

The bus stop

Teacher's notes and answer key

Level: Intermediate and above

Age: Adults

Time needed: 45 minutes plus

Procedure: The 'Twelve top tips' will give you extra ideas for using the plays in the classroom.

Notes on language and culture

1. 'Goodness me' is an expression used for showing that you are surprised.
2. When Lilian says 'rotten thing' at the start of the play, she is criticizing her mobile phone because she can't make it work. There is no full form of this exclamation.
3. The expression 'go on then' is used for encouraging someone to do something.
4. When Mark says 'There we are', he is expressing his satisfaction at having made the phone work.
5. The expression 'Well, I never' indicates that the speaker is very surprised.
6. You can say 'I'm OK' to indicate that you don't want something someone has just offered you, such as a drink or sweet.
7. The expression 'It'll do you good' is another way of saying 'It'll be good for you'.
8. When Lilian says 'You knew where you were with the weather when I was young', she means that the weather was predictable.
9. 'It's not worth the paper it's printed on' is used for saying that the information on the paper is not reliable.
10. When talking about her bus pass, Lilian says 'It's free when you get to my age'. In England, all pensioners are entitled to free off-peak travel on local buses anywhere in the country.
11. A 4-by-4 is a four-wheel drive vehicle. It is a typical vehicle used by mums taking their children to school, something that is unpopular with many people.
12. When Mark says '... here's a number 61 ...', he is referring to the number of the bus. It is also common to use the definite or indefinite article and cardinal numbers to refer to buses or trams without the word 'number' e.g. 'I get the 27 to work'.



13. When three number-61 buses arrive at almost the same time, Lilian says 'Typical!' This is because buses are known to be late in the UK and so it is usual for more than one bus to arrive together. In fact, it has become a running joke, a joke that all British people understand ('You wait ages for a bus and then three come along at once!').
14. 'Cheers' in this context is an informal way of saying 'thank you'.

Twelve top tips

1. Take away the title of the play. Students try to guess the context. – Who? Where? Why? What?
2. Ask students to describe the appearance, personality and social status of the characters in the play.
3. Cut it up into four sections. Students then put it back in the correct sequence.
4. Supply several statements of fact or opinion about the play. Ask students to assess whether each one follows from the play, supports it, contradicts it or is assumed.
5. Use the play alongside a news article on the same subject and hold a debate and discussion on the topic to link the content with students' experience or knowledge.
6. Students add their own stage directions, e.g. ... *he said angrily – rising from his chair.*
7. Students can finish the play off in their own words or change its ending.

Mini-plays

by Tim Bowen and Liz Plampton

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8. Students interpret the play, perform it and then perhaps record and listen to themselves for correct use of stress and intonation.
9. Students perform the play using the same words but in different styles, e.g. a romance, a ghost story, a thriller, etc.
10. Students identify vocabulary that has a negative connotation.
11. Students identify the word/phrase/phrasal verb that means ...
12. Take an adjective or adverb out of a sentence and put it in brackets at the end of the line. Students put it back in the correct place or wherever it will logically fit, e.g.
Look, there's another behind it, and another. [RIGHT]
Look, there's another right behind it, and another.

Answer key

1. What are they discussing?

1. b; 2. c

2. Vocabulary

1. d; 2. f; 3. a; 4. e; 5. c; 6. b

3. Find the colloquial expression

1. the heavens have opened up; 2. hardly a soul; 3. the school run; 4. gas guzzler; 5. a sobering thought; 6. do our bit

4. Colloquial language

1. It's been like this for weeks.
2. Have you been waiting long?
3. I wouldn't bother looking at that.
4. Are you a regular, then?
5. I know what you mean.
6. Have you ever thought of becoming a comedian?

5. Discussion: Topic

There is no single answer to this question but the most likely overall theme of the play is d.

The bus stop

Transcript

Scenario: Two people standing at a bus stop in south London

Characters: Mark (young man), Lilian (older lady)

Lilian Goodness me! Rotten thing. I only bought it last week! It's supposed to be automatic.

Mark Can I help? I'm good with mobile phones.

Lilian Oh! ... Err ... Go on then, see if you can make it work.

Mark There we are.

Lilian Well, I never! How did you do that?

Mark Just press that little button there. It's switched on now.

Lilian You youngsters, you can do anything, can't you? No trouble at all.

Mark Well, not always; it's just that my mum's got one exactly the same.

Lilian Would you like a cough drop?

Mark No thanks, I'm OK.

Lilian I always keep a few in my pocket for days like these. They warm you up!

Mark Oh, I thought they were for ...

Lilian Coughs? Not really, dear. Go on. Try one. It'll do you good.

Mark OK, thanks. Ooh, yes, they kind of glow in your mouth! Now I know why they're called cough drops!

Lilian It's been like this for weeks. One minute it's dry, the next minute the heavens have opened up again!
You knew where you were with the weather when I was young!

Mark Global warming, isn't it?

Lilian Well, I'm not getting any warmer!

Mark Have another cough drop! You been waiting long?

Lilian About twenty-five minutes.

Mark This timetable says the bus was due ten minutes ago.

Lilian I wouldn't bother looking at that. It's not worth the paper it's printed on!

Mark You a regular, then?

Lilian Oh yes. I've got a bus pass! It's free when you get to my age, you see.

Mark Well, at least you're helping the planet.

Lilian Yes, I suppose so. And, you know, it does annoy me when I see these great big cars whizzing by with hardly a soul in them!

Mark Oh, you mean the mums on the school run?

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Transcript

Lilian Yes.

Mark Know what you mean. Those 4-by-4s are meant for the countryside, not here in London.

Lilian And they must use so much petrol.

Mark Yeah, 'gas guzzlers' they call them. They say the bee population is dying off now, as well!

Lilian Oh?

Mark Yes, and if they die out, we'll all be dead in six years' time!

Lilian Now, there's a sobering thought! Have you ever thought of becoming a comedian?

Mark Well, at least we're doing our bit, eh?

Lilian Yes, I try my best.

Mark Oh, here's a number 61 now. Oh, and look, there's another right behind it ... and another!

Lilian Typical! Another cough drop?

Mark Cheers!

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Worksheet

1 What are they discussing?

1. Read this short extract from the beginning of the play:

Lilian Goodness me! Rotten thing. I only bought it last week! It's supposed to come on automatically.

Mark Can I help?

Lilian Oh! ... Err... Go on then, see if you can make it work.

Mark There we are.

Lilian Well, I never! How did you do that?

Mark Just press that little button there. It's switched on now.

Lilian You youngsters, you can do anything, can't you? No trouble at all.

Mark Well, not always; it's just that my mum's got one exactly the same.

What do you think Lilian bought last week? Why?

- a. a watch b. a mobile phone c. a radio

2. Why was Mark able to solve the problem?

- a. He's young.
b. His Mum showed him how to do it.
c. He's familiar with this type of device.

2 Vocabulary

Match these words from the text with their meanings.

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| 1. a cough drop | a. drive past very fast |
| 2. a regular | b. cease to exist |
| 3. whizz by | c. a ticket that allows you to travel without paying each time |
| 4. due | d. a type of sweet containing medicine |
| 5. a bus pass | e. supposed to arrive |
| 6. die off | f. a passenger who often makes the same journey |

3 Find the colloquial expression

Look in the play and find the following words and phrases. Note that they are in the order in which they appear.

1. a five-word expression meaning *it's started raining heavily*
2. a three-word expression meaning *almost no-one*
3. a three-word expression meaning *the journey to school by car each morning and back again in the afternoon*
4. a two-word expression meaning *a car that is expensive to drive because it uses too much petrol*
5. a three-word expression meaning *something that makes you think about things in a serious way*
6. a three-word expression meaning *do what we can to help*

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Worksheet

4 Colloquial language

Which words are missing from these examples from the play?

1. Been like this for weeks.
2. You been waiting long?
3. Wouldn't bother looking at that.
4. You a regular then?
5. Know what you mean.
6. You ever thought of becoming a comedian?

5 Discussion: Topic

Which of these topics do you think is the main topic of the play?

- a. modern technology
- b. transport problems
- c. the weather
- d. global warming
- e. anti-social vehicles

6 Listen and speak

Listen to the recording and read the play aloud in time with the recording.