

Lesson description

In this lesson you will take part in a group problem-solving discussion on problems which face the city of Amadillo. You will listen to city problems being discussed and will practise present perfect simple and continuous to describe changing situations and contrast this to the past simple tense. You will also practise the language of prioritising and making alternative suggestions.

Aim

Taking part in a problem-solving discussion and making decisions on what to prioritise and how to resolve the problem.

Language

- Phrases to prioritise problems and make alternative suggestions
- Present perfect simple and continuous to describe changing situations vs past simple

Task

The task for this lesson is for learners to discuss several problems affecting a city in South America and decide how to resolve them and which to prioritise.

Materials

Handout

Photocopiable (cards for Task – one card per group of three to four students. There are two different cards which can be exchanged if students finish discussing their topics and time permits.)

Audio U042CEU-1.mp3, U042CEU-2.mp3, U042CEU-3.mp3

Self-study activities

(available on platform)

Listening
 Listening
 Listening
 Grammar
 Vocabulary

Handout activity number:

Input 3
 Input 4
 Lang focus 1
 Lang focus 2
 Lang focus 4

Suggested running order

Lead-in	Group mingle on what problems exist in the students' area of residence.
Input	Students listen to a meeting between the mayor and leader of the task force and make notes on the problems. Students then listen to a discussion between members of the task force who discuss solutions to these problems and which problems to prioritise.
Language focus	Phrases to prioritise problems and make alternative suggestions. Present perfect simple and continuous to describe changing situations vs past simple using a gapfill exercise and a sentence completion exercise.
Task	Students discuss several problems affecting a city in South America and decide how to resolve them and which to prioritise.

Lead-in

- 1 Students look at the questions and add two more about good and bad things about their town or city. Then they stand up and ask as many other people in the class as possible in the time given. Allow five minutes for this.

- 2 Students share information with the others in the class and decide who they think is happiest about the area they live in.

Input

- 1 Students read the information individually.
2 Students discuss which problems are most important and justify this.
3 **▶1** Students listen to the audio and make notes on the problems mentioned.

Related to traffic *cars parked all over the pavements, lack of an integrated transport policy, traffic jams and air pollution, someone died on their way to hospital*

Related to crime *pickpockets and muggers on public transport, badly-lit access tunnels*

Related to green spaces *lack of green spaces - it's a bit dusty in the summer and there aren't enough benches for people to sit on or enough mature trees to give shade.*

- 4 **▶2** Students listen to the next part of the meeting and make notes on suggestions to these problems.

Related to traffic *build a few large underground car parks on the waste ground out towards the airport and add an underground station there, introduce some sort of charge for traffic coming into the city*

Related to crime *improve the lighting in underground access tunnels and platforms and install CCTV cameras so the police could see what was going on, have more transport police patrolling stations and trains at peak hours*

Related to green spaces *involving local communities by providing them with trees and getting them to plant them around their own neighbourhoods, then have a neighbourhood competition to find the best kept areas*

They prioritise crime.

Language focus

- 1 **▶3** Students listen to excerpts from the meeting and complete the sentences.

1 *have been getting* 3 *had* 5 *couldn't get* 7 *'ve had*
2 *we've had* 4 *died* 6 *have been using*

- 2 Ask students in groups to look at the three verb tenses in 1 and identify which they are and why they're being used:

Past simple (*had, died, couldn't*): a completed action at an identified time last year.

Present perfect (*twice we've had complete gridlock, we've had 52 muggings*): something that's happened in a period of time from past to present. We use present perfect simple and not continuous because a frequency or number is stated.

Present perfect continuous (*have been getting, have been using*): to talk about an uninterrupted action that started in the past and continues to the present. Contrast:

I have done my homework. (= it's finished)

I've been doing my homework. (= it isn't finished yet)

Students complete the sentences with the correct verb form.

Possible answers:

1 *has been working, won, has implemented* 4 *have been complaining*
2 *tried, didn't succeed* 5 *have been*
3 *has been talking, haven't found* 6 *has caused*

- 3 Students complete the sentences about themselves and their cities.
- 4 Students decide if the phrases from audio 42.2 are to prioritise (P) or to make alternative suggestions (AS).
- | | |
|------|------|
| 1 P | 4 AS |
| 2 P | 5 AS |
| 3 AS | 6 P |

Task

- 1 Organise students into groups of three or four depending on numbers. Distribute an information card per group. Students work individually initially to read through the problems and decide how to resolve them and which is most important.
- 2 Students work in their groups to discuss the problems as they heard in the input. If they finish and still have time, exchange their information card with another group (there are two cards with different problems).
- 3 Students feed back to other groups on the problems they prioritised and their solutions. Feedback on language and review learning objectives.

Audio script

Audio 1

M = Mayor, T = Tomas

M So, my idea for this meeting is to outline some of the problems as I see them, and find out what your preliminary findings are.

So, I'll start. Obviously we have a bit of a problem in this city with traffic. There are cars parked all over the pavements which makes life very difficult for pedestrians, especially for any with disabilities. This is a problem which is getting worse each year and we haven't found an adequate solution yet. We're aware that this is related to the irregular public transport system and our lack of an integrated transport policy. People prefer to bring their cars into the city centre, but this is causing huge problems. Traffic jams and air pollution in the city centre have been getting gradually worse over the years. Twice we've had complete gridlock which took hours to resolve and we even had one occasion last year in which someone died on their way to hospital because the ambulance couldn't get through.

T Yes, that's true. This is a problem we've identified, too. Another major problem is that of crime. One reason people don't want to use the public transport system, for example, the underground system, is that they're very wary of pickpockets and muggers. Over the years residents and tourists alike have been using this form of transport less and less frequently, preferring to travel in their own private cars or taxis. The pickpockets strike during the rush hour, when trains are full, and muggers appear in the evening, when they're quieter. People are afraid to walk in the tunnels leading to the stations in the evening. They're badly lit and a perfect place for thieves to wait till someone passes by, then rob them of their wallet and mobile phone. We've had 52 muggings alone this month, and it's only the 16th!

M Yes, that's a major problem. Another thing that worries me is quality of life for people living in the city centre. Where can people go if they want to relax a bit? At the moment there's only one park, Estrela Park, but it's a bit dusty in the summer and there aren't enough benches for people to sit on or enough mature trees to give shade.

T Yes, I agree. That's another major headache we need to do something about.

Audio 2

T = Thomas, H = Helena, J = Josh

- T Right, let's start then. The city has three major problems: traffic, crime and a lack of green spaces. First, we need to decide how these problems could be resolved, bearing in mind the solution has to be cheap and involve the local community. So, let's start with the first problem I mentioned. Traffic. Josh, what are your thoughts?
- J OK, this is a big problem in lots of developing cities. People become more prosperous and buy cars, but the city doesn't keep up with the changes and before long you've got a major headache on your hands. One problem here is the fact that there's no integrated transport system, so what I believe would work would be to build a few large underground car parks on the waste ground out towards the airport. The underground already runs to the airport so it would be easy to add another station. That way people could leave their cars on the outskirts of the city and travel into the centre on public transport.
- H Another idea would be to introduce some sort of charge for traffic coming into the city centre, like they do in London.
- T I think they're both good ideas. So Helena, what are your thoughts on the topic of crime?
- H Well, we could improve the lighting in underground access tunnels and platforms and install CCTV cameras so the police could see what was going on.
- J Yes, or alternatively we could have more transport police patrolling stations and trains at peak hours. Seeing a policeman always makes travellers feel secure and scares the thieves off.
- T OK, good idea. As for green spaces, I think involving local communities by providing them with trees and getting them to plant them around their own neighbourhoods would be good. It would give them some responsibility for the scheme. What do you think?
- J Sounds good. Another possibility could be to then have a neighbourhood competition to find the best kept areas.
- T OK, great ideas. Now to prioritise. Which do we feel is the most urgent problem here?
- H Personally I think we need to give crime priority. When the safety of individuals is in question, we need to take action.
- T What do you think, Josh?
- J To be honest, for me the most urgent problem is crime, too. It keeps tourists away and puts lives at risk.
- T I agree. Crime is of key importance and should be considered immediately. Well, thank you, both – that was a very productive meeting.

Audio 3

- 1 Traffic jams and air pollution into the city centre have been getting gradually worse over the years. Twice we've had complete gridlock which took hours to resolve and we even had one occasion last year in which someone died on their way to hospital because the ambulance couldn't get through.
- 2 Over the years residents and tourists alike have been using this form of transport less and less frequently, preferring to travel in their own private cars or taxis.
- 3 We've had 52 muggings alone this month, and it's only the 16th!