

Lesson Plan – ‘What the Car Means to Me’

Activities and Lesson Plan

This lesson encourages students to think about their perception of ‘the car’ - their attitudes towards it, the image it creates for them and the way it can affect their lives and independence.

They will also be encouraged to think about how they are going to finance the whole ‘learning to drive’ process, from driving lessons to purchasing, maintaining and running a car.

Part 1: Behaviour Questionnaire (Individual exercise)

- Ask students to complete the questionnaire. There are no wrong or right answers – students should answer the questions quickly, giving their ‘gut’ response, without thinking too deeply about it.
- Once everyone has completed the questionnaire, use the responses to open up a whole-class discussion. You will notice that some of the questions contradict each other, some link together. Did the students notice this? Have they put conflicting answers? Why do they think this is?

**Part 2: What the Car Means to Me** (In pairs or small groups)

- Ask the students to make a list of the positives and negatives of owning a car. Positives may be independence, access to work, convenience, feel safer, don't need to rely on public transport. Negatives may be cost, traffic congestion, pollution, global warming, responsibility, accidents, road-building/environment
- Discuss their opinions as a whole class, or you could set up a debate on the advantages versus the disadvantages of cars, both for the individual and for society
- Explore the concept that the car is maybe more than just a means of transport and creates an image of ourselves to others, an extension of our personality. Ask the students what sort of image they might want to create? E.g. rich, powerful, sporty, sexy, cool, trendy, skilful, fast, different? What car would they choose to create each image discussed? Does colour matter? Match types and colour of car to their favourite celebrities Mis-match types of car to famous people!

- Give each student a small piece of paper. Without discussing it or showing anyone else what they have written, ask them to write down on one side, (cost and insurance no object!) their ‘dream car’ including colour, that best matches their personality and aspirations. Then on the other side, (back into the real world!!) ask them to write down what they are most likely to have as their first car.
- Collect up the papers into a box, then draw randomly and read out the ‘dream car’. Classmates then guess who wrote this. Once they have identified correctly (writer must own up!), turn the paper over and read out what they are likely to be driving!

E.g. ‘Dream Car’ = red Ferrari. Actual car likely to be an ‘old blue Corsa’ ‘Dream Car’ = black Skyliner mod. Actually likely to be ‘riding a bike’! ‘Dream Car’ = pink Beetle convertible. Actually likely to be ‘sharing Mum’s’!

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Part 3: How Much Is It Going to Cost Me? (In small groups/whole class)

- As a whole class make a list on the whiteboard of all the elements of car ownership that will cost financially
- Share the list amongst the groups and set them the task of researching the costs for each element – students to use their own/family/friends experience, plus there are plenty of websites with this information
- Bring the whole class back together, discuss their findings and put the costs up on the board – some will be one-off costs, some you will need to average, and some will be per annum
- Total up the costs!
- Discuss / debate whether the costs seem fair, but remember, fair or not, this is the real world!
- Discuss how the students intend to meet these costs if they aspire to having a car – have they already started saving, will they get a part-time job, is this likely to affect their studies? etc



Note: This session is not designed to demoralise – keep it as positive as possible – students so often say they are going to have lessons and get a car as soon as they are 17 – but they do need to address the reality of ‘how’! In Year 11, being 17 isn’t that far away!

Part 4: Car Adverts (Whole class or in groups)

- Select some car adverts from magazines, TV ads or the internet
- Make notes on each advert:
 - Who is it targeting? (Age range, job, lifestyle etc)
 - How is it targeting them? (Benefits – speed, looks, safety, excitement)
 - How does it grab attention?
 - What is it saying?
 - Are there any subliminal messages? (In the picture, text, script, music)
 - Is this appropriate/moral/ethical?
 - Could any of these things adversely influence a young driver?
- Debate: Do car adverts influence our beliefs and sell us a dream? Should they? Or should they sell us a mode of transport, fit for purpose and safe?

