

Future-ready classrooms: Cultivating global citizenship through English

Webinar handout

Sherly Hephzibah J

What is global citizenship?

Global citizenship is the understanding that we live in an interconnected world, where our words, choices, and actions ripple far beyond our immediate surroundings. It's about developing **empathy** to relate to others' feelings, seeing the world through different **perspectives**, and having the **voice** to express ideas respectfully and confidently.

It encourages learners to stand up for justice, feel a sense of belonging, and take responsibility for how their actions affect others. Global awareness means staying informed about social and environmental issues and recognising our interdependence. Through global citizenship, students gain agency to lead, innovate, and use their learning to help create a fairer, better world.

Why global citizenship in ELT

English classrooms are powerful spaces for nurturing global citizenship. Through dialogue, stories, and writing, students not only build language skills but also explore emotions, cultures, and ideas. With simple shifts in approach, English teaching can foster critical thinking, respectful communication, and a deep sense of global awareness - helping students become thoughtful, empathetic world citizens.

English lessons don't need an overhaul - just small, intentional shifts. Use prompts that invite perspective-taking, encourage diverse storytelling, and support student voice.

Key classroom activities by skill & grade

Here's a cross-grade breakdown of how English-based activities can promote global citizenship while staying aligned with the curriculum.

Skill	Pre-Primary	Primary	Lower Secondary	Secondary
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Listening	Sound walks story: Imagine a place from audio clips (e.g. a rainforest, a market).	Match the message: Identify tone in greetings or classroom phrases.	Soundtrack for a cause: Interpret tone/themes in a song or speech.	News debrief: Listen to a news report and discuss its human impact.
Speaking	Kind words circle: Share one nice sentence about a friend.	"If I were there..." Prompt: Describe feelings in everyday school situations.	Story circle: Share short anecdotes of kindness or fairness.	Voice for change: Deliver persuasive speeches on local/global issues.
Reading	Read aloud with emotions: Explore feelings through facial expressions in text.	Value detectives: Find words/actions showing respect in short stories.	Cultural symbol hunt: Identify and discuss cultural markers in texts.	Compare voices: Analyse differing viewpoints in opinion articles.
Writing	Kindness cloud: Write or draw kind words on a word web.	"If I were..." letters: Write from nature's or another person's point of view.	Dear future me: Reflective letters imagining a better world.	Monologue of the marginalised: Write from a less-heard character's perspective.

These approaches don't just teach language - they nurture young people to think, care, and act beyond borders. In doing so, English classrooms become launchpads for a more just and compassionate world.

References:

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A recording of Sherly Hephzibah's webinar can be watched here:

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