

English in Mind Second edition

Level 4 Unit 14

Lesson Plan

THE
INDEPENDENT

Want to live longer? Carry on laughing

AIMS

- to read extensively and study a text related to the Unit theme
- to help students identify and use words and noun verb collocations related to illness
- vocabulary building
- to practise freer speaking, by describing funny films and telling funny stories or jokes
- (further work) to practise writing a short narrative of a funny story

Total time (approx): 1hr 30 minutes

(Note: some exercises can be set as homework)

reasons. The answers are given in the Key but don't reveal them yet.

Key: (X) help patients with broken legs, make people fitter; (✓) all the rest.

Time: 15 minutes

Reading comprehension (1):
reading for detail

- 4 Hand out the article and ask students to read the first five paragraphs carefully so that they can complete the third column of the table. Quickly check the answers with the class and encourage them to consider what, if anything, has surprised them about what they have read.

Time: 5 minutes

Lead-in

- 1 Hand out the worksheet and tell students they are going to read an article about the therapeutic benefits of laughing. Before looking at the text, introduce them to its theme by telling them about a funny film, advert or TV programme you have seen. This will serve to demonstrate Exercise 1. Give them two to three minutes' thinking time, and then ask them to describe one of their own to a partner. They should decide between them which they think is the funnier and then one of the pair should tell it to another pair.
- 2 To link the topic to your students' experience and get them thinking more widely on the topic, write up the questions 'What else makes you laugh?' 'Why do you think humans laugh?' on the whiteboard and ask them to discuss their answers in pairs. Give them a minute. Elicit a few answers from the whole class.
- 3 This pre-reading activity will prepare students for the context of the article. Write the title of the article on the board and then ask them to consider the question about the potential health benefits of laughter. Hold up the worksheet and ask students the first question 'Can laughing help exercise our facial muscles?' Demonstrate writing a tick for yes and a cross for no in the first column. Get students to ask you any vocabulary they are unsure of. Tell them to work alone to complete the table. They should then compare their answers with a partner, explaining why they have put a tick or a cross. Choose a few of the potential benefits and elicit students' ideas and

Reading comprehension (2):
true or false?

- 5 To encourage a more detailed reading of the rest of the article for specific sense, ask students to look at the statements on their worksheets and decide if they are true or false. They should compare their answers in pairs and give evidence from the text.
- Key:
- 1 T: *Patients who are depressed at the time of heart bypass surgery, for example, are more than twice as likely to die during the following five years.* (para 6)
 - 2 T: *Happiness and laughter have been shown to increase natural killer cell activity ... laughter causes the release of special neurotransmitter substances in the brain* (para 7)
 - 3 F: *Those with the highest marital satisfaction had the higher antibody responses to a flu vaccine* (para 9))
 - 4 T: *laughter seems to lower levels of a protein involved in the progression of diabetic nephropathy, a kidney disease that occurs as a result of diabetes and which is the leading cause of kidney failure* (para 10)
 - 5 F: *a component of many age-related chronic diseases that often cause disability* (para 11)
 - 6 T: *those who watched a funny video and laughed were able to tolerate more pain* (para 13)
 - 7 T: *Laughter is thought to trigger changes in breathing patterns* (para 14)
 - 8 F: *Dieters, too, may be unlikely beneficiaries of the direct physical effects of laughter.* (para 15)

Time: 15 minutes

English in Mind Second edition

Level 4 Unit 14

Lesson Plan

THE
INDEPENDENT

Want to live longer? Carry on laughing

Vocabulary (1): words related to illness

- 6 The article contains many words related to illness that students should be able to recognise, either through cognates or previous knowledge of the words. This exercise gives students an opportunity to revise and expand their vocabulary related to health orally. First, ask them to read the first six paragraphs and underline all the medical conditions they can find.

Key: eczema, allergic reactions, high blood pressure, flu, heart disease, arthritis, diabetes, stress, cancer, rheumatoid arthritis, depression, stroke.

Choose one of the above and describe the symptoms or causes of the illness to the class. Ask students to guess which condition you are talking about. This will act as a model for the next part of the activity, which they should do in pairs. Give a slip of paper to each student with one of the above illnesses written on it. Tell them not to show their illness to anyone else. Students then take it in turn to describe symptoms and causes of illness, while their partner guesses.

Vocabulary (2): verb + noun collocations

- 7 The article contains several verb + noun collocations related to health. Ask students to match the highlighted collocations in the text with the definitions:

Key:

- 1 lower tension = *ease stress*
- 2 get fewer bad effects from a disease = *reduce symptoms*
- 3 improve the body's natural defences = *boost the immune system*
- 4 improve = *have a positive effect on*
- 5 stop something hurting as much = *provide some pain relief*
- 6 make things happen = *trigger changes*

As an optional follow-up, you could ask students to write their own sentences using the collocations.

Time: 15 minutes

Vocabulary (3): vocabulary related to laughter

- 8 The vocabulary for laughter is extensive and rich, and this gap-fill exercise will draw students' attention to a range of words/expressions associated with it from the text. Students will be familiar with many of these, but the task of choosing the most appropriate word in each sentence and inferring meaning from context for unknown words will expand their skills.

Key:

- 1 What I like about Tom is his great sense of *humour*.
- 2 *Happiness* is what everybody wants in life.
- 3 I love those old *comedies*, but they show them so rarely these days. I'll always remember my granddad *chortling* away to himself as he watched one of them.
- 4 It's wonderful listening to the *laughter* of my children when they are playing together.
- 5 Our school reunions are so *funny*. All the old stories, the *jollity*. It really takes me back.
- 6 When Julie starts telling stories I just can't stop *laughing*.
- 7 I wish John would *lighten up* a little. He's so serious.
- 8 He's such a *mirthful* character, so humorous and full of laughter.

Speaking

- 9 Tell a joke or funny story to the class. This could be a true personal anecdote or one you have heard. When you have finished telling the story elicit six or seven key words from the story and write them on the board. Tell students that these are the words that help you to remember the story. Tell them that they have five minutes to prepare their own story/joke and to write down the key words to help them remember it. Encourage them to ask you for help with any unknown vocabulary or to use a dictionary. To ensure that students tell their stories rather than reading them, emphasise that they will have only their lists to refer to when recounting it. When students are ready, put them into small groups and ask them to tell each other their stories. Finally ask them to decide which is the funniest story. Listen to one or two of the best ones in open class.

Time: 25 minutes

English in Mind Second edition

Level 4 Unit 14

Lesson Plan

Want to live longer? Carry on laughing**THE** 
INDEPENDENT**Further work**

- 10** For homework, students can write up their story/joke or one that they heard during the lesson.

This article first appeared on Tuesday, 16 December 2008, at www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/life-style/health-and-wellbeing/features/want-to-live-longer-carry-on-laughing-1097285.html.

Lesson Plan and Worksheet author: Ellen Darling and Jeffrey Fowler

Editor: Jacqueline French