

Pawn shop by María Sándor

Age:	Adults
Level:	Intermediate +
Time:	50 minutes
Objective:	to practise the present simple and the present continuous, plus the language of negotiation and persuasion
Key skills:	speaking, listening, reading
Materials:	one role card per student; one copy of sentences per group of clients (cut up) / pawnbroker (not cut up); one copy of the revision table per student; one copy of the key per pawnbroker; one copy of the scoreboard per group of clients and pair of shop assistants / pawnbrokers

Introduction

This lesson practises the use of the present simple and continuous, but the activity can be used to revise any grammar problem (non-finites, past tenses, modals, comparison of adjectives, articles, prepositions, etc.) as well as phrasals or idioms. Also, it can teach the students the art of negotiating, which gives an extra flavour to the activity. As there are definite roles, the whole class can be kept busy.

Procedure

1. Ask students if they know what a pawn shop is. Explain that people who are in urgent need of cash often take valuable objects to pawn shops where they leave these objects as a deposit and get cash for them. Later, if they would like to have the object back, they can redeem it. So, this is seen as a quick and simple way to get a loan. It is not necessary to redeem the objects and, if the owner of the object does not return after a certain time, the pawnbroker can sell the object to anyone interested in it. Pawning involves a lot of negotiating as both the client and the pawnbroker want to get the best deal.
2. Tell students they are going to role-play pawning. Explain that some of them are going to be clients, some are going to play shop assistants and some will be pawnbrokers.
3. Give each student a role card. **Note:** the role of shop assistant requires confidence and

quick-thinking, so you might want to give these cards to stronger students.

4. Tell students to sit in groups according to the role cards they have drawn. Divide the group of clients into smaller groups of two to three students. **Note:** the number of small groups of clients depends on the number of shop assistants and pawnbrokers. If there are four small groups of clients, you need four shop assistants and four pawnbrokers.
5. Allow the students time (e.g. two minutes) to read their role cards. Make sure they understand what they have to do and explain any unknown vocabulary.
6. Hand out the cut-up sentences, illustrating the use of the present simple and the present continuous, to each group of clients. Allow the students five minutes to go through the sentences and decide whether they are correct or not.
7. Give the shop assistants the revision table, which they can read while the clients work on the set of sentences. Check whether they know the different meanings of the verbs used in the present continuous with a change of meaning (for example, see meaning 'the ability to perceive something' and see meaning 'meeting someone').
8. Give each pawnbroker a copy of the sentences (not cut up) and ask them to decide which sentences are correct and which are not. Consequently, the whole class is kept busy, so the teacher can go around and see how the students are coping with their tasks.
9. Write the following rules on the board as each group works:
 - The maximum amount for each item is £100.
 - The client starts the negotiation.

Setting a maximum amount for each item will help the students to decide on the sums they are going to ask for.

You can now tell the clients to decide among themselves who will sell which sentences and how much money they want for each sentence. All the sentences have to be sold, so a student will have at least three sentences to 'pawn'.

10. When this preparation phase is over, draw the students' attention to the rules on the board, then ask students if they know any phrases that people use when they are negotiating. Write any correct suggestions on the board and add the following:

Well, I can see your point, but unfortunately I can't agree with it.

I hate to disagree with you, but ...

I'm sorry but this is just not good enough.

Maybe we can come to an agreement.

Let's meet halfway.

Encourage students to use these in the activity.

11. Now the activity can begin. Decide where the pawn shops in the classroom should be, tell the shop assistants to take their places behind the desks (representing the counters) and tell the clients which shop to go to. Each group of clients should go to the same pawn shop. Give out the tickets to the shop assistants and explain that, after each negotiation, they should write the price of the item on it and give it to the client. Likewise, tell the clients that, after the negotiation, they should write the price of the item next to the sentence and give it to the shop assistant.
12. To make sure the students understand what they have to do, role-play the negotiation between client and shop assistant with a stronger student in front of the class. For example:

Teacher: Good morning.

Student: Good morning. Can I help you?

Teacher: Well, I've got this valuable item. Have a look at it. [Show the student a sentence slip, e.g. *It doesn't matter how much it costs, I'm wanting it right now.*] Nice, isn't it? I've had it for ages, but unfortunately now I have to part with it. I need the money.

Student: It looks really nice. How much would you like for it?

Teacher: Well, I thought £100.

Student: I'm sorry but I can't give you that much. It's not perfect, so I'll give you £30 for it.

Teacher: That's not enough. Will you give me £50?

Student: No, £40.

Teacher: Make it £45.

Student: Okay, £45.

Teacher: Deal.

Student: Deal.

13. Start the activity. Give fifteen minutes to complete it, highlighting to students that they only have, on average, one and a half minutes for each negotiation and if they don't use all the sentences, this will affect their 'score'. While the clients and shop assistants are working, give the pawnbrokers the key for the sentences to check if they have all the correct answers. When three to four items have been sold, the pawnbrokers can go to the shops they own and start checking the work of their shop assistants. Go around the shops to see if students are using the recommended phrases and if they can cope with the task.

14. When the time is up or all the items have been sold, each group of clients should have ten pawn tickets showing the sum for which they sold their items, and the shop assistants should have ten sentences showing the sum of money at which they bought them. At this point, hand out a copy of the key to each group of clients and the scoreboards to each group of clients and pair of shop assistants / pawnbrokers and ask them to work out the scores.
15. The clients score more points if they sold the items at a high price, whereas the shop assistants score more points if they bought the items at a low price, regardless of whether the sentence was correct or incorrect. The team of clients and shop assistant with the highest scores are the winners.
16. Conduct an evaluation of the activity, asking the clients, shop assistant and pawnbroker from each 'shop' to work together. Ask them to highlight which of the sentences were judged wrongly (addressing any errors), items that the clients / shop assistant negotiated successfully and any negotiating language used. Ask each 'shop' to report back to the class.
17. Quickly go through the rules of using the present simple and the present continuous, using the table given to the shop assistants. Check if students know the different meanings of the verbs used in the present continuous with a change of meaning.

Possible extension activities

- Ask some students who played the clients to write their own set of sentences for the next class and play the game again.
- The activity can be adapted to check or reinforce other grammar points.



ITEM 1

The water is boiling, so it must be 100°C now.

£

ITEM 2

We are visiting our grandparents on a regular basis.

£

ITEM 3

She smells around because the whole place is smelling of burnt bread.

£

ITEM 4

The decorators have left, so we are having a nice, clean house.

£

ITEM 5

The soup tastes perfect; I can tell from the expression on her face as she is tasting it.

£

ITEM 6

Darling, you look wonderful tonight.

£

ITEM 7

People spend more and more on gadgets.

£

ITEM 8

I've torn out two pages; now the book is containing 172 pages.

£

ITEM 9

Do you think that this picture is looking funny?

£

ITEM 10

I can see that you're excited; maybe it's because you're seeing him tonight.

£



ITEM 1	correct
ITEM 2	We visit our grandparents on a regular basis.
ITEM 3	She is smelling around because the whole place smells of burnt bread.
ITEM 4	The decorators have left, so we have a nice, clean house.
ITEM 5	correct
ITEM 6	correct
ITEM 7	People are spending more and more on gadgets.
ITEM 8	I've torn out two pages; now the book contains 172 pages.
ITEM 9	Do you think that this picture looks funny?
ITEM 10	correct



ITEM 1	Sold for £	ITEM 6	Sold for £
ITEM 2	Sold for £	ITEM 7	Sold for £
ITEM 3	Sold for £	ITEM 8	Sold for £
ITEM 4	Sold for £	ITEM 9	Sold for £
ITEM 5	Sold for £	ITEM 10	Sold for £



	CLIENTS	SHOP ASSISTANTS
Correct sentence – £75-100	4 points	1 point
Correct sentence – £50-74	3 points	2 points
Correct sentence – £30-49	2 points	3 points
Correct sentence – less than £29	1 point	4 points
Incorrect sentence – £75-100	4 points	1 point
Incorrect sentence – £50-75	3 points	2 points
Incorrect sentence – £30-49	2 points	3 points
Incorrect sentence – less than £29	1 point	4 points



PRESENT SIMPLE AND PRESENT CONTINUOUS

Present simple

- habitual actions
- permanent situations

Present continuous

- actions in progress
 - changes
- temporary situations

Verbs never used in the continuous

- verbs relating to thinking, e.g. *want, believe, understand*
- verbs relating to opinions, e.g. *like, dislike, love, hate*
 - others, e.g. *contain, consist, resemble, own*

Verbs used in the continuous with a change of meaning

see, hear, feel, taste, smell, look, think, have



CLIENT

You are the client in a pawn shop. Your aim is to sell your items for as much as possible, ideally all above £50. You will receive a set of sentences – these are the ‘items’ that you should sell. The sentences contain examples of the use of the present simple and the present continuous. Decide whether the sentences are correct or not. If they are correct, they will be worth more money. If they are incorrect, they will be worth less. You should decide how much money you should try and get for each sentence.

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SHOP ASSISTANT

You are a shop assistant in a pawn shop. You know that all that glitters is not gold, so if a client offers you an item that seems valuable, you don't want to give too much money for it. Your aim is to get items at the lowest price possible, but within reasonable limits. You will be given a sentence (item) by a client and will have to decide **immediately** how much money to give for it. Correct sentences are worth much more money than incorrect ones. However, ideally, you don't want to sell an item for less than £50. You will have training on how to spot an incorrect sentence.

PAWNBROKER

You are the owner of a pawn shop and you can tell the difference between real value and rubbish. You are a strict boss and you regularly check your employees – you reward good work, but punish mistakes. You will study the sentences belonging to the clients closely and check your assistant's work to make sure that he/she has bought them at the correct price.