

**Level:** Elementary – Intermediate / A2 – B1

**Age:** Teenagers

**Time:** This lesson can be divided up in various ways to suit the time you have with your students. Below are three time options which you can choose from depending on the length of your class. However, these are just suggestions and there are plenty of other ways you could divide the lesson up.

90 minutes – Complete all activities in The wall and Fly on the wall

60 minutes – Complete all activities in The wall and Fly on the wall but students graffiti their walls for homework

45 minutes – Complete all activities in The wall and Fly on the wall but without the idioms tasks and students graffiti their walls for homework

**Summary:** This lesson is divided into two sections: The wall and Fly on the wall. Students will (depending on the length of the lesson):

1. identify famous walls;
2. look at examples of graffiti;
3. graffiti a wall;
4. complete a description of a room;
5. describe their own room;
6. learn some wall idioms;
7. practise active listening.

**Key skills:** speaking, reading, listening

**Subskills:** speculating and guessing, prepositions of place, idioms, phrases for active listening

**Materials:** one copy of both worksheets per student

## THE WALL

1. Hand out The wall worksheet 1. Students complete the 'These four walls' activity, matching each wall with its description.

2. Check the answers as a class. Have the students visited any of the walls? Are there any famous walls near where they live, such as ancient city walls?

**Key:** 1. d; 2. c; 3. a; 4. b

3. Next, students are going to look at some famous graffiti. Tell them to look at the six examples in the 'Get out your spray can' activity and match each one with the corresponding description.

4. When they have finished, get the students to compare their answers with a partner. Then check through the answers as a class.

**Key:** 1. *Kilroy was here*; 2. *Don't worry be happy*;  
3. *George Davis is innocent*; 4. *Turk 182*; 5. *I ♥ NY*;  
6. *Brits out*

5. Explain that the students are now going to cover a wall with graffiti – in English! Hand out copies of The wall worksheet 2. Tell them that they can use the graffiti in the previous activity for ideas. Give the students a time limit to cover their wall with their creations.

6. When they have finished, they show a partner their wall. Can their partner guess what everything means? Direct students towards the Phrasebook, which contains language used to make guesses and check for confirmation – they can use this as they ask their partner about their wall.

Alternatively, get students to write one piece of graffiti on the wall and then pass their copy of the wall on to the next student, who adds another piece of graffiti. The students keep passing the copies round until they arrive back at the original student, who should now have a wall covered in graffiti created by all the students in the class. They can then discuss the possible meanings of the graffiti on their wall with a partner, using the speculating language in the box on the worksheet.

## FLY ON THE WALL

1. Students sit face to face with another student in the class. They ask the other student to describe the wall behind them without looking at it. They can give each other help, if needed. When they have finished, ask who did better?

2. Now, give them copies of Fly on the wall worksheet 1. They should look at the drawing of Oliver's wall and use it to help them complete his description with the correct words.



3. Check the answers as a class. Then, students test their partner. One student covers the words and the text on their worksheet; the other student reads the text, stopping every time there is a gap. Their partner must try to remember the correct phrase to fill the gap.

**Key:** 1. behind; 2. in the middle of; 3. above; 4. to the left of; 5. in the middle of; 6. to the right of; 7. in front of; 8. behind; 9. to the right of; 10. below

4. Next, they draw a picture of their own bedroom wall and write a description of it. Remind them to use the language from the previous activity to help them. When the description is complete, they read it to another student in the class. The other student has to draw the wall. When they have finished, students compare their drawings. Are there any major differences?

5. Explain to the students what an idiom is (definition: an expression whose meaning is different from the meaning of the individual words. For example, 'to have your feet on the ground' is an idiom meaning 'to be sensible'). Tell students that the next activity will introduce them to idioms containing the word *wall*. They must try to work out the correct meaning.

6. Check the answers as a class and deal with any questions the students may have about the meanings of the idioms.

**Key:** 1. a; 2. b; 3. a; 4. c; 5. b

7. Next, students will use each idiom in a different context. Tell them to complete the 'Wall idioms practice' activity.

8. Students compare answers. Then, check as a whole class.

**Key:** 1. his back's against the wall; 2. it's like talking to a brick wall; 3. a fly on the wall; 4. off-the-wall; 5. driving me up the wall; 6. the writing's on the wall

9. Direct students' attention to the Phrasebook, which gives them language for active listening. Go over the language with them. Now, tell them they will have to respond to what you say using the language as you tell them about a time when you wished you could be a fly on the wall. Then, tell them what really drives you up the wall, and get them to respond using the language again. Ask students to think of a time when they wished they could be a fly on the wall and then to tell their partner about it. Then, ask them to tell their partner what really drives them up the wall. They should respond using the language you practised.

### Homework task

Ask students to search the internet for graffiti by Banksy. They choose the piece of graffiti they like best and write about it, describing it and saying why they like it.

**Note:** You may feel that some Banksy graffiti is not appropriate for your students, in which case point them towards less controversial examples of his work and ask students to write about one of those. Give them the following search terms so that they can search for the graffiti on Google Images: *Chalk Farm maid; follow your dreams cancelled; cave paintings removal; flower thrower*

## THE WALL

These four walls

Match each of the walls below with the correct description.

- |                            |                     |
|----------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. Hadrian's Wall          | 2. the Berlin Wall  |
| 3. the Great Wall of China | 4. the Western Wall |
- When it was finally completed during the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), it was over 2,000km long. Today, it is the only man-made object that is visible from space.
  - This wall is also known as the Wailing Wall. Jewish people from all over the world come to pray here. The wall is the only remaining part of the Second Temple of Jerusalem, destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD.
  - It was made of concrete, was over 100km long and almost 4m high, and it is estimated that around 70 people died trying to cross it. Demolition of this wall started on 9th November, 1989.
  - It was built to protect the northern boundary of Roman Britain against hostile tribes to the north. Work on the wall started in about 122 AD and it took about 11 years to complete.

Get out your spray can

True graffiti artists express themselves and leave a record on the wall of who they are and how they feel. See if you can match each example of famous graffiti below with the correct description.



- Leave your name.** This graffiti first appeared in the United States in the 1930s and it is now perhaps the most famous piece of graffiti of all time.
- Write a message.** This is an example of graffiti from 1990, inspired by a pop song with an optimistic message.
- Support a cause.** In 1975, a London taxi driver was sent to prison for robbery. People who believed he was not guilty wrote this slogan all over London.
- Write your tag.** This 'tag' appeared on the subway trains of New York in the early 1970s. The idea behind 'tagging' is to write your graffiti identity in as many places as possible.
- Declare your love.** This was originally part of a campaign to attract tourists to New York. Today, it is used for anything or anybody.
- Make a political comment.** This graffiti from Northern Ireland told British soldiers that some people wanted them to leave the country. It has many racist and sexist variations.



## Graffiti your own wall



## PHRASEBOOK

**Making guesses**

I think this is / means ...

I reckon ... stands for ...

I think you drew .. because ...

Could this be ...?

**Asking for confirmation**

Am I right?

Am I far off?

**Speculating**

I wonder if ...

This might be / mean / stand for ...

It's difficult to say, but maybe ...

This looks like ...

I'm not really sure, but perhaps ...



## FLY ON THE WALL

Describing a wall

Look at this drawing of Oliver's wall. Complete the description using the words below.



to the left of  
to the right of

below  
above

in the middle of  
behind

to the right of  
in front of

behind  
in the middle of

I'm looking at it right now. It's the wall \_\_\_\_\_(1) my computer. Right \_\_\_\_\_(2) it, there's a corkboard. There's not much on it at the moment – just a couple of notes reminding me to do things. \_\_\_\_\_(3) the corkboard, there's a long poster of the Himalayas with Mount Everest in the middle. I went to Nepal two years ago but it was the monsoon season and too cloudy to see the mountains, so I bought this poster instead! \_\_\_\_\_(4) the corkboard, there's a shelf. \_\_\_\_\_(5) the shelf there are some books. \_\_\_\_\_(6) the corkboard, there's a really beautiful painting from Indonesia. On the painting, there's a woman sitting \_\_\_\_\_(7) a very small house with a tree \_\_\_\_\_(8) it. \_\_\_\_\_(9) the painting, there's a poster from the Rioja region of Spain. On the poster you can see wine bottles from the different wines that are produced in this region. And, \_\_\_\_\_(10) the shelf, there are some holiday photos.

## Wall idioms meaning

Choose the best definition for each wall idiom. The idioms are in bold.

1. Callum's inviting Emily round for dinner tonight. He's going to ask her to marry him. I wish I could **be a fly on the wall!**
  - a. be there and not be seen
  - b. stop it happening
  - c. be there and make them feel uncomfortable
2. He always plays techno music when he's at home. **It drives me up the wall.**
  - a. It makes me want to get up and dance.
  - b. It really annoys me.
  - c. I have to go upstairs so I can't hear it.
3. Chloe? She's the one who wears really **off-the-wall** clothes.
  - a. strange
  - b. horrible
  - c. standard and boring
4. I've tried to convince her not to start boxing but **it's like talking to a brick wall.**
  - a. You can't understand what she says.
  - b. She can't hear what I say.
  - c. She won't listen.
5. I know I said I'd help you, but I can't right now. There's a serious problem at work and **my back's against the wall.**
  - a. I've got a bad back.
  - b. I'm in a very difficult situation.
  - c. I'm really busy.

## Wall idioms practice

Complete the sentences with the idioms below.

it's like talking to a brick wall

driving me up the wall

a fly on the wall

the writing's on the wall

his back's against the wall

off-the-wall

1. The football coach was really popular but \_\_\_\_\_ after all those terrible results.
2. I keep telling her to tidy up her room but \_\_\_\_\_.
3. I'd love to be \_\_\_\_\_ when John goes to see the school director!
4. She has these really \_\_\_\_\_ ideas. I don't know whether she's joking or being serious.
5. Hey! Will you stop sniffing? It's \_\_\_\_\_.
6. Some people think \_\_\_\_\_ for the printed page and that books will disappear now that people have e-readers and tablets.

Think of a time that you wished you could be a fly on the wall. Then, tell your partner about it.

Now, tell your partner what really drives you up the wall.

Use the phrases in the box below to show you are listening and encourage your partner to continue talking.

### PHRASEBOOK

#### Reacting to what your partner is saying

Yes, that would be fascinating.

Wow!

Yes, that would drive *me* up the wall, too.

I can see why that annoys you.

Oh, how annoying!

#### Showing you are listening

Ah, OK.

I see.

#### Encouraging your partner to say more

Really?

So, what happened next?

Tell me a bit more about that.