

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 homelessness;
- enhance Ss' prediction skills;
- allow Ss to practice grammar (modal verbs of speculation) in a specific context;
- develop Ss' ability to make inferences from a reading text;
- enhance Ss' critical thinking;
- enhance Ss' research skills;
- motivate Ss to take action.

What you will need: a copy of handout per student (recommended colour printout); downloaded short film [The Conditioned](#) or access to the internet; classroom computer, projector and loudspeakers; colour printout of the images in Appendix 1; the four signs for the “four corners” task (Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly disagree)

Teacher's notes

Step 1

Divide Ss into two groups, A and B. Prepare two 2m x 1m strips of big paper, one for group A and one for group B. Stick picture A (Appendix 1) in the middle of the big paper for group A, and picture B (Appendix 1) in the middle of the big paper for group B. Write the following questions on the board:

1. Who is the man in the picture?
2. How do you think he is feeling?
3. What is his life like?

Engage Ss in silent discussion about the man in the picture. In their discussion, Ss should answer questions a-c.

For silent discussion instructions, go to Appendix 2.

Note:

It is recommended that the images in Appendix 1 be printed out in colour.

Step 2

In the same groups, Ss look at the notes they made during the silent discussion. They rewrite several of the speculations about the man in your picture, or write a few more, using following the instructions (Handout, Task 1).

E.g. He must be a poor man.

Step 3

The two groups present their speculations to the rest. Then a class discussion follows in which Ss compare and contrast the two pictures, and speculate in what way the two men could be related.

Step 4

Write the following questions on the board:

1. What is the island?
2. How did Raimundo and the woman narrating the story meet?
3. How did Facebook change Raimundo's life? List 1-3 changes.
4. The title of the story is The Conditioned. How do you interpret it?

Get Ss to answer the questions as they are watching The Conditioned from Facebook Stories.

A discussion follows in which Ss talk about whether or not their predictions (Steps 1-3) were correct, and about what in the short film surprised them most.

Step 5 (Handout, Task 2)

Announce a mobile moment.

Ss use their mobile devices and/or the computers available in the classroom. They have eight minutes to find out more about the man in the video. They answer the questions provided to them.

Step 6 (Handout, Task 3)

Looking into the causes of homelessness.

Ss read testimonies of several homeless people. Based on those testimonies, what are the causes of homelessness?

Possible answers:

1. **mental condition**
2. **grief / debt**
3. **illness/injury/disability / addiction**
4. **family conflict / domestic violence**
5. **job loss and unemployment**
6. **broken relationship**

Step 7 (Handout, Task 4)

Ask Ss to keep in mind the causes of homelessness (Step 6). Get Ss to prepare and perform interviews following the instructions.

Step 8

Use the "four corners" strategy (instructions in Appendix 3) to get Ss involved in a group discussion about one of or all of the following stereotypes and misconceptions about homeless people:

1. Homeless people are criminals.
2. Homeless people are all drug addicts or alcoholics.
3. Homeless people are too lazy to work.
4. Homeless people are mentally ill.
5. One should always try to have a conversation with a homeless person to show kindness.

Step 9

Think-pair-share

Write the following questions on the board:

1. How would you characterise public attitudes towards the homeless?
2. What are the reasons for those attitudes?
3. What did you think the last time you saw a homeless person? What did you do?

First, Ss work individually trying to answer the questions.

Then, get Ss into pairs to discuss their answers.

Finally, each pair share their ideas with another pair / a larger group / the whole class.

Step 10

Ask Ss to prepare a poster on which they present ways of helping the homeless. Encourage them to pick one of the options and put it into practice.

The list of ideas can include, but will not be limited to:

1. Organise a public exhibition or school display with pieces of art created by the students aiming to raise awareness of the issue.
2. Organise a collection of food or clothes at your school and donate to a charity.
3. Educate yourself about homelessness.
4. Volunteer at a local homeless shelter.
5. Always respond with kindness and show respect.

Appendix 1

GROUP 1



GROUP 2



Source of images: [The Conditioned](#) (2014) Dir. Michael Marantz (used with the permission of the author of the story, Shalla Monteiro, and the producer of the video, [Already Alive](#))

Appendix 2

Step 1

For instructions on how to do a silent discussion, go to p. 37.

Appendix 3

"Four corners" strategy – general instructions

Before the lesson

Prepare four signs printed in large letters with the following labels:

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

Place the four signs in the four corners of your classroom.

During the lesson

Present your students with a statement which voices a point of view (in this case, one of the stereotypes and misconceptions about homeless people). Ask your students to decide whether they strongly agree, agree, disagree or strongly disagree with that statement. Instruct them that once they have gathered their thoughts, they move towards the corresponding corner.

You will ideally have a few students standing in each corner. Allow them a few minutes to discuss the reasons why they strongly agree, agree, disagree, or strongly disagree with the statement.

Repeat the activity for each statement you wish to be discussed.

After the lesson

Ask your students to write a paragraph in which they support their point of view with a sound argument.

Appendix 4

Recommended resources

Video:

- [Cardboard Stories | Homeless in Orlando, Rethink Homelessness](#)

Articles:

- [Why Don't Homeless People Just Get Jobs?](#)
- [Some Reasons People Become Homeless](#)
- [Homelessness: 'People think it can never happen to them, but it can, in the blink of an eye'](#)

Handout

Task 1

In groups, look at the notes you made during the silent discussion. In your notebooks, rewrite several of the speculations about the man in your picture, or write a few more, using modal verbs of probability (present and past) and/or expressions such as *he is probably* / *I reckon*.

Grammar revision – Modals of probability (present and past)

must / might / could / may / can't + be must be = 95% sure sth is possible might be could be / may be = maybe can't be = 95% sure sth is NOT possible	must / might / could / may / can't + have + past participle must have = 95% sure that sth was possible might have = maybe could have = maybe may have = maybe can't have = 95% sure that sth was NOT possible
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Task 2

Use the internet to find out more about the man from **The Conditioned**, Raimundo. Answer the following questions:

1. What is Raimundo's full name? _____
2. What is his origin? _____
3. When did he move from rural areas of the country to São Paulo? _____
4. How old was he when he moved to São Paulo? _____
5. What did he do back then? _____
6. When did he become homeless? _____
7. How long did he live on the streets? _____

Task 3

Read testimonies of several homeless people. Match them with the causes of homelessness in the box below. Notice that some testimonies can be matched with more than one cause.

Illness/injury/disability	Grief	Debt
Addiction	Mental condition	Job loss and unemployment
Domestic violence	Broken relationships	Family conflicts

Testimony	Cause of homelessness
1. "I had my first nervous breakdown when I was a teenager and have been on medication ever since. I ended up in a psychiatric hospital at the age of 18. My family never came to visit. I managed to escape after a few months and have been living on the streets ever since."	

2. "Ten years ago, my parents got killed in a car accident. On that day, my life changed completely. A few months later, I had to sell the house to pay my parents' debts. I ended up living on the streets after a short time."	
3. "When I was still working at the construction site, I had a bad accident. As a result, my leg was amputated. After spending some time in hospital, I started taking drugs to forget the pain and depression. Soon, I ended up sleeping rough."	
4. "My father is a very aggressive man. He often hits and pushes my mum down the stairs. I couldn't stand it, and I didn't know what to do... So I left. It was almost a year ago, when I was 14 years old. I've been sleeping on a park bench since then. I don't want to go back home."	
5. "When I lost my job, it became more and more difficult to pay my bills. They cut off my electricity, heating and water. I was evicted a year later. I have been sleeping in my old car ever since."	
6. "My girlfriend and I were living together, and we were planning to start a family. When I found out she was cheating on me, I moved out without asking for any explanations. But I had nowhere to go... I was getting more and more depressed. I quit my job and ended up living on the streets in no time at all."	

Task 4

Imagine that you have a chance to interview the homeless person in the picture below. In pairs, prepare such an interview and present it to the rest.

Consider including the following information:

- a. Previous life
- b. Reason for homelessness
- c. Hopes for the future
- d. What the sign says



Photo by David Meddows

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**.