

Be a Good Sport!

This lesson plan—like the feature article—focuses on lacrosse. The lesson is divided into three main parts, which emphasize listening, writing, and speaking. You might decide not to use every task, but the lesson is designed so that each step leads naturally to the next one; in particular, students generate information at the end of the listening activity that they can use in the writing activity. And there is no need to worry if you are not a lacrosse expert; the feature article describes the sport in plenty of detail, and the paragraphs provided in the listening and writing activities give students all the information they need to complete the lesson.

This lesson has been developed for upper-beginner and lower-intermediate learners of English.

Objectives: Students will increase their knowledge of lacrosse, demonstrate listening comprehension of a passage about lacrosse, develop a basic paragraph, and talk about being a good sport.

Part I: “I Love Lacrosse” (Listening)

Goals: To familiarize students with features of lacrosse and to have them successfully complete increasingly detailed listening-comprehension exercises

Materials: whiteboard/blackboard; listening passage (provided); picture of a lacrosse stick (if available); copies of the cloze activity, one per student or pair (if available)

Activity 1: Pre-listening (5 minutes)

Goals: To activate students’ background knowledge about lacrosse and get them ready to listen

1. Show a picture of a lacrosse stick, or draw one on the board to the best of your ability. (See page 38 for a photo of lacrosse sticks.)
2. Ask students, “What do you think this is?” If they don’t know, ask them to use their imagination:
 - What do you think this is used for?
 - Does it look like any other object you’re familiar with?
 - It’s a piece of sports equipment. Can you guess which sport?
3. If the students haven’t guessed, tell them that the object is a *lacrosse stick*. Point to the net at the end of the stick and elicit the word *net*. Then tell them that they will be learning about the sport of lacrosse. Ask them about their knowledge of and experience with lacrosse:
 - Have you ever seen lacrosse?
 - Have you ever played lacrosse?
 - Is lacrosse similar to any sports played in our/your country?

Activity 2: While-listening (10 minutes)

Goals: To listen for the main ideas of the text, then for more detailed information

1. Write these questions on the board:
 - How does the speaker feel about lacrosse?
 - Who first played lacrosse?
 - Is lacrosse fast or slow?
2. Read the text below. Have students write their answers to the above questions. Ask students to compare their answers with those of a partner. Then elicit answers from the whole class.

I love lacrosse. I started playing lacrosse when I was ten. I was in fifth grade, and we learned to play lacrosse in gym class. I am from New York State, where many Native Americans once lived. Lacrosse was first played by Native Americans in our area. I like lacrosse for a lot of reasons. First, it's fast—we run up and down the field, trying to throw and catch the ball with our lacrosse sticks. Second, I like being part of a team. I have to work with my friends to play lacrosse because we have to keep passing the ball back and forth. And finally, I am good at using the net at the end of my lacrosse stick to throw and catch. I often score points by throwing the ball into the goal with my stick. Sometimes things get a little rough, but most of the time we have fun and no one gets hurt.

If necessary, use this glossary:

gym class – a class where students practice athletic skills and learn how to play certain sports

Native Americans – the original people of North America

back and forth – from one player or side to another player or side, and back again

rough – a little bit dangerous, with the potential for injury

3. Write the following questions on the board:
 - Where is the speaker from?
 - What are the three reasons that the speaker likes lacrosse?
 - How do players score points in lacrosse?
4. Read the text again. Give students a few seconds to write their answers. Ask students to compare their answers with those of their partner. Then elicit answers from the whole class.

Activity 3: Cloze Listening (10 minutes)

Goal: To listen for specific words in the text

Option A: Cloze Handout

1. If possible, duplicate the cloze version of the text on the next page. Distribute one copy to each student or pair of students, depending on the number of students you have and the number of copies you want to make.
2. Read the text. As you read, students fill in the missing words. You may need to read the text more than once.
3. After students have finished, give them a minute to compare answers; then elicit the answers from the class as a whole.

Option B: Cloze on the Board or a Poster

1. If you cannot make copies of the cloze version, you can still do the activity. Before class, write the cloze version on the board or on poster paper. Be sure to write large enough

4. After students have finished their charts, ask them to compare answers with a partner. Then elicit answers from the entire class. A completed chart could look like this:

| Lacrosse | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| <u>Action Words</u> | <u>About the Sport</u> |
| <i>run</i> | <i>team sport</i> |
| <i>catch</i> | <i>invented by Native Americans</i> |
| <i>throw</i> | <i>fast</i> |
| <i>play</i> | <i>a little rough</i> |
| <i>work together</i> | <i>fun</i> |
| <i>pass back and forth</i> | <i>players use lacrosse sticks</i> |

Keep the chart on the board to use in the next activity.

Activity 5: Post-listening (15 minutes)

Goal: To expand upon and personalize the information in the text

- Put students in small groups to discuss the sports that they like and that are played in their country. Use these questions to get the discussions started:
 - What sports do you like to play?
 - What sports are popular in your/our country?
 - Are there any special sports from your region of the country? What are they?
- Draw a new chart on the board with columns for “Action Words” and “About the Sport.” Ask students in each group to choose one popular sport from their country and fill in a chart with information specific to that sport. For example, a chart for soccer might look like this:

| Soccer | |
|---------------------|---|
| <u>Action Words</u> | <u>About the Sport</u> |
| <i>run</i> | <i>team sport</i> |
| <i>kick</i> | <i>popular worldwide</i> |
| <i>pass</i> | <i>fast</i> |
| <i>shoot</i> | <i>fun</i> |
| <i>save</i> | <i>players cannot use their hands to score or pass</i> |
| <i>score</i> | <i>players try to kick or head the ball into a goal</i> |

Each group should choose a different sport, if possible. Encourage students to see if any of the words on the chart about lacrosse can be used to describe their sport as well.

- Elicit the words on the charts that each group has prepared. As each group reads its list, make a checkmark next to any words that also appear on the lacrosse chart made during Activity 4.

4. After all groups have read their lists, look at the original lacrosse chart and see how many checkmarks appear. If there are a lot of checkmarks, what does this mean? [It means that lacrosse and the other sports have many similarities.] What does it mean if there are no checkmarks? [It means that lacrosse and the other sports are quite dissimilar. Note: It could also mean that different words have been used for similar features—such as *quick* and *fast* or *fun* and *enjoyable*—so make sure students understand that different words might be used to describe features that are similar.]

Remind (or tell) students that when we look at similarities, we are “comparing,” and when we look at differences, we are “contrasting.” Tell students to keep their charts, as they will use the charts in a writing activity.

Part II: The Elements of a Paragraph (Writing)

Goal: To establish a foundation in paragraph-writing skills

Materials: Whiteboard/blackboard; handouts

Note: Students will write two types of paragraphs. First they will learn about the parts of a paragraph by writing an explanatory paragraph about their favorite sport. Then they will practice the skills they have learned by writing a paragraph comparing or contrasting their sport to lacrosse.

Activity 6: The Title (15 minutes)

Goals: To think about and practice creating titles

1. Explain that a title tells the reader something interesting but does not reveal everything, and that the title motivates the reader by raising his or her level of curiosity. Ask students to suggest titles of movies they have seen, songs they have heard, or books they have read.
2. Write the following titles on the board:
 - A. Native Americans Created Lacrosse
 - B. A Game That I Love
 - C. The Rules of Lacrosse

Have students reread the paragraph from the listening activity. Ask which of the following would be the best title. Make sure students explain the reasons for their choices. [Of these three choices, B is the best title. Choice A mentions only one detail from the paragraph, while C is not relevant because the paragraph is not about the rules.]

3. Write the following paragraph on the board, or distribute copies of it to your students. Have them work in pairs or groups to think of an interesting title for the paragraph.

Even though lacrosse is popular in both Canada and the United States, there are differences in the game. The rules are basically the same, but one main difference is the place where the game is played. Canadian lacrosse is played indoors because of the very cold climate in many parts of the country. In addition, it is played in an arena shaped like a rectangle, and for this reason Canadians call the sport “box lacrosse.” On the other hand, American lacrosse is usually played outdoors on athletic fields. That is probably because the weather in the United States is milder than the weather in Canada. Americans simply call the sport “lacrosse.” Whether you are in Canada or the United States, lacrosse is fun to watch or play anywhere and in any climate.

Title suggestions might be “One Game, Two Countries,” “A Game with Two Names,” and so on. (Many other choices are possible!)

Activity 7: The Topic Sentence (15 minutes)

Goals: To familiarize students with the function and characteristics of topic sentences

1. Explain that a good topic sentence should not be too general or too specific, and it should not be just a statement of fact. Explain that a topic sentence should have a topic and a controlling idea (sometimes called a “main idea”). Write the following examples on the board:
 - A. Three sports played at our school are soccer, tennis, and lacrosse.
 - B. Lacrosse is a great game for three reasons.

Show students that both of these topic sentences have a topic and a controlling idea. In A, the topic is “three sports played at our school,” and the controlling idea is “soccer, tennis, and lacrosse”; therefore, the following sentences in the paragraph will give details about these sports. In B, the topic is “lacrosse,” and the controlling idea is “a great game for three reasons”; therefore, the following sentences will list and explain the three reasons.

2. Write these sentences on the board:
 - A. A lacrosse stick is more than one meter long.
 - B. Lacrosse is a sport that requires skill, speed, and strength.
 - C. Lacrosse players often have to push their opponents out of the way.

Ask students which would make the best topic sentence.

[Sentence B is the best topic sentence because it includes the topic—lacrosse—and a main idea that could be developed into separate supporting sentences. Ask your students what they think about sentences A and C. Note that A is just a fact about a piece of equipment and that D is rather narrow; it would be difficult to develop this idea into an interesting paragraph with good supporting sentences.]

3. Have students look at the paragraph contrasting lacrosse in Canada and the United States; then have them identify the topic sentence.

[The topic sentence is “Even though lacrosse is popular in both the United States and Canada, there are differences in the game.”]
4. Have students work in pairs. Ask them to look at the chart they made about their sport during the listening activity. Tell them they are going to write a paragraph about this sport explaining why they like it or why it is popular. Ask them to start by writing a topic sentence for their paragraph. When they are finished, evaluate some of their topic sentences with the whole class: Is the topic clear? And does the sentence include a controlling idea?

Activity 8: Supporting Sentences (15 minutes)

Goal: To familiarize students with the function and characteristics of supporting sentences

1. Explain to students that now they need to write supporting sentences. Have them reread the paragraphs about lacrosse (the Canada/United States paragraph and the paragraph from the listening activity). Each paragraph has three supporting ideas. Tell the students to identify what the three ideas are for each.

[In the Canada/United States paragraph, the three differences are where the sport is played, the shape of the arena, and what the sport is called. In the paragraph from the listening activity, the three reasons are that lacrosse is fast, it is played by a team, and the writer is good at using the net in the lacrosse stick.]

2. Now it is time for students to add supporting sentences. Have them look at their topic sentences and the chart they filled in for their sport. Tell students to write at least three sentences that support their topic sentence.

Activity 9: Concluding Sentence (20 minutes)

Goal: To familiarize students with the function and characteristics of concluding sentences

1. Explain that the final sentence in a paragraph is often the concluding sentence. Using the paragraph about differences between American and Canadian lacrosse, have students identify the concluding sentence and discuss, in pairs, whether this sentence is a restatement of the topic sentence, a summary of the most important information in the paragraph, a comment about the topic, or a call for action to be taken. [They should tell you that it contains a restatement of the topic sentence and a comment about the sport.]
2. Have students each write a concluding sentence for their own paragraph. Remind them to avoid repeating the topic sentence.
3. When students have finished their concluding sentences, have them write a title for their paragraph.
4. Now students can either post the paragraphs on the wall or exchange them. Tell students to read several paragraphs and to decide on the following:
 - Is there a topic sentence?
 - Are there logical supporting sentences?
 - Is there a good concluding sentence?
5. When students have finished discussing their paragraphs, ask them what they thought the class strengths and weaknesses were in writing the paragraphs. Discuss what they have learned and what they need more practice doing.

Activity 10: A New Paragraph (45 minutes)

Goals: To apply knowledge of parts of a paragraph by writing another paragraph

1. Tell students that they are going to write a paragraph comparing or contrasting their sport to lacrosse. They can use the two charts they filled in during the listening activity. If necessary, review the steps: writing the topic sentence, writing supporting ideas, writing the conclusion, and finally adding a title.
2. Put students into small groups and allow them to work together. Monitor and help the groups.
3. When students have finished writing, ask them to exchange paragraphs with another group. Ask students to help each other improve their titles, topic sentences, supporting sentences, and concluding sentences.
4. Once all groups have finished, post the paragraphs on the walls. If you want, you can ask the students to vote on which paragraph is the best organized.

For further instruction, students can exchange paragraphs and give feedback either orally or in writing using a peer-review questionnaire—and then the writers can revise their paragraphs on the basis of the feedback. Students can also read the paragraphs aloud in groups or to the whole class. In addition, final drafts can be used as the centerpiece for posters.

Part III: Be a Good Sport! (Speaking)

Goals: To learn phrases regarding good sportsmanship; to make presentations giving advice, giving examples, and explaining results

Note: Many Native American legends explain the origins of lacrosse. Some say that animals used to play the game, with mammals on one team and birds on the other. The poor bat—which looked like it was part mammal, part bird—was originally rejected by both teams. However, the owl, being the wisest of the birds, knew that including everyone was important. Thus, the bat was invited to join the bird team and play lacrosse. While the legends differ, their message is the same: lacrosse embodies good sportsmanship. This activity focuses on being a good sport.

Activity 11: Vocabulary (15 minutes)

Goals: To learn and practice using vocabulary relating to good sportsmanship

- Put students into pairs. Write the eight sentences below on the board and ask students to match the sentences on the left with the examples on the right (you may want to change the names to avoid using any of your students' names).

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1) Lisa is good at sports. ____ | a) She can't run fast and prefers reading. |
| 2) Susan is not good at sports. ____ | b) She always argues with the referees. |
| 3) Jane is a good sport. ____ | c) She always congratulates the other team. |
| 4) Martha is a bad sport. ____ | d) She plays lacrosse, tennis, and football. |

Check answers with the class, explaining the differences between *is good at sports* and *is a good sport* and between *is not good at sports* and *is a bad sport*. [Answers: 1. d; 2. a; 3. c; 4. b]

- Now write this sentence on the board: Bob is a good athlete, but he is a bad sport.
Ask students to explain this sentence. [Being an athlete means being able to play or do a sport well; being a bad sport means not playing the sport fairly or not having a positive attitude toward other players. So someone can be a good athlete, but still be a bad sport.]
- On the board, write the term *a good sport*. Ask students to name some famous athletes. Then ask them if these athletes are good sports or bad sports. Ask students to explain what the athletes do or don't do that makes them good sports or bad sports.
- Write the following expressions on the board:

| | | |
|---------------|-------------------|------------------|
| trash talk | brag | cheat |
| blame someone | cheer for someone | lose your temper |

Do the following demonstrations and ask students to tell you which expression you are demonstrating. The answers are in brackets.

- "We lost, and it's all your fault! You missed that goal!" [to blame someone]
- Look at someone else's paper and copy their answers in a test. [to cheat]

- C. "I'm the best lacrosse player there is! I'm great! I can beat anyone!" [to brag]
 - D. *Yelling and getting angry*: "I can't believe you said that! You're a bad referee!" [to lose your temper]
 - E. *Applauding and shouting*: "Yes! Go! Yeah! You can do it!" [to cheer for someone]
 - F. "Your team is bad. You can't throw. You don't even know how to use your sticks!" [to trash talk]
5. To check whether students understand the terms, point to each term and ask students if the phrase is a positive characteristic or a negative one. [All are negative except for "cheer for someone."] Then nominate a student to demonstrate the meaning of that expression for the class. Students can use the same demonstration you did or they can do something else, as long as it shows they understand the meaning.

Activity 12: Mini-Presentation (30–45 minutes)

Goals: To work together to organize and present ideas about the behavior of a person who is a good sport

1. Divide students into groups of four. Tell them they are going to give a mini-presentation on "Being a Good Sport." Write the following expressions on the board. (These structures may help students complete the task. Make sure students can pronounce and understand the meaning of each expression.)
 - Lucy plays lacrosse. She is a good sport because she always [good thing], and she never [bad thing].
 - For example, she does/doesn't [example].
 - When Lucy's teammates play with her, they feel [example connected to her behavior or skill].

Give students examples so that they can understand the patterns. The following examples might help. (You do not need to write these on the board. You can explain them orally.)

- Lucy plays lacrosse. She is a good sport because she always plays fair.
 - For example, she doesn't hit other players with her stick.
 - When Lucy's teammates play with her, they feel that the game is fun.
2. Tell the groups to prepare a mini-presentation about an imaginary athlete. Tell students they need to:
 - imagine an athlete.
 - give the athlete a name.
 - decide which sport their athlete plays.

Tell students that their task is to explain to the class why their athlete is a really good sport.

Explain that each presentation should first introduce the athlete's name and the sport he or she plays. Then the students need four sections: two things the athlete *always* does and two things the athlete *never* does, with examples.

Tell students the presentation will be evaluated on how appropriate the athlete's characteristics are, how good the examples are, and how clear the presentation is.

Give the groups about 15 minutes. You may need to help them with ideas: Good sports

are always polite, cheer for teammates, play fair, congratulate opponents, and know the rules of the game. Good sports never trash talk, brag, cheat, lose their temper, show off, or blame teammates.

- When the groups are finished preparing their presentations, put the following criteria on the board:

| | <u>Great</u> | <u>Good</u> | <u>Okay</u> |
|------------------------------|--------------|-------------|-------------|
| Appropriate characteristics: | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Good examples: | 3 | 2 | 1 |
| Clear presentation: | 3 | 2 | 1 |

Explain the criteria: appropriate characteristics demonstrate being a good sport, not being a good athlete; good examples clearly explain each characteristic; and if the presentation is clear, students who are listening can easily understand what is being said.

- Have each group make its presentation to the whole class. Each student in each group should speak. The rest of the class should listen and evaluate the group according to the criteria above.

Tell the listening students that after each presentation you will randomly select two of them to summarize the good and bad characteristics. (Knowing they might be selected to summarize should encourage students to pay attention.) After each presentation, ask the listening students to evaluate it and give you the scores on a small piece of paper. Then select one student to tell the class which two characteristics were positive; select another to tell which two were negative.

In large classes, whole-class presentations take a long time. Instead, put three groups together and have each group present to the other two groups. The students in the two listening groups will evaluate the oral presentation. After all three groups have presented, they will announce which group had the highest score. If you wish, the winning groups could then present in front of the class.

Give the students with the best presentation a round of applause or a small reward.

- (Optional) Have each group design a “Be a Good Sport!” poster stating what a good sport does or does not do. The posters could be displayed around the school.

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