Lesson Plan

Teaching Procedure

Lesson Topic	***Code translation and interpretation***
Phenomenon	How do we communicate in the digital and intercultural world? How do we decipher symbols, languages and signals between technology, society and culture? In our daily lives, we are constantly immersed in communication systems that use different codes: verbal languages, visual symbols, gestural signals, digital systems and implicit cultural references. From written messages to emoji, from traffic signs to memes, from binary codes to idiomatic expressions, we communicate through conventions that must be recognised, interpreted and often translated. In an increasingly interconnected and multicultural world, understanding how communication codes work, and especially how they can be misunderstood, becomes a key competence for active citizenship, democratic participation and inclusion. Code literacy is not only about language, but involves technology, art, history and social life. Translating a code today means entering into the other's point of view, recognising the implicit rules of communication and learning to build bridges, not just messages. This real-life phenomenon provides an authentic and stimulating context to activate interdisciplinary reflection and cooperative work, through concrete experiences of decoding, comparison between symbolic systems and intercultural awareness.
Grade Level	Students aged 13-18
Learning Objectives	• To recognise and classify the communication codes used in everyday life (verbal, visual, digital, cultural); • Understand the function of codes in the transmission of meanings in different contexts (historical, linguistic, social, technological); • Critically analysing coded messages, identifying possible misunderstandings due to cultural or linguistic factors; • Experimenting with decoding and translation activities, applying tools and knowledge from several subject areas (e.g. interpreting a message in binary code, analysing an artistic symbol, translating a cultural gesture); • Promoting respect and inclusion through understanding others' codes and awareness of one's own.
Learning Outcomes	At the end of the lesson, students will be able to: • recognise and distinguish different types of codes (visual, linguistic, digital and cultural) explaining their meaning and function through the specific vocabulary of several disciplines; • apply integrated knowledge to decipher complex messages, collaborating in groups and combining IT, linguistic and cultural skills. • demonstrate the ability to reflect critically on the role of codes in communication and contemporary society, highlighting the importance of inclusion, accessibility and intercultural awareness.

Subjects Integrated	- <u>Literature</u>: Travel writing and comparative landscape descriptions across historical periods. - <u>English</u>: Comparison of sustainable tourism models across different countries. - <u>Law/Economics</u>: EU regulations on tourism and sustainability; impact on local employment. - <u>Science</u>: Biodiversity, ecological impacts, and environmental protection. - <u>Mathematics/Physics</u>: Data analysis on tourist influxes and resource consumption. - <u>Geography</u>: Different geographical features impact tourism and how sustainable practices adapt to various environments (e.g., fragile ecosystems, urban settings).
Materials	- Paper materials such as cards with coded messages, decoding keys, note sheets and observation grids for interactions; - digital materials such as a presentation with images and symbols to be analysed, and access to devices (computers or tablets) for any interactive exercises or viewing multimedia content; - physical materials such as coloured cards, printed images, labels or symbols useful for constructing the 'imaginary cultures' codes; - basic technological tools such as a projector, speakers (if a video is to be used), and a blackboard to collect final reflections; - possible reference materials such as short visual glossaries, examples of symbolic alphabets, binary conversion tables or emoji with associated meanings. All materials should be prepared in advance and adapted to the number of students and groups envisaged.
Prerequisite Skills	To participate actively in the lesson, students should possess some basic skills. It is important that they are familiar with the use of language to understand and produce simple informational texts, are able to recognise symbols and signs commonly used in everyday life - such as signs, emoji, icons - and have already acquired the main digital skills, such as the use of electronic devices and online navigation. Furthermore, it is useful that they have already experienced working in small groups, knowing how to collaborate, listen and communicate with others. Finally, they should have an introductory knowledge of the concepts of citizenship and culture, in order to be able to reflect on differences and similarities between communicative codes in different contexts.
Seating Arrangements	- For the introduction and final reflection, students will be seated in the classroom: possibly in a semicircle or horseshoe shape, so as to facilitate discussion and the collective viewing of images or slides; - During the main activities: Groups will consist of **3-4 students**, each with their own assigned 'cultural' space (for the simulation of the imaginary code). For the interaction phase, the students will move freely around the classroom, temporarily transformed into a 'multicultural square', where they can meet, exchange non-verbal messages and observe the codes of others.
Time	60-80 minutes
Assessment	- Exit ticket with an answer phrase; - Mini quiz (2-3 questions); - Peer review with comments on each discipline involved.

Lesson Steps

**Introduction
10 Minutes**

To introduce the theme of the lesson and activate prior knowledge, students are shown a slide with a series of apparently incomprehensible codes, including:
- a line in binary code;
- a sentence written only with emoji;
- an unfamiliar road sign;
- a gesture photographed out of context.

The teacher asks a provocative question:
"*These are all ways to communicate... but with whom? And how can we understand them if we don't speak the same code?* "
A brief guided discussion begins, during which students share personal experiences related to codes that are difficult to understand (a foreign language, an unrecognised symbol, a misinterpreted cultural rule, etc.).

At this point, the teacher presents the aim of the lesson: to explore the world of codes in everyday and intercultural communication, learning to decipher, interpret and respect them.
The interdisciplinary approach of the lesson is made explicit, linking technology, languages, art, history and citizenship.

**Activity 1
25 Minutes**

Gestures that speak - Intercultural role play
Objective: to introduce the concept of cultural codes and prepare the setting for simulated interaction.

The class is divided into groups. Each group represents an 'imaginary cultural community' and is given a set of invented communication rules (e.g. the thumbs-up gesture means 'no', the colour red indicates happiness, it is forbidden to make eye contact, etc.).
The rules are kept secret from the other groups.
Students reflect internally on how to communicate with each other and with others by following those codes exclusively.

**Activity 2
25 Minutes**

Objective: to experience first-hand the difficulty of interpreting unfamiliar codes and to activate empathy towards the other.

The students leave their groups and begin to interact with members of other "cultures", performing simple tasks (greeting each other, asking a question, proposing an exchange, etc.), without using verbal language and sticking to their own communicative rules.

During interactions, misunderstandings and misunderstandings occur, which are observed by the teacher or briefly documented by the students themselves on a sheet of paper.

NOTE: It is possible to appoint some students to act as external observers, with the task of taking notes on all misunderstandings and relationships between members of different groups, to be discussed later in the final phase of the activity.

**Activity 3
20 Minutes**

Guided reflection and comparison
Objective: consolidate the experience through meta-reflection and link it to the themes of inclusion, intercultural communication and communicative democracy.

Return to the classroom for a guided collective discussion. Guiding questions:
- What did you experience during the interactions?
- What misunderstandings emerged?
- How could you have avoided the misunderstanding?
- Has something similar ever happened to you in real life?
- How can knowing cultural codes foster inclusion and global citizenship?

Each group briefly presents their communication rules to the others.

Closing
10 Minutes

Summary of concepts emerged Objective: to close the circle between experience, learning and real context, reinforcing the interdisciplinary and inclusive perspective.

The teacher guides the students in recognising how, throughout the lesson, they used different codes and had to interpret, translate and adapt them.

The role of codes in social life, technologies, culture and citizenship is emphasised.
As a final formative assessment, an exit ticket is proposed in which to write "An example of a code I use every day and why it is important to understand it".

Teacher Tips

Follow-up project: Propose a collaborative project in which students create their own **class "cultural code"**, with symbols, communication rules, greetings and shared signals. They should document it in a multilingual (e.g. Italian + English) brochure or video presentation and explain its meaning in relation to inclusion and communication issues.
Alternatively, they can undertake **comparative research** on writing and coding systems in different civilisations (e.g. hieroglyphics, Morse alphabet, emoji, computer languages).

Real-world application: Invite students to reflect on professions related to coding and decoding: translators, cultural interpreters, graphic designers, computer scientists, diplomats, intercultural communication or language experts.
An observation activity can be proposed at home or in the neighbourhood: identify and photograph **5 'codes' used daily** (signs, digital icons, religious symbols, packaging, etc.) and explain their function.

Interdisciplinary links: The theme naturally links to:
History: ancient writing systems, cryptography during wars, literacy.
Art: symbolism in paintings, use of colour as a visual code, logos and design.
Technology: basics of binary language, QR codes, communication in social media.
Civic education: cultural and linguistic diversity, respect for implicit rules.
Foreign languages: different meanings of words or gestures in cultures.
These connections can be exploited for future developments or integrated units with other teachers.

Activities to propose
- Visit to a **museum of science, technology or communication** (or virtual) to observe coding tools (e.g. Morse codes, Braille printers, visual languages);
- Use of educational apps to create coded messages (e.g. coding apps or visual languages);
- Guided reading of a story or comic in which communication is central (e.g. The Time Machine, The Little Prince, etc.);

Proposal of a creative **challenge at home**: construct a "personal code" with symbols to express emotions or simple messages.

Appendix

Include all material that the students will have to interact with (e.g. worksheets)