

Lesson Plan 1: The past and future forms of “be able to”

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Class Type

- Intermediate level young adults.

Purpose

- The purpose of this lesson is to provide students with the tools to explain reasons for absence clearly and politely.
- Note: For the purpose of providing opportunities for meaningful review, this lesson is most effective when conducted early in the course.

Objectives:

Terminal Objective

- Students will become proficient at politely explaining reasons for past and future absences.

Enabling Objectives

- Students will be able to understand and produce the past and future usages of the phrasal modal “be able to” as well as review the use of “have to”.
- Students will become familiar with and be able to produce a variety of collocations relevant to their daily lives.

Materials and equipment:

- Prompt cards (1 set per 10 students)
- Running dictation handout (1 per 2 students)
- Teacher’s Attendance Sheet handout (1 per student)

Procedures

- As a warm up, review the past tense form of the modal “have to”. Write the question: “What did you have to do in high school?” on the board and have students stand in groups. Give one ball to each group and model that students are to say something they had to do in high school and then pass the ball to another group member. Keep the pace fast and continue this way until all students have contributed a few sentences each.
- To introduce the theme of the lesson, write “absence from class” on the whiteboard

- with the time expression *yesterday* written beneath.
- To set the scene, call on a student to play the role of you as teacher while you play the role of the student. Act out a situation in which you as a student explain to the teacher why you were absent from class the previous day. Use the target structure: “I am sorry, but I wasn’t able to attend class yesterday because I had a doctor’s appointment”
 - Next, elicit the above structure by asking students to recall what you said in the role play.
 - Write the word “tomorrow” on the whiteboard and repeat the same procedure to elicit the structure “I am sorry, but I won’t be able to attend your class tomorrow because I have a doctor’s appointment”.
 - To teach the meaning of the target structure elicit/ teach the difference in register between the modals *can’t/couldn’t* and *be able to* by emphasizing that the latter has a more polite tone.
 - Next, pass out the prompt cards (1 per student) and have them produce the complete target structure by looking at the written prompts. As students call out the sentences, correct any grammatical mistakes and teach any new vocabulary where necessary.
 - To check that students are able to produce these phrases correctly, put the students into pairs and play a game of running dictation. Before beginning this game, hand out the running dictation sheet (1 per pair) and tape or have students tape the prompts around the room. Model that partner A is to read a prompt, memorize it and return to partner B who will listen and write down the prompt under the appropriate column on the running dictation handout sheet. (while partner A should say the entire target structure to partner B- including the correct use of the modal(s)- partner B need only write down the reason for absence under the appropriate headings)
 - For more controlled practice, collect the prompt cards and divide the students into two teams. Give an even number of cards to one person on each team. Model that students are to produce sentences based on the prompts on each card and then pass the card to the next student who will do the same. If a student makes a mistake the card will return to the first person in the group. The first team with the last person holding all of the cards is the winner.
 - Next, ask the students to role play by dividing the class into students and teachers. Give the handout “attendance sheet” to the students playing the role of teachers. Those playing the roles of students should have 1 prompt card. Model that the

students are to approach the teachers and explain the reasons for absence while the teachers complete the attendance sheets. When finished, change roles and repeat the activity.

Extension

- Divide the class into groups of 3-4 students and have them take part in a classroom poster contest. From memory students create posters that list the target structures and reasons for absence. Select the best poster and hang it in the classroom. Encourage students to use this poster as reference when they are absent.

Evaluation

- As students are leaving the class have them approach you individually on their way out the door provide reasons for past and future absence.

Extra Class Work

- Assign each student one of the prompts and have them make a new prompt by drawing a picture that indicates the reason for absence. Collect the cards next class and use them to review this lesson.
- Encourage/require students to use these structures when they are absent from future classes.

Prompt Cards

Tomorrow have a doctor's appointment	Yesterday have to meet with another teacher	Yesterday be not feeling well	Yesterday miss the train	Yesterday oversleep
Tomorrow Have a family emergency	Tomorrow have to go to part-time job	Yesterday catch a cold	Tomorrow have a job interview	Tomorrow have to take a test

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Running Dictation handout

I'm sorry, but I wasn't able to come to class yesterday because....	I'm sorry but I won't be able to come to class tomorrow because....
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• • • • •	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• • • • •

Teacher's Attendance Sheet

	Name	Date			Reason for Absence
		/	/	/	
1					
2					
3					
4					
5					
6					
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					
14					