

Classrooms of the Future

Pre-Reading

A. Warm-Up Questions

1. What type of technology do you use in the classroom?
2. Imagine your classroom in ten years. What will be different about it?
3. Should classroom walls separate students by age or level? Will physical classrooms and schools always exist?



B. Vocabulary Preview

Match up as many words and meanings as you can.

Check this exercise again after seeing the words in context on page 2.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| _____ 1. not cut it | a) to design so that minimal updating will be required in the future |
| _____ 2. scramble | b) special skills or knowledge in a certain field |
| _____ 3. ahead of the curve | c) to be better or more advanced than average |
| _____ 4. tech-savvy | d) the integration of computer graphics into real-world environments |
| _____ 5. augmented reality | e) to not be good enough |
| _____ 6. groundbreaking | f) a temporary position at a workplace (sometimes unpaid) |
| _____ 7. mobility | g) someone who helps make learning easier or more likely to happen |
| _____ 8. future-proof | h) to act quickly without time to plan |
| _____ 9. flexible | i) to have a good understanding of technology |
| _____ 10. internship | j) providing new solutions and methods, innovative |
| _____ 11. expertise | k) open to change, not set |
| _____ 12. facilitator | l) the ability to move around |

Reading

CLASSROOMS OF THE FUTURE

Accommodating 21st-century learners

1. Does your teacher lecture you at the board at the front of the classroom? Do you and your classmates sit in rows of desks filled with outdated textbooks? The traditional classroom **doesn't cut it** in the 21st century, and school boards worldwide are **scrambling** to adapt.
2. Some schools are already **ahead of the curve**. Each student is equipped with a Wi-Fi enabled device full of interactive apps. Students take virtual field trips and have video chats with experts. **Tech-savvy** teachers are even experimenting with **augmented reality** and 3D printing. Will these **groundbreaking** technologies prepare students for jobs that don't exist yet?
3. Twenty-first-century students expect schools and teachers to keep up with the times. They want to learn about real-world issues using real-time media. They expect choice, convenience, **mobility**, and even comfort. If designers and educators work together, maybe they can **future-proof** classrooms and keep kids in school.
4. What timetable will the classroom of the future have? We shouldn't be surprised if students start rejecting the traditional school bell. After all, their parents appreciate **flexible** work hours and the option to work from home. Maybe students of the future will set their own schedules and log online study hours. They may even be able to specialize and do **internships** before post-secondary school.
5. What will the role of the teacher be in the classroom of the future? Could robots serve as substitutes and assistants? Sophisticated technology can already determine what a student wants and needs to learn. Maybe students of the future will choose their teachers from a panel of experts. Instead of one teacher per class, maybe a team of teachers with varying **expertise** will act as **facilitators** for large groups.
6. Maybe the classroom of the future won't have any physical walls. Students may be free to roam from one learning space to another. Instead of a hall pass, maybe they'll request a pass to the real world.

"I realized if you can change a classroom, you can change a community, and if you change enough communities, you can change the world."

—Erin Gruwell

Comprehension

Discuss these questions in pairs, and write the answers below.

1. What's the difference between the two types of boards mentioned in paragraph 1?

2. According to the reading, what are some tech-savvy teachers already experimenting with?

3. What expectations do 21st-century learners have?

4. What does the reading say about school schedules of the future?

5. According to this article, how might the role of the teacher change in the future?

Vocabulary Review

A. Word Recognition

Which word from page 1 do you think of when you read each sentence?
More than one option may be possible.
Use the word form hint to find the correct word.

#	Sentence	Word	Word Form
1	Our teachers do not lecture at the front of the room. They walk around the room and help learners achieve their goals.		noun
2	They need to design classrooms that will still work ten years from now.		verb
3	Our tables are on wheels, so we can easily move them out of the classroom. We need lots of space to move around.		noun
4	She'll be spending Mondays and Wednesdays in a real newsroom.		noun
5	Each student brings a different speciality to the group. One is good at drawing or writing, while another is good at programming.		noun
6	Providing Internet access isn't good enough. We also need 25 laptops with a Wi-Fi connection.		verb
7	You have a 3D printer in the classroom? I hope you also have a teacher who knows how to use it.		noun
8	Now that we have a robot to call on, we don't have to run around searching for a substitute when we get sick.		verb

Vocabulary Review cont.

B. Complete the Sentences

Complete the sentences about classrooms of the future.
Use vocabulary from page 1. You may need to change the word forms.

1. Augmented _____ may be _____ technology, but you also need tech-savvy teachers who know how to teach with it.
2. In order to _____ our classrooms, we need to think about _____. Students don't want to be stuck in classrooms sitting in chairs.
3. They installed a 3D printer in my classroom. Now I'm _____ to figure out how to use it. I think I'll talk to Professor Langdon. He always tries to stay _____.

Common Error

MAYBE VS. MAY BE

A. Reference

The words *maybe* and *may be* commonly confuse English learners.
In fact, native English users often confuse these words in writing as well.

Maybe

Maybe is an adverb that means "perhaps."

It is often used at the beginning of a sentence:

- Maybe classrooms will have lots of screens.
- Maybe I will be a teacher.

It is also often used as a one-word answer in spoken English:

A: Are you coming to class on Monday night?

B: Maybe.

A: Yes or no?

B: I said maybe! I have to find out if I'm working or not.

May Be

May be is a modal verb that expresses possibility.
It is slightly more formal than *might*.

- She may be in the library.
- There may be a better explanation.

Common Error cont.

B. Practice

Complete the dialogue between a teacher (A) and student (B) in the future. Add **maybe** or **may be** in each blank. Then practice the conversation with a partner. Your teacher will come around and check your intonation.

A: Are you studying at home tomorrow?

B: _____ . I'm working on a big project.
1.

A: I need a yes or no answer. Our class _____ going on a space trip.
2.

I'll need an e-signature from your guardians.

B: _____ I should get them to sign just in case.
3.

A: I need to know which shuttle to order.

There _____ an extra cost to change the shuttle size tomorrow.
4.

B: Okay, I will come. I _____ tired, but I don't want to miss the space trip.
5.

A: On second thought, _____ we'll wait until Saturday. I don't want you to be too tired in space.
6.

Discussion

1. How has classroom furniture changed, and what will it consist of in the next ten years?
2. Will schoolteachers always be people who specialize in education? Will there be a shortage or excess of teachers in the near future?
3. Can technology get in the way of learning?
4. How does the technology at your school compare to the technology in other schools around the world?
5. Instead of smartphones, will the learners of the future use smart drugs?



Group Task

Work in small groups and make some plans to future-proof your classroom. Here are some features to think about. Describe your plans to the class.

- physical layout
- furniture
- technology
- school hours
- distance learning opportunities
- role of the teacher
- school rules

Listening

Fill in the blanks as you listen to the recording.

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2. Some schools are already ahead of the _____. Each student is equipped with a Wi-Fi enabled device full of interactive apps. Students take virtual field trips and have video chats with experts. _____ teachers are even experimenting with _____ reality and 3D printing. Will these _____ technologies prepare students for jobs that don't exist yet?
3. Twenty-first-century students expect schools and teachers to keep up with the times. They want to learn about real-world issues using real-time media. They expect choice, convenience, _____, and even comfort. If designers and educators work together, maybe they can future-_____ classrooms and keep kids in school.
4. What timetable will the classroom of the future have? We shouldn't be surprised if students start rejecting the traditional school bell. After all, their parents appreciate _____ work hours and the option to work from home. Maybe students of the future will set their own schedules and log online study hours. They may even be able to specialize and do _____ before post-secondary school.
5. What will the role of the teacher be in the classroom of the future? Could robots serve as substitutes and assistants? Sophisticated technology can already determine what a student wants and needs to learn. Maybe students of the future will choose their teachers from a panel of experts. Instead of one teacher per class, maybe a team of teachers with varying _____ will act as _____ for large groups.
6. Maybe the classroom of the future won't have any physical walls. Students may be free to _____ from one learning space to another. Instead of a hall pass, maybe they'll request a pass to the real world.

Answer Key

LESSON DESCRIPTION:

In this lesson, students read and think about what the classroom of the future may be like. They discuss the role of technology and the role of the teacher. Includes a group assignment.

TEACHING TIPS:

See *Discussion Starters Teaching Guide* (<https://esllibrary.com/courses/72/lessons/>) for a variety of ways to use the reading. Audio is available for this lesson.

LEVEL: High Int

TIME: 1.5–2 hours

TAGS: discussion, future, classroom, technology, school, teacher, education, robot

Pre-Reading

A. WARM-UP QUESTIONS

Have students work in small groups or as a class. Discuss the quote. You may also want to do a bit of research about Erin Gruwell and the Freedom Writers Teachers.

B. VOCABULARY PREVIEW

- | | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|-------|-------|
| 1. e | 3. c | 5. d | 7. l | 9. k | 11. b |
| 2. h | 4. i | 6. j | 8. a | 10. f | 12. g |

- Learners in the 21st century expect to learn about real issues in real time. They want choice, convenience, mobility, and even comfort.
- The reading says that school schedules of the future may become more flexible. Students may be able to log online study hours.
- The schoolteacher may become more of a facilitator. Teachers may work in teams, and they may be experts in a field rather than expert educators. Robots may even have a role in teaching.

Reading (and/or Listening)

Read individually, in small groups, or as a class. You can also play the listening as your students read along. A gap-fill version of the reading is available on page 8. Help your students with vocabulary and expressions that they are unfamiliar with.

Comprehension

- The first “board” is the type you write on (chalkboard, whiteboard, blackboard). The second “board” refers to a group of people that manage a region or group (school board or board of directors).
- According to the reading, some tech-savvy teachers are already experimenting with augmented reality and 3D printing.

Vocabulary Review

A. WORD RECOGNITION

- | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|---------------|
| 1. facilitator | 4. internship | 7. tech-savvy |
| 2. future-proof | 5. expertise | 8. scramble |
| 3. mobility | 6. not cut it | |

B. COMPLETE THE SENTENCES

- reality, groundbreaking
- future-proof, mobility
- scrambling, ahead of the curve

(continued on the next page...)

Answer Key cont.

Common Error

A. REFERENCE

In writing, learners often confuse *maybe* and *may be*.
Explain the differences and check your students' understanding.

B. PRACTICE

- | | | |
|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. Maybe | 3. Maybe | 5. may be |
| 2. may be | 4. may be | 6. maybe |

Note: You could also ask your students to write their own dialogues.
Ask them to use "maybe" and "may be" with *the classroom of the future* as the theme.

Discussion

Answers will vary. Can be done in small groups or pairs.

For more discussion, you could also show one or two videos from the Classrooms of the Future playlist on ESL Library's YouTube channel. Please preview any video before you show it in class.
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL0MvnNQjMzmY2z-ZvYsgpv8O4h3s0b9Si>

Group Task

Place students in small groups for this project, and give them time to come up with some ideas. Invite each group to present their ideas. Which classroom of the future is the most realistic? Which one is the most outlandish?

Listening

1. cut it, scrambling
2. curve, Tech-savvy, augmented, groundbreaking
3. mobility, proof
4. flexible, internships
5. expertise, facilitators
6. roam

SPELLING NOTE:

This lesson shows the American spelling of the word *Practice*. Most other English-speaking countries spell it this way: *Practise* (when used as a verb; *Practice* when used as a noun). Make it a challenge for your students to find this word in the lesson and see if they know the alternate spelling.