teacher's notes

Step 1

Write the phrase *Mother Earth* in the middle of the board. Ask Ss why this term is often used to refer to our planet? (e.g. the Earth is the source of all its living beings and natural features, the Earth is the provider of all life, mother is fertile, Earth produces life for everyone and mothers provide life for their children, mother is a source of life, mother gives birth)

If you are teaching a group of Ss with a variety of L1s, ask them if they refer to Planet Earth as Mother Earth in their languages, too. If yes, what does it sound like (e.g. not in Croatian, in which the word "planet" is a masculine noun)? If not, in what other ways do they refer to the earth?

Step 2 (Handout)

Make sure that Ss understand the vocabulary in the text about Mother Earth Day. You can do this by giving synonyms and asking questions, e.g. Which word means *worry*?

Then, get them to use the words/phrases from the box provided to complete the text.

Answer key: 1 – risks 3 – movement 5 – protect 7 – lumber
2 – marine 4 – species 6 – concern 8 – go extinct

To check general understanding, ask students to summarise the story behind the initiation of Mother Earth Day idea to each other.

Step 3

Tell Ss they are going to write a poem about Mother Earth. They should follow the steps below:

1. Think about sights, sounds, smells, tastes and feelings you associate with Mother Earth. Write them down in the form of a spider diagram. Highlight the ideas which stand out most or bring out the strongest emotions; you might want to focus on them later when writing your poem.

2. Think and write down ideas about people and activities associated with Mother Earth.
3. Use your ideas from #1 and #2 to write your poem. You can start in the following way:
"Mother Earth is..."

Sample poem:

*Mother Earth is the green trees and colourful flowers,
the smell of grass after the rain.*

*Mother Earth is the taste of its fruit
and a happy bird's song in the morning.*

*Mother Earth is my family and friends
and the picnic on a sunny Sunday.*

Note:

If Ss don't know how to make a spider diagram, draw a template similar to the one below on the board.



Note:

With more advanced groups, you can feed in and check understanding of sound devices they can use in their poems.

Sound devices

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| Alliteration | - repetition of the initial letter of a word, e.g. snake slithers slowly |
| Assonance | - repetition of internal vowel sounds in words, e.g. croon, moon, spoon |
| Onomatopoeia | - words that sound like their meaning, e.g. meow |
| Repetition | - repeated words or phrases, rhythms or rhymes to add emphasis or build mood, e.g. starting each line with the same word in acrostic poems |

After Ss finish writing their poems, you can ask them which devices they used (e.g. repetition in the sample poem).

Step 4

Engage Ss in a discussion based on the following question: How does our planet nurture us and how can we care for it in return?

Step 5

Explain to Ss that Mother Earth Day has a different theme every year, e.g. 2016 – Trees for the Earth, 2017 – Environmental and Climate Literacy, 2019 – Protect Our Species

Get Ss to find out what the [theme of the upcoming Mother Earth Day](#) is and tell them to create an action plan involving their classmates and their school and local communities.

Encourage Ss to prepare posters, banners, leaflets, and to organise an awareness-raising campaign in their neighbourhood, etc.

If Ss need guidance with vocabulary, write the following words/phrases on the board and tell Ss they can use them (as well as vocabulary from handout) in their action plans:

reduce	recycle	energy	natural resources	sustain
reuse	compost	litter	conserve	pollution

Step 6

Tell Ss that they are going to prepare a leaflet to hand out to people in their neighbourhood in order to gain their support in the effort to protect the environment.

First, provide Ss with the following Native American Proverb: “We do not inherit the Earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children,” and get them to use this proverb to build the text on the leaflet.

Then, get Ss to design the leaflet.

Email a friend telling her/him about what they feel this quote means.

Appendix

Recommended additional resources

*Film:

- [The Biggest Little Farm](#) (2018) by John Chester
- [Our planet](#) (2019-) – documentary series

Talk:

- [“The disarming case to act right now on climate change”: TEDxStockholm talk by Greta Thunberg](#) (2018)

*Always ensure that a film you choose for your group of students is age appropriate.

Handout

Use the words/phrases from the box to complete the text about Mother Earth Day.

marine	concern	go extinct	protect
species	risks	movement	lumber

Environmental awareness was very low before 1969: dangerous chemicals were used in products of everyday use, on our crops to protect them from pests, and in our building materials, while consumers remained unaware of those environmental and health ¹ _____

On 28 January 1969, a large oil spill off the coast of Santa Barbara, California, hit the headlines and within a few days, tens of thousands of barrels of oil spilled into the ocean covering the surface of the water in a sticky, thick substance, killing thousands of sea birds as well as ² _____ animals such as dolphins, elephant seals, and sea lions.

The tragic event inspired a ³ _____ brought about change, and the first Mother Earth Day was held on 22 April 1970. More than 20 million people participated in the initiative on that day, and soon, the Environmental Protection Agency was created, and environmental pacts and laws protecting water, sea life and endangered ⁴ _____ were passed.

Today, agencies, organisations and individuals work to ⁵ _____ the environment and human health. There are eco-friendly alternatives in almost any product category, and many consumers show ⁶ _____ for the environment. Despite the rising awareness, however, chemicals are still being applied to our crops, trees are being cut for ⁷ _____, the oceans and the air are being polluted, the Earth is heating up, and tens of species ⁸ _____ every single day.

In response to these developments, millions of people across the globe take part in Mother Earth Day every year. They hold marches, organise concerts, plant trees, or clean up local parks and beaches; anything to ensure a better future for our planet.

About the author



Margarita Kosior

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As an advocate for social justice, Margarita Kosior believes in spreading awareness of global issues through ELT. Margarita has incorporated social issues into her teaching since the beginning of her career when, as a novice teacher, she still didn't know much about Global Education. She simply believed that what she was doing was the right thing to do. Since then, she has participated in relevant projects, presented at international conferences and written ELT materials based on social issues ranging from modern day slavery, disabilities, the Holocaust, to kindness, as an underlying value necessary to make a big change in the world.

Margarita shares her insights and teaching tips on her blog: [ELT for a Better World](https://www.eltforabetterworld.com) and she is the author of a series of children's stories, **Tales of strays**.