Lesson Plan 2: Prepositions of Time

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Grammar Analysis

and

Lesson Plan: “Time for Prepositions!”

TESL 515
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Grammatical Analysis of the Lesson Plan

The following lesson was taught in a 6th-8th grade middle school English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom in a suburban area of south Orange County. The students were all low income to middle class students performing at a language level 3, according to the California English Language Development Test (CELDT), which translates to a high intermediate communicative competence. This particular class meets for a “zero” period, one hour before the regular school day, with the intent to help these students progress at an accelerated rate to level 4 or 5 in their language competence and test out of the ESL class by the end of the year. According to their school records, many of these students have been “stuck” at level three since elementary school, so the need for this class was apparent. I also realize that native English speakers can rely heavily on what ‘sounds right’ in language, and the language learners in this class often do not have that luxury early on in their language journey.

Therefore, designing a lesson using grammar skills in context was crucial to these language learner’s advanced growth in English speaking and comprehension. In speaking with my mentor teacher, I asked if a lesson on prepositions of time would be appropriate for this set of students; she agreed that it would be a useful topic for them to learn.

The students were currently learning grammar rules and had already received lessons on prepositions in general. In my pre-observation meeting with my mentor teacher I asked how she taught prepositions and she explained she used the example: “anything a squirrel can do to a tree.” I was able to reference this example when I taught the lesson. One of the successful aspects of my lesson was the ability to utilize the students’ background knowledge and synchronize my lesson with what they already learned. This made my teaching of the new use of prepositions for time an easier transition for the students. In addition, I created a chart for the prepositions of time - at, in and on – that included the definition of how to use each form, a fill in the blank sentence to assist teacher guided instruction and a...
blank column where students generated their own uses of each preposition. This chart was helpful and set a solid foundation for the rest of the lesson. Because the students were able to understand the rule, they were easily able to participate in the communicative activity that followed.

The communicative activity during the lesson went very well, but it was also a challenge in the implementation of this lesson. Because this was not my class, I had to adjust some parts of my teaching style. For example, I normally speak to every single one of my students by name throughout one lesson. I was unable to do this in this class as I did not know all of their names and some of them were very quiet because they did not know me. I knew two students, however, because they are in my regular English class, and a few other students were more outgoing and vocal. Their willingness to communicate made for a more exciting interactive discussion time, which is more my style. Overall, this did not seem to affect the class as a whole; the feedback from the students was that the chart I created and the interview activity helped them understand these prepositions in an easier and clear way and the feedback from the teacher was that she would use this chart and the exit ticket from this activity for future reference in her grammar lessons!

This feedback reinforced that this lesson was appropriate for the language level of the students. None of them seemed physically or visibly frustrated and all of them were talking and on task during the interview activity. If I were to teach this lesson in a lower language level class or in a class with more language level variety, I would add more picture visuals that show clocks, times and dates. I may even borrow or make an elementary style clock and pocket calendar to visually show times and dates.

In addition to the use of the clock and pocket calendars, some other changes I would make include using more volume and inflection in my voice. This will make my points more clear and my lessons more pleasing to listen to. I would also adjust the lesson to include a True/False style activity where I read sentences using the prepositions, at, in and on, and students have to decide if the preposition is
being used for time or location. These prepositions are often misunderstood by students and it is good for them to be aware of both uses. These changes would reflect the teaching principle: “selecting appropriate techniques for addressing ESL/EFL students’ grammar and learning needs.” The needs of my students were first assessed through my pre-observation meeting and then ongoing throughout the lesson as I saw where their developmental understanding peaked. At the end of the lesson students were assessed through an exit ticket where they wrote a sample sentence using a preposition of time that they heard or used during the interview activity. The interview activity allowed students to “improve both accuracy and fluency of production…[and] develop the receptive processing of grammar as well.” (Thornbury, 1999, 111) Accuracy, fluency and receptive processing are all complicated, yet important, elements of grammar learning. This lesson worked to develop all these areas while also teaching a relevant and necessary communicative form – the prepositions of time.
Lesson Plan 2: Prepositions of Time

Title: “Time for Prepositions”

Time Frame: Approximately 90 minutes (lesson and assessment)

Lesson Outcomes:

By the end of class SWBAT...

- Identify and use ‘at,’ ‘in’ and ‘on’ in sentences in the context of TIME.
- Show their comprehension of when to use ‘at,’ ‘in’ and ‘on’ as related to time by filling out a calendar with ‘appointments’ and events and then participating in an interview with their partner.

Rationale for Learning Outcomes: I chose these learning outcomes because the students had recently had a lesson on prepositions in general and these outcomes aligned with their current curriculum. Additionally, they seemed simple enough to complete in one class period without trying to teach too many rules or confuse the students. This lesson can be utilized and modified for any ESL/EFL context of any age, although recommended for an intermediate or above level to ensure students have a grasp of conversational vocabulary and also of the concept of time.

Assumptions: Students should be intermediate to advanced learners – enough to be able to hold a conversation. You might consider giving a lesson on prepositions in general first and/or prepositions of location before you discuss prepositions of time, especially since these prepositions can also tell location. (Ex. The book is ON the shelf.)

Materials Needed/Preparation Steps:

- White board
- Individual student white boards
- Document Camera (Optional, to project handouts as you explain/model task)
- Question Slips for Hook – Appendix A
- Blank Calendar Print out - Appendix B
- Set of interview questions (one for each student) – Appendix B
- Exit Assessment Ticket - Appendix C

Hook/Warm-up: (10-15 minutes)

a) Give each student a slip of paper. On each slip of paper is a question

EX: Q: What were you doing AT 9am today?
Q: How old will you be IN two months?
Q: Where are you going ON Friday?
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b) Student have to walk around the room and ask their question to three other students. Other students should do their best to answer the questions using complete sentences. Once everyone has asked three people, they sit down and discuss. Did they see a pattern in any of the questions or answers? Lead in to lesson on prepositions of time.

Main Activities: (45 -50 minutes)

1. Teach the prepositions of time. (10 minutes) On the white board write:
   - **AT** = specific time (Ex.: I wake up every morning **at 8am**.)
   - **IN** = future; usually refers to months, years and seasons. (Ex.: I will be 15 **in January**.)
   - **ON** = usually refers to days of the week or dates. (Ex. ‘We will go to the park **on Monday**.’ and ‘I have an interview **on the 14th**.’)

   Give sentence examples of each one. (Use the hook/intro slip sentences if you need to or just use them for inspiration for examples you make up on the spot.

   Students can copy the above information in their grammar notebooks (if they have one, otherwise write on lined paper in their English binder.) Writing down the above information will help them remember the rules!

2. For practice and a good visual, show the following YouTube Video of “at-in-on” usage. (2 minutes) >>> [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8w6j14YdSvA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8w6j14YdSvA)

3. INTERACTION (5 minutes) Using the same questions from the warm up, show fill in the blank sentences. (Copy the hook questions from Appendix A, deleting the preposition of time word or white it out.) Have students fill in the blank with the correct preposition of time – writing their answers on their own individual white boards at their desk so you can quickly check for understanding. Reteach as necessary.

4. (5 -10 minutes) Once the majority of students are writing the correct answers on their white boards, allow students to work with their table partner to create their own ‘at,’ ‘on’ and ‘in’ prepositions of time sentences. (One of each) They should write the sentences down on their white board or on a piece of paper.

5. (5 minutes) Use the document camera to project sample sentences that the students generate. Each set of partners can also put a star next to their best sentence and that can be the sentence the teacher shares and discusses. Use the sentences as discussion points to encourage and reteach, if necessary.

6. (15 minutes) Students practice with the prepositions but this time they will be given 3x5 cards or slips of paper with only dates, times, months, seasons or years on them and they will have to come up with a sentence that uses the correct preposition for that time or date.

   **EX:** A student’s card may say: “Friday” and the student would have to make up a sentence such as:“I am going to the movies on Friday.” Or it may say: “Spring” and the student would have to answer “I play lacrosse in the spring.” Etc. Students can do this activity with a partner. Each student can pull “words from a hat” or bag and share sentences with each other. This is an opportunity for you to informally assess through observation what students ‘get it.’ Reteach those students who need help.
Wrap-up/Review: (2-5 minutes) Remind students when these terms are used. Repeat good sentences you heard during the activity. Show the intro video again, (optional, if you have extra time) this time pausing and seeing if students can recall when each term is used.

*Assessment Exit Ticket: Before the assessment plan for this activity, give students the Exit ticket (Appendix C). Each student needs to write a question that requires a preposition of time to be used in the answer to the question. The teacher will use the exit ticket to determine what each student knows and as a guide to determine re-teaching or further grammar assessment needs.

Assessment Plan: (30 minutes)

Students will fill out a blank calendar with dates and events. (Appendix B) Then, using the bank of interview questions, they will interview each other and answer using the proper prepositions of time.

Example, after the students fill out their chart (with preselected appointments and events) they will have to answer questions such as “Do you have a doctor’s appointment on Saturday?” and “When do you have soccer practice?” etc.

Extensions: Students can study and review by playing the “walk the plank” game.
http://www.englishmedialab.com/GrammarGames/walk%20plank/prepositions%20of%20time/prepositions%20of%20time.html
References

_AT, IN and ON prepositions with time - Tutor time (english grammar) [Video File]. Retrieved from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8w6j14YdSvA_

Prepositions of time AT, IN, ON and FOR. Walk the plank game. Retrieved from: http://www.englishmedialab.com/GrammarGames/walk%20plank/prepositions%20of%20time/prepositions%20of%20time.html

APPENDIX A

Directions:

- Cut the following questions into strips. (Optional: type or write onto 3x5 cards and laminate.)
- Hand out one strip to each student.
- Students read their question strip to at least three other students, the other students answer the question using a complete sentence (incorporating the question into their answer)
- Once everyone has asked three students, they may sit down.

**Review the questions; you may need to edit them to fit your context and students’ interests.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What were you doing AT 9am today?</td>
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<tr>
<td>How old will you be IN two months?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Where are you doing ON Saturday?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What are you doing AT 6pm tonight?</td>
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<td>What classes are you taking IN January?</td>
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<td>Do you have a break for lunch ON Thursday?</td>
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<td>Do you eat breakfast AT 3pm?</td>
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<td>Did you go to the football game ON Friday?</td>
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<td>Will you be done with your project IN two weeks?</td>
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<td>Do you sleep during the day or AT night?</td>
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<td>Are you going out of town IN December?</td>
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<td>Do you have time to study for the test ON Wednesday?</td>
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<td>Will you be in the library AT 2:00 today?</td>
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<td>Do you have any tutoring appointments IN October?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Question</td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are you going to the pep rally ON Friday?</td>
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<td>Did you go to your dorm AT lunch?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Were you born IN 2001?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Are you joining the grammar club ON Tuesday?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does the coffee shop open AT 5am?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Did Abraham Lincoln live IN the 1500’s?</td>
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APPENDIX B

Use ALL of these events to fill out the following blank calendar. Write each event ONCE and choose a TIME for your event.

1. Breakfast
2. Lunch
3. Dinner
4. Go to the library
5. Eye doctor’s appointment
6. Dentist appointment
7. Study for the test!
8. Pep rally at lunch!
9. Football game
10. Register for spring semester classes.
11. Go to the grammar club
12. Tutoring
13. Study for the test
14. Work on my science project
15. Science project due!
16. Coffee with friends!
17. Go out of town (for any two days in a row)
18. Go to sleep.
19. Wake up!
20. Go to the birthday party!
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(Month)

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THE INTERVIEW

Pair students up. Partner A asks the questions first and partner B answers the questions next. This portion is conversational. Remember to answer using complete sentences! Your sentence also has to include a preposition of time, so make sure you answer in a way that includes a preposition of time!

1. What time did you eat breakfast this morning?
2. What time did you have lunch?
3. What time do you usually eat dinner?
4. When will you be at the library?
5. When is your eye doctor's appointment this month?
6. Is your dentist appointment this week?
7. Are you studying for the test this week?
8. Are you going to the pep rally at lunch this Friday?
9. Are you going to the Football game this Friday?
10. The deadline was yesterday – did you register for spring semester classes?
11. Do you have a grammar club meeting on the 30th?
12. Did you go to tutoring on the 14th?
13. Are you studying for the test this week?
14. Will you work on your science project the second weekend of the month?
15. Is your Science project due the last Monday of the month?
16. Do you have coffee with friends planned the week of the 8th?
17. Are you going out of town on the 21st-22nd?
18. What time do you usually go to sleep?
19. What time do you wake up in the morning?
20. Is Sarah’ birthday party on the 7th?
# ASSESSMENT TICKET

**Directions:** You and your partner must EACH fill out one of these assessment tickets after the calendar interview. You need to choose any three questions from the interview, copy them down here, and then write your answer to show EACH of the prepositions of time. Write your answers below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#1</th>
<th>Preposition Used in Answer: _____</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q:</td>
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<td>A:</td>
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<tr>
<th>#2</th>
<th>Preposition Used in Answer: _____</th>
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<td>Q:</td>
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<td>A:</td>
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<tr>
<th>#3</th>
<th>Preposition Used in Answer: _____</th>
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<td>Q:</td>
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<td>A:</td>
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