

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:

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

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.

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.)

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.

Speed-dating lesson: Teacher's notes

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

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

Level: Intermediate +

Age: Teenagers and adults

Time: About 1 hour or 90 minutes for a large class.

Resources:

- 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

- 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 2: Reading (15 minutes)

Pre-reading

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

Reading

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

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.