Lesson Plan Easy Access English

What's Going on At Ikea

EAE Learning objectives for this lesson

Comprehension and Continuous Tenses.

ACTIVITY ONE - Discussion

Ask and answer these questions with your partner or teacher.

1. Is the concept of 'a family day out' important to Ikea? What does it involve?
2. In a society where online shopping is becoming more and more common and where people want quick service, do you think that 'a day out' in a furniture store is going to remain popular?
3. Do you think that Ikea should offer services, areas of the store or organise events, which could encourage visitors to spend longer in the store and visit on a regular basis.

ACTIVITY TWO – Vocabulary

Now, let's match up the following words or idioms with their definitions

Words

1. Pensioner
2. To gossip
3. To check someone out
4. Matchmaking
5. Unruly
6. To nap



Definitions

A. To talk about the private life of another person
B. To look at someone's features to see if you find them attractive
C. An elderly person who is retired and receives money from the government
D. Disorderly, out of order, chaotic
E. To sleep for a short time during the day
F. When you join two people together
G. A club where people meet to try and find a boyfriend or girlfriend because they are lonely.

ACTIVITY THREE- Listening Comprehension (Please try to prepare this before the lesson with an open internet connection).

Listen to this video and find out what is happening in Shanghai's Ikea store!

http://www.npr.org/player/v2/mediaPlayer.html?action=1&t=1&islist=false&id=141904803&m=141926343

Answer the questions.

1. What are the reasons that these pensioners choose to spend their time at Ikea?
2. How often does the club meet?
3. What do the group do during their meetings?

ACTIVITY FOUR – Continuous Tenses

Continuous tenses

To describe a continuing action in English we use **continuous (also known as progressive) tenses**. There are three of these: **present**, **past**, and **future**. These tenses express either an incomplete action or a state in progressa t a particular time. When you are talking about something you do repeatedly, habutually for example you don't use the continuous tense. (I work at Ikea, not 'I am working at Ikea' or 'I play the Piano' not I am playing the piano', or 'I live in Montpellier, not I am living in Montpelllier'). They're respectively formed with the present, past, or future of the verb *to be* but, no matter when the action happened, are always followed by the present participle (the form of a verb that ends in –ing), for example:

A. *I'm thinking of you.*
B. *We were standing in the cashline waiting to be served.*
C. *She'll be working in the Ikea Restaurant tonight.*
D. *I have been working for Ikea for ten years.*

This last example is the 'Past Perfect Continuous'. It's used for an action which has just stopped recently, (What have you been doing you look hot ?" I have been walking fast because I was late .'). It's also used for an action continuing up to now. (I have been living in Paris for ten years). We ofteh use for and since with the present perfect continuous. ***FOR*** *is used to talk about a period of time (I have been regularly visiting Ikea for the last ten years) and we use* ***SINCE*** *to refer to a point in time. (I have been coming to this store since it openened in 1998).*

ACTIVITY FIVE – Reading Comprehension

Now, let's read the text to find out some more information about the lonely heart's club! IDENTIFY THE CONTINUOUS TENSES (each time you see one in the text).

At IKEA In Shanghai, Do-It-Yourself Matchmaking

If you're retired, single and looking for love in Shanghai, try IKEA. People have been using the store as a place to meet.



Twice a week, hundreds of Shanghai residents who have formed an informal lonely hearts club of sorts gather at the cafeteria of the Swedish furniture megastore for free coffee and conversation.

The pensioners begin arriving around 1 in the afternoon and fill nearly 20 tables in the store cafeteria. They sit for hours drinking coffee, gossiping and subtly checking ea ch other out.

"You can find a boyfriend or girlfriend, or just make friends and chat. It makes you a little bit happier," says Ge, a smartly dressed 50-year-old woman who retired this year.

Ge's friend, with the surname Han, is a retired bus-ticket seller and says IKEA is a good place to meet people if you're divorced or widowed, because there is so much matchmaking going on.

"If I meet a guy and he's appropriate for me, we can call each other," Ge explains. "But if he finds someone more suitable for me, he'll help and introduce me to the other guy."

Both women refuse to give their full names because they don't want their families thinking that they visit IKEA. Han says it's just too embarrassing. So, the club is affecting perceptions of the brand.

"When we go out, we don't tell people we're going here," Han says. "We tell them we're going to a tea house. We don't tell them we go to IKEA, because IKEA is the place to find boyfriends and girlfriends."

A Result Of Changing Demographics

Retirees began coming to the IKEA in Shanghai's Xuhui district about three years ago. The phenomenon is a result of the nation's rising divorce rate, changing demographics and the comfort of the stores themselves.

"We don't tell them we go to IKEA, because IKEA is the place to find boyfriends and girlfriends. - *Han, a retired bus-ticket seller*

Shao, a former manager at a local Unilever factory who won't give his first name either, is 70.

"Shanghai has become an aging society with many single senior citizens," Shao says. "They need to make friends, they feel lonely at home. So what IKEA does is laudable, and we wish IKEA's business will prosper. I am thankful for IKEA's tolerance toward us."

Actually, IKEA's tolerance has pretty much run out.

The company is tired of the lonely hearts drinking gallons of coffee but never buying anything. Recently, when some lonely hearts became unruly, IKEA cordoned off a section of the cafeteria to pen them in.

IKEA managers refused to discuss the problem — they don't want the publicity.But they have posted a sign that reads: "Your behavior is affecting the normal operations of the IKEA cafeteria. Frequent fights and arguments are damaging the image both of Shanghai residents and IKEA."

A Different Kind Of Store

Torsten Stocker studies consumer products in China for Monitor Group, a U.S.-based management consulting company.He says Chinese feel comfortable being themselves in IKEA because the shopping experience is so different from most here.

"It feels more like a place of leisure than a place where you would buy furniture," Stocker says. "You know, it also represents to some extent the home that they aspire to and they would like to have."

In fact, some Chinese have always treated IKEA like an extension of their own homes. When the first store opened in Beijing in 1998, people napped on the beds. Families camped out on sofa sets, reading newspapers, drinking tea from glass jars and eating biscuits.

Ge, one of the lonely hearts, admits they don't treat the company very well."I don't think it's appropriate, because this is a money-making business," Ge says. "The best thing would be if we had places like this in our own community, even if there is no coffee or tea, we can bring our own."

For now, IKEA and the lonely hearts are in an uneasy truce. IKEA is not considering telling them not to continue coming to the store. They are unwilling to force the Chinese seniors out.

And the lonely hearts don't want to give up IKEA's modern comforts — and all that free coffee.

Comprehension Questions:

1. What does Ikea think about the group meeting in their Shanghai store?
2. What have Ikea said about this club to the press?
3. What do you think this says about Ikea?
4. Why is Ikea different to other stores and public places in Shanghai?
5. Why does IKEA tolerate this club?
6. What do you think they should do about this?

ACTIVITY SIX – Create your own club!

Make sure that you think about:

- Who will come to the group?
- When will it be?
- What is the company's policy about this group?
- How will you advertise it?
- What are the benefits of coming to this group/club?
- Why does it benefit the company?

Present your idea using short sentences and linking words.

