

Lesson: Critical Thinking – Reviews

Level: Pre-intermediate

Age: Teenagers / Adults

Time: 60-90 minutes

Language objectives: reading for information, writing a newspaper report / review

Key life skills: expressing an opinion, critical thinking (analysis and evaluation)

Materials: one copy of the reading and worksheet per student



Procedure

Pre-reading tasks

1. Tell students that you have some friends / family visiting you and you'd like to take them to a nice local restaurant. Put them in pairs and ask them to come up with three suggestions.

Tip: let the students choose

If you're new to where you're teaching this can be genuinely useful information! However, if you are familiar with the local restaurants make sure you let the students choose and don't let them know if you've been to many already.

2. After a while join the pairs up and, in a group of four, students can look at their suggestions and choose one.

3. Feedback: ask for the suggestions. If there are a number, perhaps write these on the board and get the students to vote for an overall favourite.

4. Then ask students to think about what is the most important thing for them when they choose to eat out. Write on the board:

- The setting
- The price of the food and drink
- The quality (how good the food is)
- The service

Tip: step the speaking activities

This task will be much easier after choosing an actual restaurant. How did they decide?

5. Remaining in their groups of four, ask students to think about adjectives that go with the four categories on the board. They should have at least three or four for each one, thinking about synonyms and antonyms too. For the setting they can come up with ideas like romantic, but allow them to include adjectives to describe the décor and ambience too: busy (quiet), popular (unpopular), trendy etc.

6. Give each student a copy of the worksheet. Make sure students are helping each other and that they are all writing the suggestions down. If you have one group with lots of ideas, split them up to share these with the others.

Tip: do an example first

Show the suggestion expensive that is already on the worksheet. Elicit inexpensive, not expensive, cheap, good value, overpriced etc.

Tip: monitor well and really encourage students to think about synonyms and antonyms

If the students come up with friendly or polite get them to think of unfriendly and impolite, and then rude, they'll be surprised how much they know already or how they can widen their range of vocabulary so easily.

First reading tasks

1. Give each student a copy of the reading. They need to read this quite quickly and decide which restaurant they would like to go to.

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2. Let students compare their choices – was one restaurant more popular than the others? Which one, and why?

Tip: give students real life tasks

This is an authentic response to information about restaurants.

Second reading tasks

1. Now students read again and look more closely at the information. They need to give each restaurant marks out of five for each category which makes a total of 20 points. So if they think the service is good they give 4 or 5 points, and if it's bad 1 or 2. (Note, however, that for price it's more about how happy the customer was paying the price, not how expensive the meal was).

2. Students compare their answers with each other. The marks can vary of course and this allows for some discussion.

Tip: have more interesting comprehension questions

If students have understood the text they will give an appropriate score for the categories. If you are in doubt, ask them to explain their marks – some students may like a quiet, peaceful restaurant whereas others may prefer a noisier atmosphere.

Post-reading reading tasks - vocabulary

1. There are bound to be more adjectives here than the students came up with. Ask them to add these to the worksheet. Get them to notice the antonyms and synonyms too.

Tip: get students to notice lexical sets

As a native reader we know what kinds of words are associated with food and restaurants. Students need to be aware of these too.

Post-reading reading tasks - writing

1. Students now write their own review of a restaurant of their choice. They look at the text which shows examples of what they should do. It doesn't need to be very long but each category should be covered.

2. Suggest students make notes first. Encourage students to use a range of vocabulary, especially any words which are new to them. The writing is to be done on the worksheet.

3. Once they have done some preparation they can do the writing for homework.

Tip: link the reading to other skills

After the writing there is now another reading task – students read what their classmates have written and award marks for the different categories. Does the writer agree with the total given?

Tip: make the task really authentic!

Why not suggest that students go out together to a restaurant. They can then write a review and compare what they have each written about the place.

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The Orchard

I had a very nice meal at The Orchard restaurant. The food was lovely – delicious and full of flavour. The only disappointment was the dessert – the apple pie was far too sweet and it was cold too. We chose to eat in the garden which was full of beautiful flowers and very relaxing. The service was quite good but as we were in the garden it was more difficult to find a waiter when we wanted to order something. Apart from that it was an enjoyable evening. As for the price – what a bargain, excellent value for money!

The quality	/5	The Service	/5	The setting	/5	The price	/5	Total	/20
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PARK INN

The best thing about Park Inn was the service, it was excellent. There was a warm welcome when we arrived and the staff were very helpful all evening. Unfortunately, the food wasn't as good. The menu looked interesting but the meals were rather tasteless. I ordered a curry which was very mild and had very little flavour. Then when we had coffee at the end it was far too strong! It's quite a nice room but having black and white photographs of famous people on the wall is not an original idea. It's not a cheap restaurant and I wasn't happy to pay so much for boring food.

The quality	/5	The Service	/5	The setting	/5	The price	/5	Total	/20
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RICHARD'S PLACE

When we entered the restaurant, we were surprised by the lovely interior design of it. So stylish, so modern! This is one of the most popular restaurants in town and it's very easy to see why. The quality of the food was extremely good and we all had very tasty meals. The starters were wonderful. However, the staff were unfriendly and very slow. They were also disorganized – they gave us the wrong food and forgot to bring the wine. So the food was great and excellent value for money but it was ruined by very, very poor service!

The quality	/5	The Service	/5	The setting	/5	The price	/5	Total	/20
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Candlelight

I went to Candlelight because I wanted a romantic meal with my wife – what a mistake! The music playing was horrible and very loud too. There were no candles, the place was full of bright, flashing lights! The food was average, nothing special at all. My wife's chocolate cake was tasty but I had a lemon tart which was far too sour. Our waitress never noticed when our glasses were empty and we had to wait over half an hour for the bill. It wasn't expensive but as the food wasn't great I'm glad I didn't have to pay any more.

The quality	/5	The Service	/5	The setting	/5	The price	/5	Total	/20
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The Riverside

It was lovely sitting outside and looking over the river. There were lots of little lanterns and fairy lights everywhere and it all looked very pretty. The food was good, nothing very special but quite tasty. We went last year and I saw that the menu was the same. I had a steak for my main course which was a little overcooked but the dessert was delicious. The service was ok, we didn't have to wait too long for our food but the waiter never looked very happy! It's quite an expensive place but with the view I think it's good value for money.

The quality	/5	The Service	/5	The setting	/5	The price	/5	Total	/20
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