The School for Training is a small specialist teacher training institute in Barcelona, providing innovative courses of the highest quality for language teachers from around the world. The school was founded and is run by Kieran Donaghy who has extensive experience of designing and delivering courses for teachers. Find out more about courses: https://theschoolfortraining.com/

What teens are thankful for

Language level: Intermediate (B1) – Upper Intermediate (B2)
Learner type: Teens and adults
Time: 60 minutes
Activity: Watching a short video, speaking and writing
Topic: Gratitude
Language: Vocabulary related to gratitude
Materials: Short video
Overview

In this lesson students talk about what they are grateful for, watch a video in which high students read a letter of gratitude to another person and write their own letters of gratitude.

Step 1

Write ‘grateful’ on the board. Elicit or explain the meaning. You may like to give a definition such as ‘feeling or showing thanks’ or ‘feeling that you want to thank someone because they have given you something or have done something for you’.

Step 2

Write these example sentences on the board:

‘Thanks for coming to the hospital with me. I’m really grateful.’
‘I’m very grateful for all your help with the project.’
‘I’m so grateful to my teacher for being so patient with me.’
‘I’m so grateful to my grandmother for everything she did for me.’
‘I’m grateful I have such a lovely family.’
‘I’m grateful I’m healthy.’

Point out different constructions with grateful:

- grateful for + gerund
- grateful for + noun
- grateful to + person
- grateful + I + have
- grateful + I + be

Step 3

Write five things you are grateful on the board. These are the sentences I wrote:
I’m grateful to my parents for the way they brought me up.
I’m grateful for having two beautiful daughters.
I’m grateful for having a job I love.
I’m grateful I have a nice flat to live in. I’m grateful I’m in good health.

Step 4

Read out each sentence and explain why your grateful for each thing. Encourage your students to ask you questions.

Step 5

Tell your students you would like them to write five sentences about things they are grateful for. Encourage them to use as many of the constructions in Step 2 as possible.

Step 6

Ask your students to read and explain their sentences to a partner. Encourage them to ask questions about their partner’s sentences.

Step 7

In plenary ask each student to read out and explain a sentence. See if any common themes emerge and comment on them.

Step 8

Tell your students they are going to watch some American high school students read out letters they have written expressing their gratitude to a person. Ask them what they think the students might be grateful for.

Step 9

Give students these questions to answer while they watch the video:

- Who do the students write letters to?
- How do the people react when the person reads the letter to them?

Show the first part of the video (0.00–1.37). Link: [https://bit.ly/2we565P](https://bit.ly/2we565P)
Step 10

Students check their answers.

- A teacher (Mrs Andrews), a friend (Nick), a mother (Clare)
- Mrs Andrews cries, Nick hugs his friend, Clare cries.

Step 11

Students watch the first part of the video again and answer this question:

Why are the students grateful?

Show the video again.

Step 12

Students check their answers.

- The girl is grateful because her teacher helped her learn English, gave her an appreciation of learning and made her feel like she mattered.
- The boy with blond hair is grateful to his friend has helped him a lot and let him stay with his family when he was going through a hard time.
- The boy with dark hair is grateful to his mother because a lot of the decisions he has made have been determined by her and for everything she has done for him and his two sisters.

Step 13

Ask your students how they think the students feel after reading their letters.

Step 14

Show the second part of the video (1.37–1.58) and tell students to check their answers to the previous step.
The blond boy says it felt good.
The girls it felt unreal.
The dark-haired boy says it was cool and he’s glad he did it.

Step 15

Ask your students to think of a person they would like a letter of gratitude to. Tell them to try to choose a person they are very grateful to but to whom they have never expressed their gratitude.

Step 16

Tell your students you would like them to write a letter of gratitude to the person they have chosen. Give them these guidelines:
- Write as though you are addressing this person directly ("Dear____").
- Describe in specific terms what this person did for you, why you are grateful and how this person’s behaviour affected your life.
- How you remember this person’s behaviour towards you.
- Keep your letter to 300 words.

Step 17

For homework students write their letters

Step 18

In the following class, take in the letters and correct them. Give them back in the next class.

Step 19

In plenary, if students feel comfortable doing so, they can talk about their letters and how they feel after writing them.