

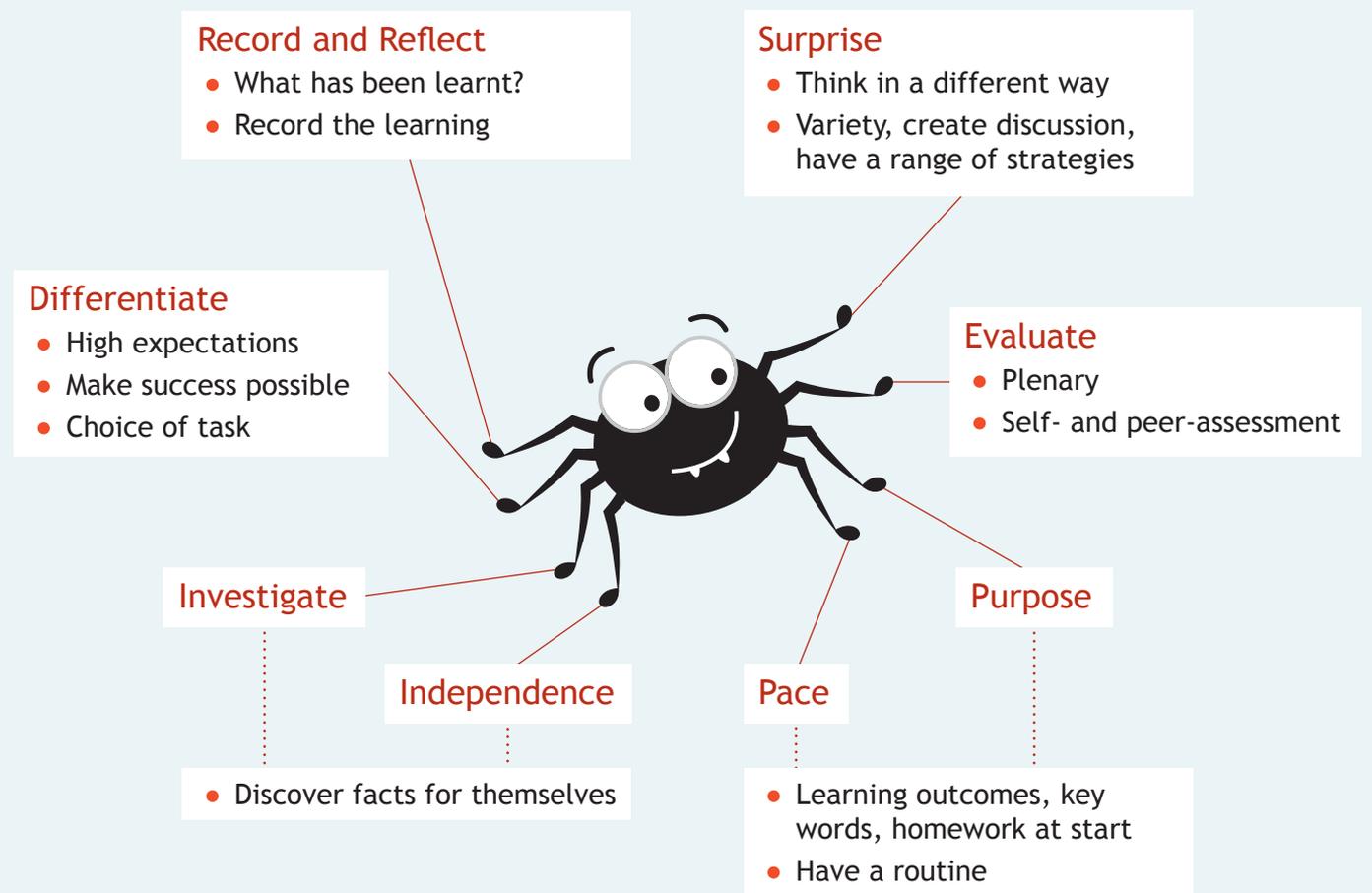
The Perfect (Ofsted) Lesson

Guidance and advice for teachers

The following pages provide a skeleton for **The Perfect (Ofsted) Lesson**. Also included are some workable ideas/activities, theories and suggestions to put it into context and give you something you can apply immediately to your own planning and teaching.

If you can incorporate most of the strands shown in the spider diagram below into each lesson, it should be heading for perfect - the rest of the detail is just how you could do it. The text has been highlighted throughout to show where each of the vital ingredients (spider's legs) fits into the lesson structure.

Spider diagram: vital ingredients for a perfect (Ofsted) lesson



Why not include this diagram in your planner for future reference?

Sources:

- Jackie Beere 'The Perfect (Ofsted) lesson' <http://www.jackiebeere.com>
- Phil Beadle 'How to Teach' <http://www.philbeadle.com>
- Marcella McCarthy (spider strategy) <http://www.linkedin.com/pub/marcella-mccarthy/1b/99b/306>
- Robert Powell 'Personalised Learning in the classroom' <http://www.robertpowellpublications.com>

Step 1: Know what Ofsted are looking for

	Learning and progress	Teaching and assessment
Outstanding	<p>The quality of learning is exceptional. Students demonstrate excellent concentration and are rarely off task even for extended periods without adult direction</p> <p>They have developed a resilience when tackling challenging activities</p> <p>Their keenness and commitment to succeed in all aspects of school life and ability to grasp opportunities to extend and improve their learning are exceptional.</p> <p>Progress is at least good for different groups of students and exemplary for some students.</p>	<p>Teaching is at least good and often outstanding as students are making exceptional progress.</p> <p>Students are enthused which ensures they learn really well. Excellent subject knowledge is applied to challenge and inspire students. Resources, including new technology make a marked contribution to learning as does the targeted support from other adults</p> <p>Teachers are aware of students' capabilities and their prior learning and understanding and plan effectively to build on these. Marking and dialogue between teachers and other adults and students are of consistently high quality.</p>

Consider:

- What are students learning as opposed to doing?
- Are they learning something new and acquiring knowledge?
- Can all students make links between previous and new learning?
- Can the students talk about what they are learning or simply describe what they are doing?
- Do they produce work of a consistently good standard?
- Are they working independently? Are they self-reliant?
- How well do they work collaboratively?
- Do they show initiative?
- AFL is a crucial ingredient in a perfect Ofsted lesson.
- Pay particular attention to your groups (SEN, ALS, etc.).
- An 'outstanding' lesson isn't what the teacher does, but what the student learns.
- You need to be able to demonstrate 'exceptional progress' in your lesson.



Step 2: The beginning

- Be in control right from the start.
- Wherever it is physically possible be there before students arrive to greet them with a smile.
- Establish a routine in your lesson that they are familiar and comfortable with.
- Students should expect to begin work as soon as they enter the classroom without you directing them.
- Though often controversial, playing music while the students enter which you then turn off when you are ready to start can work well to signify when the lesson is about to begin.
- Place your students according to where you want them to sit when doing group work, including when you move from working in pairs to groups of four, and from groups of four to eight, etc. Plan ahead so that when the two in front turn around to work with the two behind the students are already in the correct groups - think about the group dynamics. This is good differentiation and classroom management as students do not need to move around the room to get into their groups.

Step 3: The starter

‘A starter should stimulate curiosity and open-mindedness and prepare the brain for learning. These can be random or linked to the subject.’ (Beere, 2010)



The vital ingredients:

Surprise

- A surprise plays on the student’s emotional intelligence, which means they are more likely to remember it. Also, if they can touch something it is good for kinaesthetic learners.
- Have a curiosity or surprise item, such as a box with a secret content, a relevant item, items with links between them, a bottle with a message in - some sort of prop to engage them.
‘Toy with expectations... Maintain mystery, let them guess and get it wrong.’ (Beadle 2010)

Step 4: Purpose

Your lesson objectives should have high expectations and clear goals.



The vital ingredients:

Purpose, Differentiate

- Do the students know what they are doing and why they are doing it? Can they see the point - do they see the bigger picture?
- Have a map of the topic or project to give it a sense of purpose. This is particularly useful for examination classes as it shows students what they miss if they are absent.
- Describe simply and precisely what you want them to do by the end of the lesson.
- The learning objective should be measurable - can you prove they’ve done it/achieved it by the end of the lesson?
- Consider displaying your objectives pictorially, e.g. using relevant pictures, speech bubbles, etc.
- Your learning objectives should be differentiated to at least two different levels (ideally three so that you can use traffic lights or something similar).
- Stress the success associated with achieving the ‘crown’ at the end - the third/final objective must be challenging and something to really aspire to.
- Set a personal objective and incorporate PLTS/SEAL.
- Use Bloom’s Taxonomy (see Appendix 1 of this document) to help you write your lesson objectives - this will show differentiation too.
- You could also use strands from your levels to help you write your lesson objectives:
 - Include the key terms in your objective - or have them readily accessible at all times.
 - Give particular attention when explaining their objectives to different groups in your class and emphasise what you want them to do.
 - Where possible, have your objectives on display throughout the lesson. This can be difficult if you are using PowerPoint, but you could include intermittent ‘mini plenary’ slides for students to check and demonstrate their progress throughout.

Step 5: The main body of your lesson

Students should acquire knowledge and learn well, making good progress. Remember: ‘challenge - collaboration - choice’ and ‘enjoyment for learning - rarely off task’.



The vital ingredients:

Surprise, Pace, Differentiate, Investigate, Record and Reflect, (referring back to) Purpose

This is where the teacher’s input really comes in. There needs to be:

- A challenging level of subject knowledge.
- Active, collaborative learning - this is crucial as students should be able to work on task without supervision.
- A choice of activities or approaches available to students.
- Lots of higher order questions (which you don’t answer for them).
- Visual aids and practical activities.
- Evidence that your marking and assessment provide feedback for progress.

You will also need to:

- Consider pace, routine and well-practised transitions.
- Facilitate the learning.
- Differentiate within the lesson:
 - **From the outset** with levelled (traffic light) objectives
 - **By task**, which is increasingly being encouraged; a simple way of achieving this is to make sure that questions on your worksheets increase in difficulty (using Bloom’s Taxonomy). You could divide your worksheets into three sections - must, should, could - to fit in with your learning objectives. It is also good to tell specific groups of children (SEN, G&T, etc.) to start at particular question numbers.
- Give your students a choice of tasks. Both for differentiation and to appeal to different learning styles.
- Use strategies to improve literacy (using key words and connectives, etc.)
- Encourage competition (especially good when teaching boys)
- Encourage group work/collaborative learning (see below)
- Use questioning well to cater for all - higher order when appropriate
- Incorporate thinking time
- Encourage independence - let the students find out the information for themselves, they are far more likely to remember it that way. However, you should ensure you systematically check the learning while they are on task. Students could:
 - Explore an issue, subject, etc. from another point of view
 - Analyse information and judge how important/useful/reliable it is
 - Back up statements/opinions/conclusions with arguments and reasoning/quotes from text
 - Complete key word matching activities, where they are finding out the information for themselves.
 - Find evidence to either prove or disprove a statement as part of a ‘fact-finding’ task.
- Encourage single, paired and group work - it is crucial to prove that the students are able to work, on task, without adult supervision. You could:
 - Use carousel activities, whereby students move around to complete each activity; this can be a powerful and engaging tool.
 - Assign a points value to individual tasks that need completing to reach an overall goal; this demonstrates good differentiation (see Appendix 2 for an example activity that uses this approach).
- Utilise a range of methods and resources, ensuring a choice of challenging activities or approaches are available to students

- Promote creativity and independence
- Include visual aids and practical activities to cater for the needs of all learners

Group work is a good way for students to achieve independence while demonstrating collaborative learning. For example:

- Use the 'think, pair, share' structure.
- Let the students lead the lesson; you are then the facilitator (this is also good evidence for PLTS).
- Use six thinking hats/jigsaw pieces for each group of students. This a great way of making sure everyone in the group is engaged and involved, as is allocating each student a role within the group.
- Mind mapping, whereby each student completes a different section of the same mind map within the group, or each smaller group works on one section of a class mindmap.

The grouping you use should be based on effective differentiation depending on the task or outcome. You could consider:

- Ability (either match similar abilities or have a range in each small group)
- Gender (single-sex groups, or mixed groups)
- PLTS (have all the creative thinkers in one group with all the teamworkers in another, or mix them up)
- Random groups
- Expert groups
- Allocating appropriate roles within the groups to the G&T students
- Asking the group to establish some ground rules to achieve success before they start (if time allows - it should only take a couple of minutes).
- During and after group work, make sure students complete a log/audit of who has done what and what they have all achieved/learnt. The scribe or the chairperson for each group could do this. It is a good way of ensuring that everyone has contributed!

Use DIRT (Directed Improvement and Reflection Time) through assessment as learning. Frequently check to be able to demonstrate learning and progress throughout the lesson, e.g. how far students have come/ how far they are from achieving their learning objective. Refer back to the lesson objectives arrow or traffic lights; then as a mini-plenary slide use traffic light cards or sticky notes on the arrow to show the progress students have made.

- Peer assessment is encouraged here
- This is particularly important during group work
- Make sure students effectively record what they have learnt during the lesson

Step 6: Review learning

This should happen during the lesson, not just at the end.



The vital ingredients:

Surprise (again!), (referring back to) Purpose

- Always leave plenty of time for the plenary (at least 10 minutes). Think of it as the 'varnish' and a way to demonstrate students' learning. You may need to cut other activities short to make sure you can demonstrate the learning at the end and make your own assessment about whether students have succeeded in achieving the learning outcome. If they haven't, articulate this and use it as a way of moving on.
- If insufficient progress has been made, don't be afraid to address this. Articulate that it is the starting point for next time, asking them how they might ensure they achieve more next time.
- Use the plenary to set the scene for the next lesson.
- Encourage students to tell you what they have learnt rather than you telling them.
- Allow students to review the learning individually, in pairs or in groups - let them take a role in their learning.

- Use the same methods mentioned during the mini-plenary above although others are also available.
 - Use plenary cards
 - Peer assessment

It should be very clear to any observer that students have made progress in their learning and can demonstrate it. Where insufficient progress has been made, there should be a clear plan of action to address this in future lessons. One of the most common criticisms is that teachers don't use assessment outcomes to inform future planning; make it clear that you can see what each and every student has learnt and what the next steps are to secure progress.

7. General: It's all about you!

'I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.' (Maya Angelou, 2003)

A few tips to help things run smoothly:

- Look like you are enjoying the lesson
- Love yourself and others - yes, that means the students!
- Make your voice strong, loud and authoritative, but full of warmth and sincerity
- Calm the class, praise the class and explain the objectives and tasks
- Move around the class with confidence
- Regularly sweep every corner of the room to check what is going on and keep everyone on task
- Display open and confident body language
- Praise effort more than you praise outcome
- Have a zero tolerance policy for disrespecting the (lack of) achievement of others
- Make sure you use your TA properly in your lesson and your lesson plan

Summary:

The following (in no particular order) are some of the other essential ingredients required for an outstanding lesson:

- Differentiation strategies for various groups of learners
- Engaging and motivating students
- Developing independent and resilient learners
- Delivering skills and content essential for passing exams
- Assessment as part of developing progress in learning
- Challenging the most able learners
- Using technology and TAs to make an impact on learning
- Effective collaborative learning and peer review
- Effective classroom management
- Sharing the criteria for success

The Perfect (Ofsted) Lesson

Quick checklist for planning and delivery

Teacher:	Subject:		
Group/class:	Date:	Time/period:	
Brief description of lesson:			

Have you...	tick ✓
Identified various groups of students in your class and any special needs? Built in a way to address those needs in your lesson to ensure differentiation? Planned with any TA(s) how they are going to contribute to student progress?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Given your lesson purpose and set a differentiated learning objective using key terminology and Bloom's language for progression?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Set learning objectives against which you can measure progress for different groups of students?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Included a personal skills objective within it or separate to it?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Been there to greet the student at the door?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Designed an appropriate seating plan for your class?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trained your class so that they are in a routine to self-start on arrival?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Had an engaging starter activity for them to do on arrival?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Planned a lesson with a high proportion of active, independent learning and collaborative activity?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Differentiated (preferably by task)?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Given a choice of activities?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Planned a suitable extension task for your more able students?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Built assessment as learning into your lesson?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Checked progress at random points using DIRT?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Allowed for self- and peer-assessment? (even just glancing at each other's exercise books)	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ensured your students have been taught how to work well together and give unconditional support for each other's learning?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Made sure students are really challenged in the activities and through reflection?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Planned an effective plenary to demonstrate progress and plan for the next lesson?	<input type="checkbox"/>
 Included as many of the vital ingredients as possible: Surprise; Purpose; Pace; Investigate; Independence; Differentiate; Record and Reflect; Evaluate.	<input type="checkbox"/>

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Appendix 1: Bloom's Taxonomy

Words to use in your lesson objectives, questions and as part of the wording of the tasks on your worksheets.

Emphasis - link to Bloom's Taxonomy	Relevant action verbs to use in your lesson objectives:
<p>Knowledge</p> <p>'To find or remember information, memorising information'</p>	Tell, uncover, show, state, define, name, write, recall, recognise, list, label, reproduce, identify, acquire, distinguish, state, order, locate, repeat, count, describe, enumerate, find, match, read, recite, record, select, sequence, state, view
<p>Comprehension</p> <p>'To understand the information and restate in your own words; paraphrasing, summarising, translating'</p>	Comprehend, appreciate, select, indicate, illustrate, represent, formulate, explain, classify, translate, extrapolate, convert, interpret, abstract, transform, select, indicate, relate, experiment, make simple comparisons, demonstrate, explain, reword, discuss, cite, conclude, describe, discuss, estimate, generalise, give examples, locate, make sense of, paraphrase, predict, report, restate, review, summarise, trace
<p>Apply/Application</p> <p>'To use information to solve problems, transfer abstract or theoretical ideas to actual situations, identifying connections and relationships and how they apply'</p>	Assess, change, chart, choose, demonstrate, determine, develop, establish, produce, relate, report, select, show, use, try, diagram, perform, put into action, build, report, employ, relate, draw, construct, adapt, apply, sequence, carry out, solve, prepare, operate, generalise, plan, repair, explain, predict, instruct, compute, use, implement, solve
<p>Analysis</p> <p>'To take information apart, identifying components, determining arrangement, logic and semantics'</p>	Analyse, study, combine, separate, categorise, detect, examine, inspect, discriminate, take apart, generalise, scrutinise, estimate, compare, observe, detect, classify, discover, explore, distinguish, catalogue, investigate, break down, order, determine, differentiate, dissect, contrast, examine, interpret, identify, characterise, correlate, diagram, illustrate, infer, limit, outline, point out, prioritise, relate, subdivide
<p>Synthesis</p> <p>'To create new ideas or things, combining information to form a unique product, requiring creativity and originality'</p>	Write, plan, integrate, formulate, propose, specify, produce, organize, theorize, design, build, systematise, combine, summarise, restate, argue, hypothesise, predict, create, invent, produce, modify, extend, design, formulate, develop, build, compile, discuss, derive, relate, generalise, conclude, combine, précis, discuss, integrate, conclude, adapt, categorise, compose, construct, create, design, generate, incorporate, integrate, modify, organise, perform, propose, reinforce, reorganise, rewrite, structure
<p>Evaluation</p> <p>'To make judgements about knowledge, to make decisions and supporting views, requires understanding of values'</p>	Evaluate, interpret, decide, solve, rate, appraise, verify, assess, test, judge, rank, measure, select, check, evaluate, determine, support, defend, weigh, judge, justify, attach, criticise, weigh up, argue, choose, compare and contrast, conclude, critique, defend, predict, prioritise, prove, reframe

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Appendix 2: Example activity

This activity could be used in humanities and/or English as the basis for a perfect (Ofsted) lesson. Students could work in groups to complete the different parts of the activity:

