

English in Mind Second edition

Level 4 Unit 12

Lesson Plan

THE
INDEPENDENT

How VSO can help you make the most of your gap year

AIMS

- to read extensively and study a text related to the Unit theme
- to build skimming and scanning skills
- to expand vocabulary by reading words in context
- to build on Unit 12's work on participle clauses
- to promote discussion
- to promote writing skills (further work)

Total Time (approx.): 1 hour and 30 minutes

(Note: The composition task can be set for homework.)

Lead-in

- 1 The discussion questions in Exercise 1 will help activate students' general knowledge of the topic and vocabulary related to it. They should work in pairs before class feedback. Ensure that students understand the word **volunteer** before they meet the adjective **voluntary** in the title. Depending on their nationality, they might know of organisations such as Médecins Sans Frontières or The Red Cross, but invite them to tell you of any similar organisations that exist in their own countries.
- 2 To prepare students for the specific context of the article, ask them to look at the title and to answer the questions related to it. Discuss the answers as a whole class. If students aren't familiar with VSO, ask them to read paragraphs 1–3 of the article quickly to find out. It may also be useful to introduce the word **sustainable** here and to spend a few minutes discussing its importance. Accept all suggestions about the meaning of **a gap year**, but explain that in the UK a gap year is usually taken after A Levels and before going to university, and involves taking a break from studying in order to travel and to experience different cultures. Often 'gappers' work in developing countries. Students may also give other reasons, e.g. a year abroad to learn English, or to have something to put on their CV to help their job prospects.

Time: 10 minutes

Reading comprehension (1): gist task

- 3 This is an opportunity for students to read the whole text through once so that they have a clear overall idea about the content. Answers to the questions should be very general at this stage.

Key: 1F, 2T, 3F, 4F, 5T

Time: 10 minutes

Reading comprehension (2): understanding detail

- 4 This task helps students organise the text into manageable sections and develops scanning skills by guiding them to look for relevant detail without having to analyse every word and sentence for meaning. The Key offers suggested answers.

Key

Paras 1–7

VSO programme	Cost	Duration	Aimed at	Requirements	Locations
Global Xchange	£600	3 months in UK, 3 months abroad	Getting an insight into development in their own countries	None mentioned	Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Nigeria, India, South Africa
Youth for Development	£900	12 months overseas	'hardened world savers' who want to work with VSO partners abroad	A year's experience of voluntary work in the UK	Not mentioned yet

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Paras 8–end

	Helen Parker	Farhaan Mumtaz	Sophie Lewis
Age	18	19	19
VSO programme	YFD	GX	GX
Main motives	To make a difference; be part of a community	To get out of education, learn from real world	To find out what her potential was and back up ideals with action
Experience	HIV peer educator at school	Helping out at Islamic college in UK	Taught global awareness at school
Main area of interest	HIV awareness	Ethno-religious conflict	HIV testing
Based in	China	UK/Indonesia	UK/South Africa
Highlights	VSO not 'tokenistic' – i.e. serious about what it does	Meeting religious leaders, playing football with local kids	Effect of young Zulu on kids who'd never seen a black person; VSO gave her new skills and knowledge
Negative comments	Tough recruitment process	None	Feels like a cult!

Time: 15 minutes

Vocabulary: words in context

5 a This part of the lesson isolates specific words that students would probably need to check in their dictionary. Giving them the meaning first helps them to guess words from their context, while the follow-up discussion questions will provide practice and thereby consolidate learning. Nominate a few students for feedback as a group. Paragraph numbers appear in parentheses.

Key

stories (1)	<i>anecdotes</i>	the V-sign (2)	<i>two-fingered salute</i>
British people (3)	<i>Brits</i>	stays (pl. noun) (3)	<i>sojourns</i>
a bargain (5)	<i>a steal</i>	be travelling to (9)	<i>be off to</i>
done merely for show (10)	<i>tokenistic</i>	a person with the same function as another (13)	<i>counterpart</i>

place where you feel at ease (15)	<i>comfort zone</i>	involving serious and complicated ideas (17)	<i>high-brow</i>
fantastic (17)	<i>wicked</i> (informal, spoken)	a ban for religious or social reasons (19)	<i>taboo</i>
a person who rejects established values (19)	<i>hippy</i>	oversentimental (20)	<i>soppy</i>

b The expressions in this task are connected with the ideals of VSO and will help students express themselves in the final discussion exercise.

Key: 1 *make* (b) 2 *do* (c) 3 *mean* (d) 4 *make* (e) 5 *go* (a)

Time: 15 minutes

Grammar: uses of the gerund

6 This section exploits some of the numerous examples of the *-ing* form in the text and will be useful in consolidating the work already done on the Present Participle in Unit 14.

Key: 1 PP, 2 Prep. (in), 3 Cont., 4 Verb (*spend*), 5 Noun

Time: 15 minutes

7 Whiteboard Pelmanism. In this version of the memory game sometimes known as 'Concentration', the whole class can practise the different uses of *-ing* while enjoying a change of focus from the reading and vocabulary tasks. Draw a quick table on the whiteboard and number the boxes as follows:

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12

The numbers correspond to a table with 6 pairs of split sentences taken from the text. All use the *-ing* form. Only the teacher has a copy of this table:

1 Many gappers go abroad	2 There's nothing wrong with	3 She wanted the experience of	4 One of the highpoints was	5 The biggest impact was	6 She wanted to break the taboo
7 living in the community	8 teaching English and playing football	9 showing that someone cared	10 looking for a culture shock	11 surrounding HIV tests	12 having fun

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Put students into two teams A and B. Ask team A to choose 2 numbers/boxes. Read out the half-sentences that correspond to the numbers they have chosen. The team must decide if the two sentence halves match in meaning as well as grammar. If they make a pair, cross off the numbers on the table. The team then has another turn. If the pairs do not match, it is Team B's turn to choose 2 boxes and so on. The winner is the team which wins the most pairs.

Key: 1/10, 2/12, 3/7, 4/8, 5/9, 6/11

The teams could then create their own tables, using other sentences from the text or their coursebook, or simply sentences that they have made up (you would have to check these before the game starts). You can increase the level of difficulty by adding more boxes, or by mixing up the sentence halves more randomly (in this example, all the first halves are 1–6, and the second halves are 7–12).

Time: 10–15 minutes

Discussion

- 8 These discussion questions will help students to review some of the ideas explored in the text and provide them with an opportunity to activate some of the new language they have learned.

Time: 10 minutes

Further work

- 9 In this writing activity students can practise the useful technique of writing letters of application while recycling some of the language used in the text. They should visit the VSO website (www.vso.org.uk) and find the page on 'Volunteer placements'. They should search for the profession that matches their own skills, qualifications and experience and look for the requirements in that field. They should then write a letter of application of between 180 and 220 words explaining why they think they would be suitable for the job. To help them, you could provide an example of an advert listing requirements for a volunteer role as an English teacher and a sample letter demonstrating how your skills match them.

This article first appeared on Thursday 26 June 2008, at www.independent.co.uk/student/gap-year/how-vso-can-help-youmake-the-most-of-your-gap-year-461405.html.

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