

# International Women's Day: A lesson Plan to help educate students, improve their English skills, think critically about the society in which they live, and of their role in it.

Gerry Mclellan

## **Abstract**

This paper attempts to show how lesson plans should be created to take into account the needs of individual students or classes, help with a particular EFL or EAP sub-skill, raise cultural awareness in students and have them think critically about issues that are pertinent to them and to society at large. The author believes that lessons should not be or be seen to be isolated from the outside world. Instead, students should be able to instantly use their newfound knowledge to interact with others outside of the classroom. In any subject, be it science, maths or history, there has to be a connection between what students are learning and the reasoning behind it. Although this idea of Content and language Integrated Learning (CLIL) has been around since Confucius' times, many educators assume the connection between the lesson taught and society at large is implicit. This essay attempts to rationalize reasons for the content of one particular lesson and show how it is expected to raise student awareness of the role of women in society. Upon completion of the lesson, students will answer a survey and the author will use the feedback as the focus of a subsequent paper.

## **Introduction**

Many educators believe the burden is with students to make the connection between classroom instruction and the world outside. It seems clear, too, that students are becoming increasingly concerned with final grades and doing well in exams rather than focusing on classroom content and the enjoyment that a stress free learning environment can bring. This author believes, through years of experience and classroom feedback, that lessons should be designed and implemented in such a way as to help students to come to the realisation that there is interconnectivity in all that we do.

The paper focuses on how the author created one lesson to inform students about one important issue, help them with various language skills, have them think deeply about the issue(s) raised, and prepare their own presentation. Unlike many academic papers, the focus of this one is on the content of the lesson and the rationale behind the design rather than on student performance. Many academic papers are written on the back of action research projects numbering a student count of fewer than ten. Conclusions often indicate

such startling findings that more research is needed! It is this author's wish to take a different approach and initiate a paper with the actual lesson plan, provide a rationale behind the reasoning and state the desired objectives from the lesson. It is also hoped that upon completion of the lesson, students will provide detailed feedback. This can be analysed and form the basis of a second paper. Additionally, I would like to highlight my thought processes when preparing lessons and illustrate the rationale behind my pedagogic methodology. The second paper will show my reflections on the lesson, as well as those of the students. Vieira (2005) discusses at length the benefits to both teachers and students of reflection on classes and materials used and of how this reflective process helps inform teaching practice.

The complete lesson plan and teacher's notes can be found in the appendix.

In the body of this paper I will firstly explain my rationale for deciding upon the particular topic matter, then I will detail in a step-by-step process the reasoning behind each stage of the lesson and describe the desired and/or expected outcomes. The second part of the paper (next semester) will critically analyse the findings and provide feedback and explanations for parts of the lesson that worked or did not work. I will then provide actions that will be taken to address any shortcomings in the lesson plan. Additionally, I propose to conduct the lesson and receive feedback from classes at two universities in the Aichi area, one from a class of all female students and the other from a coeducational class. As this particular lesson focuses on women and the role they play in society, I wonder if feedback, from an all female class will differ in any way from a co-ed class. As the first lesson has yet to be used in a classroom environment, this paper will differ from other academic papers in that it cannot offer any valid conclusions. However, I can speculate, and throughout the paper intimate my expectations for each part of the lesson. Additionally, the main aim of the paper is to offer one instructor's personal rationale for electing to develop and implement a specific lesson and to perhaps, by detailing the thought processes involved, help others to better think about, critically analyse and justify their own lesson methodology and planning.

### **Background to my personal teaching and assessment beliefs**

Delpit (2006) writes about how education policy is suited, due to the changing political environment and belief sets, to raise student test scores. Indeed, in my opinion of education policy in Japan, students spend too much time focusing on test scores and exam results and completely fail to comprehend the meaning behind and pleasure of education. I, and a number of colleagues I have often spoken with, complain about student apathy and desire to simply get through the course of study and pass their final exams, without taking the time to appreciate the content of the course. Delpit (2006) does however state that a number of schools (in the U.S.) manage to treat students like the 'precious resources' they are. I am also of the firm belief that educators are responsible for helping to make students interested in the world around them, to ask questions of and think about solutions to issues affecting us all. Rohlen (1983, p271) states, 'If you would form the tree, do so while it is young.' I am of the opinion that educators play an important role and have an immense responsibility in helping to, not only shape the tree, but to ensure that it is watered and fed the proper nutrients. We should, however, take care to not shape the tree in our own image, but to let

it grow tall and find its place among the others in the forest. Rugen (2018) writes extensively on teacher immediacy, and I concur that by engaging students in class discussion, debating issues pertinent to them, and by making use of teacher self-disclosure, the atmosphere in the learning environment is enhanced allowing students to study in a relaxed manner and realise their full potential.

### **Rationale for the lesson topic matter**

I was inspired to develop a lesson to showcase the role and rising status in women (in some countries) over the last one hundred years, to evoke student feedback and involve them in an issue pertinent to them and their children. In a recent U.K. survey, Mhairi Black was second only to Nicola Sturgeon in a vote to find the most influential woman in the UK. Other notable women were Queen Elizabeth, Diana Spencer, J.K. Rowling and Margaret Thatcher. I initially wondered why three of the top six were politicians and was intrigued to discover how Japanese students might vote; would they vote for a political figure, a TV personality, singer or otherwise? I also wondered if students might change their opinions after completion of the lesson. In the following paragraphs I will explain my reasoning for each step of the lesson plan process. I believe that educators have a responsibility to be creative and to develop lessons they feel students will relate to. Learning English should be secondary to and a natural progression of classroom instruction. Students in Japan spend six years at the junior high and high school level learning grammar and vocabulary, so it is sometimes a shock to them when they are asked to think and express an opinion at the university level. I see it as an imperative precondition of any EFL/EAP instructor to provide opportunities for students to express their opinions and to create a classroom environment that maximises the full potential of student creativity. Obviously, to make the classroom L2 friendly, instructors should make allowances for the limited exposure students may have had to the language in general. Subsequently, I have included a vocabulary list of lower frequency words that students may not have been exposed to. Grabe (2007) discusses the differences between L1 and L2 reading ability and about the vast differential in exposure to L1 and L2 language. He also mentions that in order to enjoy, or fully understand a reading (or listening) passage students have to be able to comprehend more than 90% of the text. Instructors are, therefore, responsible for ensuring that students are well versed with any lexis likely to cause concern.

### ***Research Questions and Lesson Procedure***

As stated, the aim of this paper is to expose my teaching methodology and show how I take everyday ideas and try to structure a lesson around them. As a rule of thumb, my lesson plans take between two to four classes to complete. I have found that the following lesson structure proves to be beneficial:

1. Brainstorming
2. Introduction to the material and language work
3. Student preparation for Presentation
4. Final student presentation and feedback.

This complete plan can take up to six lessons, but is dependent on how teachers interpret the material.

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Brainstorming allows students to think about the issue before doing more detailed research and making a presentation.

Any plan is fluid and open to interpretation and change, often during class time! Instructors should be prepared to change at a moment's notice any pre-planned procedure if it is seen to be inappropriate for any given class. Students do, however, need to be given guidance in lesson rationale and expected outcomes should be provided after the first phase.

My research questions are to discover the following:

- ▶ Do all female classes or coeducational classes respond differently to CLIL instruction when the topic concerns females
- ▶ What aspect of the lesson did students find most interesting and why
- ▶ What aspect of language instruction did students find most beneficial and why. Students could choose from listening, writing, vocabulary building, note-taking, presentation planning and/or judging.

I plan to write a second paper highlighting these findings in 2019. I also anticipate some other findings, as yet unspecified, will present themselves and I hope to be able to address them in the second paper and show how they help inform modifications I might make to the lesson, or whether I choose to bin the lesson completely!

As stated at the beginning of this paper, I feel it is a great opportunity for instructors to be in a position to conduct research in the classroom in order to reflect and improve upon classroom practice. The following figure (Figure 1.) adapted from Gibb's (1988) Cycle highlights the processes involved in classroom assessment-related research.



The above figure is self-explanatory and emphasises the need for educators to continually be aware of the differing needs of students and classes based on factors such as time, place, politics, culture, age, etc. The cycle highlights the fact that change is constant and nobody can ‘rest on his or her laurels.’ Instead we have to continually strive for perfection. This will never be realised as, according to Heimans (2012) ‘Practice is never in a state of permanent completion, the world is constantly recreated and made possible through practice.’ We see here that we can continue to improve and adapt, sometimes reversing to past techniques (see reference to Confucius), but whatever implementation is brought about, it should be one that best fits the needs of the students at that particular time and in that particular space. The remainder of this paper will deal with the actual lesson, the reasoning behind my choice of topic and for expected outcomes of each stage of the plan. The subsequent paper will, hopefully, address shortcomings and answer the research questions.

### ***1A. Brainstorming***

The initial ‘Brainstorming’ activity can be found in appendices 1. A, B, and C (P9).

I thought that the focus on women in general would be too large for a one-lesson plan, and, indeed, is worthy of a complete textbook. Therefore, I decided to do the lesson on Mhairi Black as she is young, female and extremely outspoken.

Initially students think about their idea of the most influential female in Japan and in the world. This can either be past or present. They then share their ideas in groups of three or four.

#### **1B.**

Students then think about the roles of women in Japanese society and in other cultures around the world. It is important to stress that at the moment we are looking for ideas and opinions, not facts, and that it is more important to share ideas and express their opinions in English than to be factually correct. Indeed, when students begin to research their opinions, it can be helpful if they discover that their opinions were incorrect. Again, students share their opinions in groups. This activity helps reinforce student immediacy, promote friendship and encourages less communicative students to participate in smaller groups without fear of ridicule.

#### **1C.**

Now students think about the role men and women would have in their ideal society. This activity is designed to allow students to be creative and express themselves freely. Instructors may want to inform students that as it is an *ideal* society, students can be as freethinking as they want. Tell them to focus on factors such as salary, childrearing, housework, sexism, etc.

## **2. International Women’s Day**

Students now work individually to do some in-class research to find out as much as they can about the title of the lesson. The reasoning behind this activity is to encourage students to become more autonomous in their studies and to get them used to paraphrasing articles using their own words. This is important for

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students wishing to study overseas as plagiarising the words of others is often a problem among Asian students. Additionally, the exercise helps students to assimilate information from different sources and to become more astute at differentiating between the validity and relevance of various Internet sources. The instructor can spend more time on this activity if he/she feels the students would benefit from or need to learn from scratch about this aspect of written work. (The first two activities should take up one 90-minute lesson. The next part can be done in the second class).

### **3. Mhairi Black's Maiden Speech**

Have students listen to the speech and take notes on the gist of the content. Play the recording as many times as desired. Then, have them listen and take notes, filling in the blanks on the worksheet (A-F). If using a computer cluster, or students can use earphones with smart phones. Students can do this activity at their leisure. They then do the vocabulary exercise (4). This could complete one class. Teachers can use backup activities to reinforce new vocabulary. I plan to use a number of differing methods and hope to report on the most effective and those to which students respond to most enthusiastically.

Sometimes, especially when using a computer cluster, I inform students that they can finish early if they complete the exercises. This means that faster, more competent students can leave early upon completion and slower students do not feel bad about holding others back. Classes should be based on the ability to complete tasks and if students soon finish, they do not have to wait around for others. Creativity and adaptability is essential for educators.

5. Students work individually or in pairs to answer the questions. The teacher can then hold a class discussion to allow students to express their opinions. The length of this activity is at the discretion of the teacher and should be based on the interest and competency of the class.

6. In this final section, students are encouraged to prepare a short speech and to structure it accordingly. They should aim to have a brief introduction, three or four paragraphs in the main body of the speech and a conclusion in which they restate the main points and offer some constructive suggestions for future policy. The speeches should reflect some aspect of contemporary society that students feel concerned or angry about.

### **Conclusion**

This paper has attempted to demonstrate the thought processes involved in one teaching lesson planning. I hope that I have demonstrated how I believe it is important to think about student culture and values when planning a lesson. Although I personally believe that many young Japanese females are not overtly politically active, I wanted them to have the opportunity to think deeply about the world in which they live and to focus on issues pertinent to them. By choosing a female role model, I thought that female students, in particular, would be more encouraged to participate in the class activities and benefit more from the

instruction. I am acutely conscious of the fact that the speech is spoken at native speed and that the vocabulary level is advanced. However, I teach in too many classes where material has been stupefied and I wanted to raise the bar.

My assumptions may prove to be totally unfounded and the lesson may backfire and prove to be a disaster. This is the main purpose for writing this paper prior to doing the lesson. I believe that hindsight gives writers the opportunity to tweak facts and write about the benefits. I no longer have that luxury.

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**Appendix**  
**International Women's Day**

**1. Brainstorming!**

**A. In your opinion who is the most influential woman in Japan (past or present)? Who is the most influential woman in the world (past or present)? Write your answers in the box below and state your reasons why you think so.**

**B. In groups discuss the roles women and men play in society. Before starting the group work make some notes in the box. Give reasons for your opinions.**

**C. In your ideal society what role do you think men and women should have? Write your opinions and then discuss them in small groups. Think about education, salaries, housework, careers, politics, etc.**

**2. What is International Women's day? Use your smart phones or I-pads and write a short paragraph of the main points. Remember to discuss the origins, history and main points**



### 3. Mhairi Black's Maiden Speech to the House of Commons

Mhairi Black, at age twenty, is the youngest Member of Parliament (MP) in the UK in 350 years. Listen to her maiden speech to the House at [https://youtu.be/exQex\\_S\\_x-w](https://youtu.be/exQex_S_x-w), and fill in the blanks in the following transcript.

#### A

Thank you madam deputy \_\_\_\_\_ for calling me during such an \_\_\_\_\_ debate. Firstly, in my maiden speech I want to \_\_\_\_\_ tribute to my predecessor, Douglas Alexander. He served the \_\_\_\_\_ for many years; after all I was only three when he was \_\_\_\_\_, but it is because of that fact that I want thank him for all he did for the constituency, and I \_\_\_\_\_ want to take a moment to commend him for the dignified way in he handled himself in what must have been a very \_\_\_\_\_ election night. He did himself proud and he did his party \_\_\_\_\_ and I wish him the best for the future.

#### B

Now, when I \_\_\_\_\_ that it was of tradition to speak about the history of your constituency in a maiden speech I decided to do some research, despite the fact I've lived there all my life. As one of the tail ends doing the maiden speech of my colleagues in the SNP, I've noticed that my colleagues quite often mention Rabbie Burns a lot and they all try to form this intrinsic \_\_\_\_\_ between him and their own constituency and own him for themselves. I, however, feel no need to do this, for during my \_\_\_\_\_ I discovered a fact which trumps them all: William Wallace was born in my constituency. Now my constituency has a fascinating history far \_\_\_\_\_ a Hollywood film and a \_\_\_\_\_ name. From the mills of Paisley to the industries of Johnstone, right out to the weavers in Kilbarron. It's got a wonderful \_\_\_\_\_, a cracking sense of humour and much to love for both for the tourists and those who reside there. But the trust is that within my constituency it's not all \_\_\_\_\_. We've watched our town centres deteriorating; we've watched our communities \_\_\_\_\_. Our unemployment level is now higher than the UK average. One in five \_\_\_\_\_ in my constituency go to bed hungry at night. Paisley job centre has the third highest number of sanctions in the whole of \_\_\_\_\_.

#### C

Now before I was elected I \_\_\_\_\_ for a charitable organisation and there was a gentleman who I grew very fond of. He was one of these guys who has been battered by life in every way \_\_\_\_\_. You name it, he's been through it. He used to come in to get food from this \_\_\_\_\_, and it was the only food that he had access to and it was the only meal he would get, and I sat with him and he told me about his \_\_\_\_\_ of going to the job centre. He said 'I've heard the stories, Mhairi. They try and trick you out, they'll tell you you're a \_\_\_\_\_, Mhairi. I'm not a liar Mhairi, I'm not.' And I told him 'it's okay, clam down, be honest. It'll be fine.' And then I didn't see him for two or three weeks. I did get very worried - and when he finally did come back in I says to him, 'How did you get

on?' Without \_\_\_\_\_ a word, he burst into tears. That grown man standing in front of a twenty year old crying his eyes out, because what had happened to him was the money that he would normally pay for his travel to come to the charity to get his food, he \_\_\_\_\_ that in order to afford to get to the job centre he would save that money. Because of this he didn't eat for five days, he didn't drink. When he was on the bus on the way to the job centre he fainted due to exhaustion and dehydration. He was \_\_\_\_\_ minutes late for the job centre and he was sanctioned for thirteen weeks. If we... now when the chancellor spoke in his budget about \_\_\_\_\_ the roof when the sun was shining, I would have to ask 'on who is the sun shining?'

When he spoke about benefits not supporting certain \_\_\_\_\_ of lifestyles, is that the kind of life style he was talking about? If we go back even further, when the minister for employment was asked to consider if there was a correlation between the number of sanctions and the rise food bank use she stated, and I quote, ' food banks play an \_\_\_\_\_ role in local welfare provision.'

Renfrewshire has the third highest use of food bank use and food bank use is going up and up. Food banks are not part of the welfare state; they are a \_\_\_\_\_ that the welfare state is failing.

#### D

Now the government, quite rightly, pays for me through taxpayers' money to be able to live in London whilst I serve my constituents. My housing is subsidised by the \_\_\_\_\_. Now the chancellor in his budget said 'it is not fair that families earning over \_\_\_\_\_ pounds in London should have their rents paid for by other working people' – but it is okay so long as you are an MP? In this budget the chancellor also abolished any housing benefit for anyone below the age of twenty-one. So we are now in the ridiculous \_\_\_\_\_ whereby because I am an MP, not only am I the youngest but I am also the only twenty-year-old in the whole of the UK that the chancellor is prepared to help with housing.

#### E

We now have one of the most uncaring, uncompromising and out-of-touch \_\_\_\_\_ that the UK has seen since Thatcher. It is here that I must now turn to those that I share a bench with. Now I have sat in this chamber for ten weeks and I have very deliberately stayed quiet and I have \_\_\_\_\_ intently to everything that has been said. I have heard multiple speeches from Labour benches standing to talk about the world rise of Nationalism in Scotland when in actual fact all these speeches have served to do is to demonstrate how deep the lack of \_\_\_\_\_ about Scotland is within the labour party. I, like so many SNP members come from a traditional socialist labour family and I have never been quiet in my assertion that I feel that it is the Labour party that left me – not the other way about. The SNP did not triumph on a wave of nationalism - in fact nationalism has nothing to do with what's happening in Scotland. We triumphed on a wave of hope: hope that there was something different, something better to the Thatcherite neoliberal \_\_\_\_\_ that are produced from this chamber, hope that representatives genuinely could give a voice to those that don't have one. I don't mention this in order to pour salt onto wounds, which I'm sure are very open and very sore for many members on these benches – both

politically and personally - colleagues, possibly friends lost their seats. I mention it in order to hold a \_\_\_\_\_ to the face of a party that seems to have forgotten the very people they are supposed to represent, the very things they are supposed to fight for. After hearing the Labour leader's intentions to support the changes of tax credits that the chancellor has put forward I must make this plea through the words of one of your own, and of a personal \_\_\_\_\_ of mine.

**F**

Tony Benn once said that in politics there are weathercocks and signposts. Weathercocks will spin in whatever direction the wind of public opinion may blow them, no matter what principle they have to compromise.

And then, there are signposts – signposts, which stand true, and tall, and principled; and they point in a \_\_\_\_\_ and they say ‘this is the way to a better society and it is my job to convince you why.’

Tony Benn was right when he said the only people worth remembering in politics were signposts.

Now, yes, we will have political differences, yes, in other parliaments we may be \_\_\_\_\_ parties - but within this chamber we are not. No matter how much I may wish it the SNP is not the solo opposition to this government, but nor is the Labour party. It is together with all the parties on these benches that we must form an opposition. And in order to be effective we must oppose - not abstain. So I reach out a genuine hand of \_\_\_\_\_ which I can only hope will be taken, ‘Let us come together. Let us be that opposition. Let us be that signpost of a better society. Ultimately, people are needing a voice, people are needing help – let’s give them it.

**4. Use a dictionary to translate the words from English to Japanese. Then write a definition of the word in English and write a sample sentence using the word.**

English	Japanese	Definition in English and sample sentence
Abolish		
Abstain		
Battered		
Budget		
Burst (into tears)		
Benches		
Commend		
Community		
Constituency		
Dehydration		
Demonstrate		
Dignified		

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Elect		
Exhaustion		
Fix		
Fascinating		
Fond (of)		
Maiden		
Nationalism		
Neoliberal		
Out-of-touch		
Oppose		
Predecessor		
Proud		
Ridiculous		
Sanction		
State		
Taxpayer		
Tradition		
Trick		
Trump		
Ultimately		
Uncompromising		
Weathercock		

**5. Write your answers to the following questions:**

- 1) Do you think there should be more female politicians?
- 2) In the vote for Scottish Independence in 2014, sixteen-year-olds were allowed to vote. Do you think people of this age should have a political vote?
- 3) What is your opinion of food banks?
- 4) What can be done to eradicate poverty? How much money do you need to survive in Japan?
- 5) Is there a class system in Japan?
- 6) What do you know about the UK political system?
- 7) Are you interested in Japanese politics?
- 8) Who is your favourite Japanese politician?
- 9) In the UK, politicians voted to give themselves an 11% pay rise, but they only want to give 1% to nurses. How do you feel about this?
- 10) What do you think about people from Okinawa who want to separate from Japan?

**6. Imagine that you are the leader of a new political party in Japan. Write your opening speech for the Diet. Your speech should be around two minutes in length. What changes would you make to the economy? How can you make a fairer society? Explain your reasons.**

Mhairi's speech is divided into six parts (A-F) as follows:

A = Introduction. Pays respect to the MP she beat in the election.

B = She talks about her constituency and some of the problems it faces.

C = She tells a story of one man to highlight the problems faced by many.

D = She talks about the opposition chancellor and mentions his budget.

E = She talks about the SNP and gives reasons why she thinks they are now popular. She also says why Labour did badly and questions their commitment.

F = She talks about Tony Benn and says that Labour and SNP should work together to fight for the poor.

### **Mhairi Black's Maiden Speech to the House of Commons (Teacher's Copy)**

Hand out the first three pages of the lesson and tell students to click on the link and listen to Mhairi Black's speech. They should listen to the speech twice before looking at their papers (some teachers might want to get students to watch the video first before giving students the papers). After watching the clip two times, get them to try to fill in the blanks. The answers are in bold font.

1. Mhairi Black, at age twenty, is the youngest Member of Parliament (MP) in the UK in 350 years. Listen to her maiden speech to the House at [https://youtu.be/exQex\\_S\\_x-w](https://youtu.be/exQex_S_x-w), and fill in the blanks in the following transcript.

#### **A**

Thank you madam deputy **speaker** for calling me during such an **important** debate. Firstly, in my maiden speech I want to **pay** tribute to my predecessor, Douglas Alexander. He served the **constituency** for many years; after all I was only three when he was **elected**, but it is because of that fact that I want thank him for all he did for the constituency, and I **especially** want to take a moment to commend him for the dignified way in he handled himself in what must have been a very **difficult** election night. He did himself proud and he did his party **proud** and I wish him the best for the future.

#### **B**

Now, when I **discovered** that it was of tradition to speak about the history of your constituency in a maiden speech I decided to do some research, despite the fact I've lived there all my life. As one of the tail ends doing the maiden speech of my colleagues in the SNP, I've noticed that my colleagues quite often mention Rabbin Burns a lot and they all try to form this intrinsic **connection** between him and

their own constituency and own him for themselves. I, however, feel no need to do this, for during my **research** I discovered a fact which trumps them all: William Wallace was born in my constituency. Now my constituency has a fascinating history far **beyond** a Hollywood film and a **historical** name. From the mills of Paisley to the industries of Johnstone, right out to the weavers in Kilbarton. It's got a wonderful **population**, a cracking sense of humour and much to love for both for the tourists and those who reside there. But the trust is that within my constituency it's not all **fantastic**. We've watched our town centres deteriorating; we've watched our communities **decline**. Our unemployment level is now higher than the UK average. One in five **children** in my constituency go to bed hungry at night. Paisley job centre has the third highest number of sanctions in the whole of **Scotland**.

### C

Now before I was elected I **volunteered** for a charitable organisation and there was a gentleman who I grew very fond of. He was one of these guys who has been battered by life in every way **imaginable**. You name it, he's been through it. He used to come in to get food from this **charity**, and it was the only food that he had access to and it was the only meal he would get, and I sat with him and he told me about his **fear** of going to the job centre. He said 'I've heard the stories, Mhairi. They try and trick you out, they'll tell you you're a liar, Mhairi. I'm not a **liar** Mhairi, I'm not.' And I told him 'it's okay, clam down, be honest. It'll be fine.' And then I didn't see him for two or three weeks. I did get very worried - and when he finally did come back in I says to him, 'How did you get on?' Without **saying** a word, he burst into tears. That grown man standing in front of a twenty year old crying his eyes out, because what had happened to him was the money that he would normally pay for his travel to come to the charity to get his food, he **decided** that in order to afford to get to the job centre he would save that money. Because of this he didn't eat for five days, he didn't drink. When he was on the bus on the way to the job centre he fainted due to exhaustion and dehydration. He was **fifteen** minutes late for the job centre and he was sanctioned for thirteen weeks. If we... now when the chancellor spoke in his budget about **fixing** the roof when the sun was shining, I would have to ask 'on who is the sun shining?'

When he spoke about benefits not supporting certain **kinds** of lifestyles, is that the kind of life style he was talking about? If we go back even further, when the minister for employment was asked to consider if there was a correlation between the number of sanctions and the rise food bank use she stated, and I quote, ' food banks play an **important** role in local welfare provision.' Renfrewshire has the third highest use of food bank use and food bank use is going up and up. Food banks are not part of the welfare state; they are a **symbol** that the welfare state is failing.

### D

Now the government, quite rightly, pays for me through taxpayers' money to be able to live in London whilst I serve my constituents. My housing is subsidised by the **taxpayer**. Now the chancellor in his budget said 'it is not fair that families earning over **forty-thousand** pounds in London should have their rents paid for by other working people' - but it is okay so long as you are an MP? In this budget the

chancellor also abolished any housing benefit for anyone below the age of twenty-one. So we are now in the ridiculous **situation** whereby because I am an MP, not only am I the youngest but I am also the only twenty-year-old in the whole of the UK that the chancellor is prepared to help with housing.

### E

We now have one of the most uncaring, uncompromising and out-of-touch **governments** that the UK has seen since Thatcher. It is here that I must now turn to those that I share a bench with. Now I have sat in this chamber for ten weeks and I have very deliberately stayed quiet and I have **listened** intently to everything that has been said. I have heard multiple speeches from Labour benches standing to talk about the world rise of Nationalism in Scotland when in actual fact all these speeches have served to do is to demonstrate how deep the lack of **understanding** about Scotland is within the labour party. I, like so many SNP members come from a traditional socialist labour family and I have never been quiet in my assertion that I feel that it is the Labour party that left me – not the other way about. The SNP did not triumph on a wave of nationalism - in fact nationalism has nothing to do with what's happening in Scotland. We triumphed on a wave of hope: hope that there was something different, something better to the Thatcherite neoliberal **policies** that are produced from this chamber, hope that representatives genuinely could give a voice to those that don't have one. I don't mention this in order to pour salt onto wounds, which I'm sure are very open and very sore for many members on these benches – both politically and personally - colleagues, possibly friends lost their seats. I mention it in order to hold a **mirror** to the face of a party that seems to have forgotten the very people they are supposed to represent, the very things they are supposed to fight for. After hearing the Labour leader's intentions to support the changes of tax credits that the chancellor has put forward I must make this plea through the words of one of your own, and of a personal **hero** of mine.

### F

Tony Benn once said that in politics there are weathercocks and signposts. Weathercocks will spin in whatever direction the wind of public opinion may blow them, no matter what principle they have to compromise.

And then, there are signposts – signposts, which stand true, and tall, and principled; and they point in a **direction** and they say 'this is the way to a better society and it is my job to convince you why.'

Tony Benn was right when he said the only people worth remembering in politics were signposts.

Now, yes, we will have political differences, yes, in other parliaments we may be **opposing** parties - but within this chamber we are not. No matter how much I may wish it the SNP is not the solo opposition to this government, but nor is the Labour party. It is together with all the parties on these benches that we must form an opposition. And in order to be effective we must oppose - not abstain. So I reach out a genuine hand of **friendship** which I can only hope will be taken, 'Let us come together. Let us be that opposition. Let us be that signpost of a better society. Ultimately, people are needing a voice, people are needing help - lets give them it.

International Women's Day: A lesson Plan to help educate students, improve their English skills, think critically about the society in which they live, and of their role in it. (Gerry Mclellan)

2. Use a dictionary to translate the words from English to Japanese. Then write a definition of the word in English.

Get students to write Japanese translations for the new vocabulary and write a short definition of each word in English followed by sample sentences.

English	Japanese	Definition
Abolish		
Abstain Battered		
Budget		
Burst (into tears)		
Benches		
Commend		
Community		
Constituency		
Dehydration		
Demonstrate		
Dignified		
Elect		
Exhaustion		
Fix		
Fascinating		
Fond (of)		
Maiden		
Nationalism		
Neoliberal		
Out-of-touch		
Oppose		
Predecessor		
Proud		
Ridiculous		
Sanction		
State		
Taxpayer		
Tradition		
Trick		
Trump		
Ultimately		
Uncompromising		
Weathercock		



3. Write your answers to the following questions:

Give students some time to write their answers to the following questions and then have them discuss their opinions in small groups.

- 1) Do you think there should be more female politicians?
- 2) In the vote for Scottish Independence in 2014, sixteen-year-olds were allowed to vote. Do you think people of this age should have a political vote?
- 3) What is your opinion of food banks?
- 4) What can be done to eradicate poverty? How much money do you need to survive in Japan?
- 5) Is there a class system in Japan?
- 6) What do you know about the UK political system?
- 7) Are you interested in Japanese politics?
- 8) Who is your favourite Japanese politician?
- 9) In the UK, politicians voted to give themselves an 11% pay rise, but they only want to give 1% to nurses. How do you feel about this?
- 10) What do you think about people from Okinawa who want to separate from Japan?

4. Imagine that you are the leader of a new political party in Japan. Write your opening speech for the Diet. Your speech should be around two minutes in length. What changes would you make to the economy? How can you make a fairer society? Explain your reasons.

Mhairi's speech is divided into six parts (A-F) as follows:

Explain the different sections of the speech and ask students to follow a similar pattern.

A = Introduction. Pays respect to the MP she beat in the election.

B = She talks about her constituency and some of the problems it faces.

C = She tells a story of one man to highlight the problems faced by many.

D = She talks about the opposition chancellor and mentions his budget.

E = She talks about the SNP and gives reasons why she thinks they are now popular. She also says why Labour did badly and questions their commitment.

F = She talks about Tony Benn and says that Labour and SNP should work together to fight for the poor. She offers a short conclusion.