

BETTER ALL THE TIME

TODAY YOU WILL...

- ...DEVELOP THE ABILITY TO USE APPROPRIATE TENSES TO TALK ABOUT RESOLUTIONS AND FUTURE PLANS
- ...BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND THE IMPORTANCE AND VALUE OF HIGH FREQUENCY WORDS AND PHRASES
- ...EVALUATE AND REFLECT UPON PLANS AND GOALS

Start the year as you mean to go on, using a plan that's packed with positive thinking, suggests Elizabeth Fotheringham....

Getting pupils back into learning mode after the excitement of Christmas and the New Year can sometimes be a bit of a challenge. Asking them to think about resolutions for the coming year and perhaps also to reflect on past

intentions is one way of providing them with a focus, not only for learning how to express future plans but also to think about how realistic the goals they sometimes set themselves are.

STARTER ACTIVITY +

To set the scene for the lesson show students a short video clip about New Year resolutions. This could be of interviews done in the street such as these French (tiny.cc/qudhow) or German (tiny.cc/7hehow) examples, or a slide show such as this one, in Spanish (tiny.cc/dmehow). Ask pupils what the theme of the video (and the lesson) is and see if they can recall the target language for any of the resolutions. You could then ask them if they have made any New Year's resolutions.

MAIN ACTIVITIES +

1 LAY THE FOUNDATIONS

First, you will need to revise or introduce students to the key structures that they will need in order to be able to talk about resolutions. These are likely to be the future and/or conditional tenses and possibly some modal verbs depending on the language being taught. This could be done by giving pupils a dozen or so cards on which different resolutions are printed. Try to have a variety of different types, such as those to do with family/home (e.g. tidy room every week), school (do homework every day), health (eat more fruit and veg), relationships (not to argue with siblings), personal lifestyle (spend less time on Facebook) and so on. Make sure that each resolution uses a key starter phrase in the target language such as I am going to (or I will in the case of German) ... I want to... I would like... I must... and try also to include at least a couple that use high frequency language such as more, less, fewer, only and some negatives. You could show pupils some pictures for each resolution and get them to match them up. Then ask them to read the resolutions again with a partner and categorise them; leave them to come up with their own ideas as to what the categories should be – they may well think of something different from what you had in mind!

+ HOME LEARNING

- + Prepare a presentation of your own New year's resolutions and say how you are going to achieve them.
- + Write a paragraph about your own resolutions and those of your family. Say how realistic you think they are.
- + Use a dictionary to draft some resolutions for your language learning in the coming year.



2 SHARE & EXPAND

Ask the pupils to share how they have categorised the resolutions (e.g. school related, home etc) and make a note of these. Then focus their attention on the structure of verb + infinitive, plus, in the case of German, any word order rules. If they have a textbook or dictionary get them to find and look at the verb tables where the different forms are listed. To give them an opportunity to switch between the various verb forms show them some pictures of different people and get them to imagine what their resolutions are using the third person (e.g. He is going to... She wants to... they must...) Pupils could practise this first orally and then write some examples themselves on mini whiteboards. Once they have done this take a closer look at the resolutions that use high frequency language (more, less, fewer, only, negatives and adverbs of frequency – every day, sometimes and never etc) and get pupils work in groups to come up with further suggestions using these – e.g. eat fewer sweets (biscuits/cakes etc) more fruit/vegetables/exercise; this could be done in the form of a mind map.

3 CREATE & DISCUSS

Go back to the categories that pupils came up with earlier in the lesson (home, school, health, routine, family etc) and challenge them to come up with their own ideas for each. Remind them of the key structure of verb + infinitive so that they bear this in mind if they use a dictionary. If



INFO BAR

+ STRETCH THEM FURTHER

- + MORE ABLE PUPILS COULD THINK OF RESOLUTIONS ALONG THE LINES OF A 'GLOBAL CITIZEN' OR WITH A 'GREEN AGENDA'.
- + IMAGINE YOU ARE SOMEONE FAMOUS – WHAT WOULD YOUR RESOLUTIONS BE? MAKE THEM SMART!
- + FOR OLDER OR MORE ABLE KS3 LEARNERS OF FRENCH THIS COULD BE AN OPPORTUNITY TO TEACH OR REVISIT THE FUTURE TENSE, RATHER THAN STICKING TO THE SIMPLER IMMEDIATE FUTURE OF ALLER + INFINITIVE

+ ABOUT THE EXPERT



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they have access to computers this activity could be done using a web based application such as wallwisher.com, where they can add a virtual post-it note to the 'classroom wall' of New Year's resolutions. If you use this you could insist that wording of every 'note' is different. This gives pupils the opportunity to see how resolutions can be expressed in a range of different ways. When this activity is complete choose one of the resolutions (go for one that is quite general and non specific such as I want/would like/am going to do more exercise) and ask the class if it is a 'good' resolution and if they think it will be easy to keep. Ask them why or why not in the target language. Then show some other, similar

resolutions in the target language such as: A) I want to get fitter. I am going to exercise for an hour a day and B) I want get fitter. I am going to exercise three times a week. Get them to compare these with the original resolution and ask them if they are 'better' or not and why. Then show them a slide with a picture of a target and a list of SMART criteria and ask them again about the resolutions. SMART criteria are terms with which pupils

may well be familiar from Learning to Learn programmes and refer to: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timed. More details can be seen on Wikipedia (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SMART_criteria – this webpage also has links to pages in French and German which use the same acronym and the terms are near cognates so should be relatively easy to understand if you show them on your PowerPoint slide).

SUMMARY

Get the pupils to peer assess the resolutions they wrote in the previous activity and ask them to see if they can improve on them bearing these criteria in mind. Depending on the age and ability of your class you may need to give them a bank of words to work with.