

## Yoga in the classroom: Teacher's notes

**Level:** Pre-intermediate to intermediate

**Age group:** Teenagers

**Language areas:** Body parts, imperatives and expressing feelings.

**Aims:** To have fun and learn something new while working in a pair. To encourage clear and careful pronunciation. For students to listen to each other carefully. To help shy students to gain confidence using English. To provide an opportunity for bodily-kinaesthetic learners in the classroom. To encourage expressive intonation.

**Materials:** Copies of the script (below), enough space for students to move around, a clean floor (!), pictures of people doing yoga (if possible).

**Notes:** This lesson is a gentle drama class that can be used to draw students out of themselves and is intended as English practice, not genuine yoga practice. Take care when doing the moves to avoid injuries.

### Procedure:

#### Warmer:

1. Prepare a series of cards with the names of various sports and fitness activities and be sure to include yoga as one of the examples.
2. Mime a sport and elicit the name of the sport from the students.
3. Give each student in turn a card with the name of a sport for them to mime. Have each student come up to the front of the class to mime his or her sport whilst the rest of the class guesses the sport. Reserve yoga for the last student.
4. The last student, with the yoga mime, may need some help.
5. Follow-up by asking which of the students have seen or tried yoga before.

#### Activity:

1. Explain to the class that they are going to do some yoga.
2. Pre-teach the necessary vocabulary, e.g. palms, extend, raise, waist, inhale, stationary, straight line, straighten, chin, lean, lower, exhale.
3. Divide the class into pairs and where possible, pair less confident students with more confident ones.
4. In each pair choose, or have the students choose between themselves, an instructor and a participant. Explain that the instructor will need to speak clearly for the participants to be able to follow them.
5. Give the instructors a copy of the script, tell them not to show their scripts to their partners.
6. For lower level classes have the students work facing each other. With intermediate students have the instructors in a line, facing the wall with their participant partners behind them (explain this by saying that they are playing the part of a yoga instruction CD).
7. Monitor students to help with vocabulary if they have difficulties and to correct pronunciation when necessary. When the participants struggle or complain, encourage them to express themselves in English (with the correct intonation, which will be more naturally produced in these circumstances), using phrases

such as: "Ouch, that hurts!" "What! I can't do it!" "Oh my God!" "I feel like an idiot!" etc.

8. Have the pairs practise the script at least twice. If there is enough time the students can swap roles.
9. Call the class back and elicit some of the expressions you have been teaching and write them onto the board.
10. To conclude have one or two pairs perform to the class. This is a great opportunity to have a shy student up in front of class performing in a non-extrovert manner by reading from a script.

**Follow up:**

Collect scripts in and ask the students to write what they can remember of the twelve steps for homework.

**Possible variations:**

- Give students the script cut into the twelve steps and have them order the steps.
- Give the students the script as a gap-fill exercise to complete before beginning the yoga.
- Search a variety of yoga or Thai Chi sequences on the Internet and give each pair a different script.
- Ask the students to create and perform their own scripts for the actions of their hobbies (this can also work for non-sports activities).

## Yoga in the classroom: Script

**Step one:** Stand up tall and straight. Look straight ahead with the palms of your hands held together at your chest, your feet closed in, toe to toe and heel to heel. Breathe in and then out as you extend your arms in front of you at shoulder level, palms down.

**Step two:** Raise your arms high over your head and lean backwards from the waist, inhaling deeply.

**Step three:** Bend your body forward and exhale. Reach your hands down to your toes. Place your hands flat on the floor. Bend your knees if you need to.

**Step four:** Move your right leg backwards while keeping the left leg where it is. Bend the left leg at the knee and rest the knee of the right leg on the ground. The right leg should touch the ground only with the toes and the knee. Raise your chin and chest and inhale deeply.

**Step five:** Move your left leg back as far as you can, to the full length of the leg. Then move the right leg back as well, making a plank-shape; your head, back and legs should make a straight line.

**Step six:** Bend your arms and let your body rest on the ground. As you lower your body down, exhale. Your toes, knees, chest, forehead and the palms of your hands should be touching the ground.

**Step seven:** Straighten your arms, leave your legs where they are, raise your head and chest upward; lean back and raise your chin up as high as possible. Breathe in.

**Step eight:** Without moving your feet or hands, lift your waist towards the ceiling, so that your body is making a triangle, like a mountain, with the knees and elbows straight. Try to touch your heels to the ground. Exhale.

**Step nine:** Put your left knee down on the ground, about half way between your hands and the feet. Then bring your right leg forward all the way to your hands (in reverse of position No. 4). Inhale.

**Step ten:** Bring your left leg forward, putting the left foot at the side of the right foot; let your hands remain on or near the ground, straighten your legs. Exhale.

**Step eleven:** Slowly raise your arms high over your head, stand up straight and lean backwards from the waist inhaling deeply.

**Step twelve:** Lower your arms down to your sides. Exhale.