

Coffee shops take a hit in Silicon Valley – Intermediate Teacher's notes

Title of the lesson: Coffee shops take a hit in Silicon Valley

Level: Intermediate (B1–B2)

Time: 90 minutes +

Groups: one-to-one, small groups, whole class

Business topics: meetings; networking

Business language focus: first and second conditionals, verbs relating to ideas and growth

Skills: reading, speaking, writing

Materials: one copy of the worksheet per student

Overview: This lesson is based on an authentic article from a trusted news source. The article is about the effect of the coronavirus pandemic on Silicon Valley's coffee shops, which rely on trade from tech professionals. The author suggests that the dramatic increase in remote working could be a permanent move, but that if tech professionals can no longer serendipitously meet in real life, then this could stifle creative ideas.

1. Warmer

- a. Put students in small groups of two or three to look at the images and discuss the questions. Get a few groups to feed back to the class on the **advantages and disadvantages of each of these types of meetings.**

2. Key words and expressions

- a. Ask the students to write the words or phrases provided next to the definitions.

Key:

- | | |
|----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. <i>start-up</i> | 6. <i>hub</i> |
| 2. <i>networking</i> | 7. <i>density</i> |
| 3. <i>irritate</i> | 8. <i>diminish</i> |
| 4. <i>nerdy</i> | 9. <i>plunge</i> |
| 5. <i>low-key</i> | 10. <i>monopoly</i> |

3. Understanding the article

- a. Ask students to work in pairs to do this. They should identify first what is said and then whether it is a fact or an opinion.

Key:

1. *The coffee was never very good.* **O**
2. *They are more important than just places to get coffee; they allow the exchange of ideas.* **O**
3. *Red Rock Coffee is another place where Silicon Valley's entrepreneurs like to meet.* **F**
4. *They typically sell for millions of dollars.* **F**
5. *No area can match it for talent, capital and ambition.* **O**
6. *They are all over the world: TikTok is based in China and Shopify is based in Canada and there are important new markets in India, Indonesia and Nigeria.* **F**

4. Business language – first and second conditionals

- a. Students should first look at the ideas in the sentences to match the halves and then look at the tenses of the conditionals. 1, 2, 4 are examples of the first conditional. 3 and 5 are examples of the second conditional.

Answer key

1c; 2a; 3e; 4b; 5d

- b. Encourage students to use the structures in the previous exercise to help them. When they have written their sentences, get them to share them with a partner. Then, ask for some examples from the class.

5. Business language – verbs relating to ideas and growth

- a. Ask the students to complete the missing letters to make verbs that match the definitions. Make sure that the students understand the meanings of the verbs before starting the next activity.

Key:

1. *expand*
2. *pitch*
3. *inspire*
4. *embrace*
5. *exchange*

- b. Once the students have a clear idea of the meanings of the verbs from activity a, ask them to complete the sentences using those verbs.

Key:

1. *Inspired*
2. *exchanged*
3. *expand*
4. *pitching*
5. *embraced*

- c. Students' own answers. Get them to write the sentences individually, then share them with a partner for peer review. Then, ask for volunteers to read their sentences to the class. You could use this as an opportunity to discuss the answers as a class.

- Walking (have students leave the room they are in and go for a walk outside)
- Play a game (before the meeting, have students play an icebreaker game, e.g. 'Two Truths, One Lie' where each person thinks of two truths and a believable lie about themselves and has the others try to guess the lie)
- Brainstorm (have students brainstorm all their ideas individually before discussing them one-by-one)
- Snacks (make sure the students eat some light snacks, e.g. biscuits or fruit at the start of their meeting)

- b. When all the groups have completed the task, allow them five or more minutes to work out how to present the results of their meeting. Then, get each group to present their ideas and their opinions about their meeting scenario. Tell students to take notes on the other teams' presentations. Explain that they will need these notes to write an article about creative meetings.

- c. This is best set as homework. You could set a limit of six to eight sentences.

6. Discussion

Put students in pairs to discuss the three questions. Then get feedback on each of the questions, ensuring that each pair offers a contribution.

7. Wider business theme – Creative meetings

- a. Put students into groups of three or four. Tell them that they are going to have a business meeting about how to make meetings more creative and productive. Give each group a different scenario for their meeting. Here are some ideas. Choose those that are practical for your teaching situation. Set a time limit of 10-15 minutes.