

# Green Jobs and Green Entrepreneurs

## AIM

The lessons aim to develop students' understanding of a green economy. Through listening, reading, speaking and writing and a final group presentation on local green college programs and green entrepreneurs, students examine how green collar jobs can provide new opportunities.

## OBJECTIVES

At the end of this session, students will be able to:

- Define “green” and “green collar jobs.”
- Interpret English-language new articles that contain business vocabulary.
- Distinguish between reducing, reusing and recycling.
- Access websites, including [www.kqed.org](http://www.kqed.org), that list green-job training and employment opportunities in their area.
- List the steps involved in starting one's own business.
- Identify common obstacles in founding a company.
- Edit their writing for grammatical errors.
- Negotiate responsibilities for speaking in a group presentation.

## TARGET GROUP

Intermediate to high-level ESL students (level 6)

(For the purpose of this lesson, the target group levels range from 1 through 8, with the following guidelines: 1 = beginning, 5 = intermediate, 8 =advanced.)

## LENGTH

5 class periods of approximately 100 minutes each

## OVERVIEW

In these lessons, students follow Omar Freilla, a young man in New York who started a green business salvaging and selling used building materials. Students explore the meaning of a green economy, analyze the process of being an entrepreneur and starting one's own business, and learn pertinent business vocabulary while practicing listening, reading, speaking and writing skills. Important grammatical exercises are also integrated into the lesson.

## DAY 1

### 1. Schema Building

Begin by checking what students already know about the environment and green jobs. Write these schema-building questions on the board to elicit their understanding of the following terms.

What is *pollution*?

What is *global warming*? What causes it?

What is the *environment*?

What is *organic fruit*?

What does “eco-friendly” or “green” mean as it relates to the environment?

What are *green jobs*?

### 2. Comprehension Exercise

Stream five minutes of the “**Green Collar Jobs**” video on **NOW** (PBS) at <http://www.pbs.org/now/shows/445/index.html>, about Omar Freilla, founder of Green Workers Cooperative.

Working in small groups, ask students to answer the following comprehension questions.

- Where does Omar Freilla live?
- Where did Omar grow up? Where did his parents grow up?
- Omar Freilla explains his reason for starting a green business: “We have to create ways of *sustaining* ourselves to allow us to sustain life.”  
What does he mean?
- What did Omar's mother say when he announced his business idea?
- Did she like the *kind* of work it was?
- How were the people of the South Bronx, New York, treated in the past? Why?
- Omar opened a store that he named Green Workers Cooperative. What do they sell there?

**MATERIALS**

- “**Green Collar Jobs,**” a segment on NOW (PBS) on 11/14/08, available at <http://www.pbs.org/now/shows/445/index.html> – a video clip that includes an interview with Omar Freilla, founder of the Green Workers Cooperative in the South Bronx.
- “**The Future of Green Jobs,**” an article available at <http://www.pbs.org/now/shows/445/green-jobs.html> —an interview with Chip Giller, founder of the environmental news site Grist.org (<http://www.grist.org/>); Chip talks with a NOW reporter about the future of green collar jobs.
- Articles on green collar enterprises available at the following websites:
  - **The Wooden Duck Furniture Store** <http://www.thewoodenduck.com/v2/aboutus.html> or <http://caldining.berkeley.edu/farmerprofiles/HappyBoy.pdf> — a factory that makes furniture from salvaged wood in Berkeley.
  - **Lotus Cleaning Service** <http://www.lotuscleaningservices.com/lotusarticles.html> — a green cleaning service started by a housekeeper who advertises that he uses only natural cleaning products.
  - **Nontoxic Dry Cleaning Incentive Program** <http://www.arb.ca.gov/toxics/dryclean/ab998.htm> —provides information on how to receive a \$1,000 grant to switch the cleaning agents used in your dry-cleaning facility to natural, nontoxic cleaning agents.
  - **Happy Boys Farm** <http://www.pcfma.com/FarmBio/HappyBoy.html> or <http://caldining.berkeley.edu/farmerprofiles/HappyBoy.pdf> – 100 acres farmed as Certified Organic in Watsonville, San Juan Bautista, Giddy and Chow Chilla.
  - **Laney College Carpentry Program** <http://media.www.laneytower.com/media/storage/paper1008/news/2008/09/18/Features/Carpentry.Students.Paint.It.green-3442171.shtml> – builds green energy-efficient homes using Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards.
- Barak Obama started his presidency in the middle of a bad economic recession. President Obama promised he would create 5 million new green jobs, “jobs that can’t be outsourced.” What does “outsourced” mean?
- What does Omar hope for the future?
- What is a *cooperative*? How is it different from most companies?
- How does Omar hope his local green business will change poor neighborhoods like his?
- What is the sad nickname for his neighborhood, the South Bronx? (“\_\_\_\_\_ Alley”)
- What happened when a man wanted to open a recycled paper factory in the South Bronx?
- What was Omar’s model for his worker-owned business? Where did he get the idea for that type of company?
- How many years did it take Omar to prepare, organize and finish his plan of a recycled building materials store?
- What will he do with the money that he makes from this first co-op?
- What does *break even* mean?
- Where does most of New York City’s garbage end up?
- What is the difference between waste and a resource? Is it possible for *waste* to also be a *resource*?
- There are three simple things we can all do to help the environment by polluting less and using less energy: *reduce, reuse and recycle*. Omar Freilla’s store resells used building materials from construction. Does his store reduce, reuse or recycle?

Invite students to report back on their answers in a whole-class discussion to ensure understanding and clarify points of confusion.

**3. Free-Writing Exercise**

Ask students to write individually for 15 minutes in response to the following questions.

Do you know anyone who has *founded* (started) a business?

What kind of business was it?

Where did he/she find the money? If it was a loan, was the loan from a bank or family member?

Where did he or she get the idea?

How long did it take to *break even* (i.e., to finally make a profit, not lose money)? Did the business succeed or fail? Why?

Was starting a company easy?

Would you like to be an *entrepreneur* (i.e., would you like to start your own business)? Why or why not?

**4. Read extracts from the free-writing assignment to the class, taking care to read selections anonymously.**

List on the board the kinds of businesses people have tried to start. See if the anecdotes have anything in common.

**5. Impromptu Grammar Lesson**

Take 10 minutes, longer if needed, to correct errors in students' writing samples, copying onto the board single sentences that contain grammar errors, such as neglecting to use the past tense or omitting the final "s" on third-person singular verbs in the present tense. Work through the errors and corrections with the class.

**DAY 2**

**1. Schema Building / Checking Prior Knowledge of Topic**

Begin with a 10-minute pre-reading discussion to elicit students' background knowledge:

- Do you work?
- Do you have to wear a uniform to your work?
- What color is the shirt you wear? When people see you, do they know what your job is?
- What is a *collar*?
- Who wears white shirts to work? Who wears blue shirts to work? Why?

**2. English Idioms**

English has many interesting idioms, for example, "Save it for a rainy day," which means save it for a bad time when you will really need it. There are also idioms about kinds of jobs.

We refer to *blue collar* and *white collar* and *green collar* jobs.

What do you think these kinds of jobs are and what might a place of work be for each?

Blue collar? \_\_\_\_\_

White collar? \_\_\_\_\_

Green Collar? \_\_\_\_\_

**3. In-Class Reading and Note-Taking**

Explain to students that they will be reading an interview entitled "The Future of Green Jobs" posted on the Web at <http://www.pbs.org/now/shows/445/green-jobs.html>.

As an introduction to reading, take 5 minutes to discuss this short excerpt with the class.

“In the most basic sense, a green collar job is the 21st-century version of a blue-collar job.” —Chip Giller, founder of the environmental news site Grist.org (<http://www.grist.org/>)

Ask students to read and take notes on the interview of Chip Giller about green collar jobs.

#### “The Future of Green Jobs”

**Reporter:** We are hearing more and more about so-called green collar jobs. What is a *green collar job* exactly?

**Chip:** That’s a great question and one that a lot of people are beginning to ask as this term *gains currency*. In the most basic sense, a *green collar job* is the 21st-century version of a *blue-collar job*. The idea is that the growth of industries like *renewable energy*, *sustainable agriculture* and *green building* will provide new opportunities for workers to *apply their skills* or to learn new skills.

... We need to create jobs that will not only help people, but help this country and this planet get back on track. Examples range from installing solar panels to working on a hybrid vehicle assembly line to retrofitting buildings for energy efficiency.

**Reporter:** *President-elect* Obama said on the campaign trail that he would help create 5 million green jobs over the next decade. With so many problems currently confronting the United States, do you think this is a *realistic goal*?

**Chip:** He definitely has plenty of *challenges* ahead, doesn’t he? But this goal is not only realistic, it’s necessary. Again, the point I’d make is that green jobs are not a separate issue or some sort of special project. They are going to be *crucial to reviving* our flagging economy and to *healing* our climate. We’ve already seen incredible growth: In 2006, according to a report from the American Solar Energy Society, fully 8.5 million people were working in the renewable energy and energy efficiency fields, and that number is increasing. Of course, the recent economic *crisis* has made *investors* a little more *cautious*, so we’re seeing some temporary slowdown there. But they’ve shown that it’s possible—and that makes 5 million jobs over a decade feel entirely doable.

**Reporter:** What are you hoping for?

**Chip:** In terms of specific hopes, I’d like to see the Obama administration invest in green *infrastructure*, which would put people to work immediately, while laying the foundation for sustainable long-term growth.

#### 4. Vocabulary Exercises Based on the Reading

Ask students to work in pairs to complete the vocabulary exercises below. Suggest that they work with a partner whose native language is different from their own. Give students the following directions.

Use words from the box to find the word that makes sense in each sentence.

renewable	sustainable	agriculture	realistic
crucial	investors	infrastructure	

1. A hundred years ago, half of Americans lived on farms and worked in \_\_\_\_\_, but today most Americans live in cities or suburbs and work in offices.
2. During an earthquake, a city's \_\_\_\_\_, such as streets, freeways, underground water lines, electrical lines and phone lines, is often damaged.
3. If you want to get an "A" in a class, it is \_\_\_\_\_ that you come every day and do all the homework.
4. Some things in nature, like petroleum, take thousands of years to form. Others are \_\_\_\_\_ and can grow back quickly.
5. I have an idea for a new company I want to start, but I don't have money, so I'm looking for \_\_\_\_\_ to help me.
6. Our football team won five times this month, but I don't know if that good luck is \_\_\_\_\_.
7. She hopes to speak perfect English after living here just six months, but maybe that's not very \_\_\_\_\_.

### 5. Idioms from the Reading

Encourage students to match the idioms on the left with the correct definition listed on the right. Ask them to draw a line to connect them.

1. gains currency	a. to deal with a problem directly
2. blue collar job	b. prepare the first part
3. green collar job	c. job as mechanic, construction worker
4. tackle something head on	d. it's ready to start, already planned
5. lay the foundation for	e. the secret, the most important part
6. already in the pipeline	f. job that helps the planet / environment
7. it's the key to	g. everyone starts to use it

### 6. Reading Comprehension Questions

Ask students to discuss in small groups the meaning of these sentences from the interview.

1. “*President-elect* Obama said ... that he would help create 5 million green jobs .... With so many problems currently confronting the United States, do you think this is a *realistic goal*?”
2. “[G]reen jobs are not a separate issue or some sort of special project. They are going to be *crucial to reviving* our economy, and to *healing* our climate.”

### DAY 3

#### 1. Grammar Focus: GERUNDS

Explain to students when it is that verbs take a gerund rather than an infinitive.

Write on the board two sentences, one containing a word + infinitive sequence and one containing a word + gerund sequence. Underline the two verbs in each sentence. It's best to make the second verb the same base word in both sentences to illustrate the point that the first verb determines what follows.

Ask students what the difference is between the two verb constructions. Say, “What do you call this?” and point to the infinitive. Then point to the gerund and ask what it is called.

It's *crucial to* *reviving* our economy.  
It's *crucial to* *healing* our climate.

ASK ...

What is *crucial to* doing well in school?

What is *crucial to* raising happy children?

List other expressions that use an adjective + gerund.

EXAMPLES

It's essential to \_\_\_\_\_ing.

It's critical to \_\_\_\_\_ing.

It's related to \_\_\_\_\_ing.

## 2. Grammar Focus: PREPOSITIONS

Ask students to list *prepositions* other than "to." (Students might say "for," "to," "at," "with," "about," "from," "in," "on" etc.) Ask them to underline the preposition + gerund constructions in the following excerpt from the article they read.

"Examples range from installing solar panels to working on a hybrid vehicle assembly line to retrofitting buildings for energy efficiency."

"It is a transformation of those conventional industries, a *shift in our thinking* and a necessary shift if we are going to tackle climate change ... as we must."

## 3. SPEAKING: Milling questions

Assign one of these questions to each student. Have them memorize their one question before standing up, walking around and repeating it to everyone in the class.

- Are you afraid *of giving* presentations?
- Do you believe *in working* hard?
- Are you interested *in studying* more English grammar?
- Are you tired *of studying* vocabulary?
- Are you sick *of doing* homework?
- Is doing all the homework *essential to* getting an "A" in this class?
- Is coming to class every day *crucial to understanding* what we're learning?
- Is getting 100% on all the tests *essential to passing* this class?
- Do you think that participating in discussions is *crucial to improving* your fluency?
- Is dating a native English speaker *useful for learning* English?
- Is watching English-language movies *useful for learning* English?
- Is working with native English speakers *useful for learning* English?
- Did you have a *shift in thinking* after you moved to the United States?

#### 4. Grammar Focus: PARTS OF SPEECH

##### Word Form: Prefixes, Suffixes and Roots

Write on the board the two words listed below. Ask students which underlined part of the word renewable is the prefix, which is the root and which is the suffix.

renewable

revive

Exercise: Write this list of words on the board. Ask students to copy it and underline the suffixes of words from yesterday's reading.

sustainable	agriculture
to eliminate	industry
dichotomy	realistic
crucial	investors
cautious	proactive
infrastructure	priority
urban	regulation
investment	stimulus
generate	competitiveness

With students working in pairs, give them 10 minutes to label the words as nouns, verbs, adjectives or adverbs. Have them report findings back to the whole class to review.

#### 5. Grammar Focus: BOARD SUMMARY

Write lists of suffixes that make nouns, that make adjectives, that make verbs—or that make more than one of those!

Transformations: Working alone with their dictionaries, have students:

Change **sustainable** to a verb.

Change **agricultural** to an adjective.

Change **elimination** to a verb.

Change **industry** to an adjective.

Change **regulation** to a verb.

Change **generate** to a noun.

Change **stimulus** to a verb.



## DAY 4

### 1. Group Presentations

Organize students into presentation groups of four. Explain that each group will be preparing a presentation on a local entrepreneur who founded a green business.

Give each group a different short article to read about local people and projects, and explain that they will be spending the entire class time reading about one local green business.

Give each group ONE of the following articles:

- **The Wooden Duck Furniture Store** is a factory that makes furniture from salvaged wood in Berkeley.  
<http://www.thewoodenduck.com/v2/aboutus.html>  
or <http://caldining.berkeley.edu/farmerprofiles/HappyBoy.pdf>
- **Lotus Cleaning Service** is a green cleaning service started by a housekeeper who advertises that he uses only natural cleaning products.  
<http://www.lotuscleaningservices.com/lotusarticles.html>
- **Nontoxic Dry Cleaning Incentive Program** is a CA.gov website that provides information on how to receive a \$1,000 grant to switch the cleaning agents you use in your dry-cleaning facility to natural, nontoxic cleaning agents.  
<http://www.arb.ca.gov/toxics/dryclean/ab998.htm>
- **Happy Boys Farm** farms 100 acres as Certified Organic in Watsonville, San Juan Bautista, Giddy and Chow Chilla.  
<http://www.pcfma.com/FarmBio/HappyBoy.html>  
or <http://caldining.berkeley.edu/farmerprofiles/HappyBoy.pdf>
- **Laney College Carpentry Program** builds green energy-efficient homes using LEED standards.  
<http://media.www.laneytower.com/media/storage/paper1008/news/2008/09/18/Features/Carpentry.Students.Paint.It.green-3442171.shtml>

Ensure that each group presentation involves all partners. Explain to students that they should divide presentations into parts and distribute responsibilities equally.

The students need to decide who will:

- Create statistics by surveying people inside and outside the classroom on their knowledge and opinions on their topic.
- Write the outline.
- Speak first, second and so on.
- Find website photos.
- Prepare and operate the PowerPoint presentation.

Give students the following organizational structure to frame their presentation.

#### INTRODUCTION

Attract interest using statistics, facts, quotes, questions or a story to connect with the audience. Then clearly state the topic.

#### BODY

Phases in the development in the business

Examples of problems

Examples of success

#### CONCLUSION

Review main points, provide recommendations and / or make a prediction.

### DAY 5

#### 1. Oral Presentations

Give each group 5 to 10 minutes to deliver their presentation on **Local Green Entrepreneurs**. Suggest that the other students take brief notes as they listen.

Allow sufficient time to discuss the presentations afterward, exploring with the class:

- The different kinds of business researched
- Which business required the least money to start and which required the most
- Which business has the most employees and which has the fewest
- General responses to each green enterprise and its usefulness
- Other thoughts

Finally, ask students: If you could start your own green business, what would you do?

DEVELOPED BY **CHRISTINE SO**,  
CHABOT COLLEGE ESL INSTRUCTOR