

Cats: reading

A Cat survives journey across China



Dr Chen, a doctor living in Beijing, decided one morning to give her cat away. Dr Chen thought that it was much better for the animal to live in the country. So she put Wei Wei in her car and drove more than 100 kilometres out of the city to her brother's house and left the cat with him. A month later she was shocked to hear that Wei Wei was no longer there! Then one night Dr Chen heard a noise at her bedroom window. Unable to sleep she got out of bed and was surprised to see a thin cat looking in. She chased the cat away and went back to bed. Then, just as she was about to fall asleep, something landed on her bed. "It gave me a real fright and then I realised it was the cat and the cat was Wei Wei!" Now Dr Chen says she will never give Wei Wei away again!

B Cat survives trip on roof of owner's car



Mr Ndobe left his house one morning and there, as usual, was his cat, Zulu, sitting on his car. Mr Ndobe, a South African businessman, chased Zulu away and then got in his car and drove to work. Heavy traffic in the morning meant that Mr Ndobe was unable to drive very fast so he was surprised to see a police car behind him with flashing lights. As Mr Ndobe slowed down to pull over he was shocked to see something large and grey slide down the car's windscreen. "It gave me a real fright, and then I realised it was Zulu and he was terrified!" The policeman got out of his car and told the owner that he saw the cat and thought it was a toy being carried on the roof as a joke. Now Mr Ndobe always checks Zulu is not near the car when he drives to work!

C Cat survives night frozen to the ground



Mrs Spears, an office cleaner from Chicago, arrived at work one cold, winter morning. The temperature very low and it was beginning to snow. Hurrying to go inside and get warm she was surprised to see something large and still outside the office door. She looked closely and was shocked to discover it was a cat frozen to the ground. "It gave me a real fright!" Mrs Spears realised the cat was alive but unable to move so she wrapped him up in her coat. When the office workers came later they too put their coats around the cat. Eventually he started to move and open his eyes. They carried him inside the office, put him near a heater and gave him some warm milk to drink. Now he lives in the office and has a new name: "Lucky"!

Dogs: Reading

Man's best friend

It may be hard to believe sometimes that our favourite mutt has wolves for ancestors. They came, thousands of years ago, into villages searching for food and were exploited by people for their own needs. They bred the animals to bring out certain characteristics especially to guard, herd or hunt. The result today is a huge diversity of breeds that include Alsatian police dogs, Collie sheep dogs and Spaniel gun dogs. The Egyptians had a breed of dog called the Saluki and these were mummified in Pyramids, along with the Pharaohs, from around 2100 BC. The ancient Greeks and Romans also developed breeds that include the Greyhound, which can run at over 70 km/h making it the fastest dog in the world.



Dogs fill a variety of roles in human society but for many countries their most important role is that of companion. This is because, like humans, dogs are both highly social and adaptable which allows them to fit into different homes and lifestyles around the world. Whether it's sitting on a scooter in Brazil or at a restaurant in France, or dressing up against the cold in northern Thailand, dogs have a special relationship with us. The following stories from around the world testify to this age-old bond and the special role dogs play in our lives.

A rocket dog

There's something about Laika that touches the heart. Shot into space and fame on 3rd November 1957 she died aboard *Sputnik 2* just hours after take off. Soviet officials originally said that she had died painlessly in orbit about a week after the launch. However, a Moscow scientist recently revealed that she died of overheating and stress not long after the mission had started. Despite surviving just a few hours Laika, who was once a stray walking the streets of Moscow, became the first living creature to orbit the Earth. She proved that a living organism could tolerate a long time in weightlessness paving the way for humans in space.

A loyal dog

Perhaps even more touching is the story of Hachiko, a large hunting dog called an Akita, who was the faithful pet of a professor at Tokyo University. Every afternoon the professor would arrive back at the train station to find his dog waiting patiently on the platform, no doubt wagging his tail, and they would return home together. Unfortunately in May 1925 when Hachiko was only 18 months old, the professor died before he could return home. This did not deter the dog from continuing to go to the station to meet the train for the next ten years before returning home, sad and alone. The statue of Hachiko on Tokyo's Shibuya railway station was erected in honour of his loyalty and devotion to his master.

A war dog

A parachuting dog may seem very strange but not to a Collie called Rob. Originally a working farm dog, he played a vital role during the Second World War (1939 - 1945). Along with his SAS unit he was parachuted in behind enemy lines where he was trained to watch over and protect the exhausted men as they slept in between carrying out their undercover operations. He made over 20 descents during his time with units in North Africa and Italy.

A rescue dog

Arcón is both the name of a dog and a search-and-rescue method which Arcón's owner, Jaime Parejo, named after him. Since 1999 numerous operations in countries affected by earthquakes, such as Colombia, Turkey, Taiwan and India, have used canine rescue teams from Spain where the method was developed. One of the most famous Arcón rescues took place in Gujarat, India in 2001. Seven days after an earthquake that killed 30,000 people, Spanish dogs located a young man buried alive in the rubble. The rescue happened after the possibility of finding further survivors had been abandoned, and dogs from other countries had already been withdrawn. His rescue was carried out 'live' on TV and news programmes around the world covered the event. Spanish dogs were also used to locate survivors after the Philippines landslide in February 2006. Despite their training and incredible sense of smell, the dogs were unable to sniff out any survivors buried under 30 m of mud.

An intelligent dog

Finally, on a lighter note, we have Bertie who, despite his tiny size, is an indispensable companion to his mistress, Gill. As she cannot hear it is up to Bertie, a miniature Yorkshire Terrier, to wake her up when the alarm clock goes off, to tell her when she has visitors and to alert her if there is an unusual noise. He has been trained to do this since he was a puppy but the dog has developed other instincts. While dozing on Gill's bed in hospital after she had had surgery Bertie suddenly woke up very agitated and started barking at the lady in the opposite bed. Nurses coming to see what the matter was, realized that the patient had stopped breathing. They revived her and, thanks to Bertie's help, saved her life. Bertie was trained by a British charity which has placed over 1,100 dogs with people who have hearing difficulties. Most of the dogs are strays selected from rescue kennels.



DREAM, DREAM, DREAM ...

Language: Dream vocabulary, linking words (contrast and surprising examples)

Level: Upper intermediate (equivalent to CER level B2)

Age: Teenagers / Adults

Time: 60 minutes

Summary: This infographic lesson looks at interesting facts and figures about dreams.

Materials: One copy of the worksheet per student; access to a projector or IWB to project the infographic from onestopenglish.

HOW TO USE THE LESSON

1 Allow students time to read over the questions in exercise 1. If you have a quiet group you may want to demonstrate the activity by discussing one of the questions with a strong student. Students discuss the questions in pairs.

2 Remind students before they begin that they will find information on the discussion from exercise 1 in the infographic. You could give students the infographic as a printed worksheet or display it on the board from onestopenglish. If students use a worksheet, ask them to read the text and then turn over their pages when they have finished. If you project the infographic, slowly scroll down, allowing everyone to read the information. Then remove the image. Students work in pairs or small groups to give an oral summary of the information using the key words in exercise 2. Remind them that the summary is a speaking activity, not a written one.

3 Let students look at the worksheet (or show the infographic) when they have finished to check the information. Encourage whole class discussion at this stage. Ask students if any of the information they read surprises them or if they have had experience of it.

4 Ask students to look at exercise 4. Tell them to find the words in context in the infographic and match each word to a synonym in the second box. You may want to work on pronunciation at this stage, eg word stress on words with more than one syllable or sounds that you know your students find difficult.

5 Draw students' attention to the four words in exercise 5. Explain that two of them are used to express contrast and two are used to present surprising information. Ask students to find the

words in the infographic and notice how they function as part of a sentence. Students put a word in each of the four empty columns in the table. You may like them to work in pairs during this activity for support or extra communication.

6 Ask students to complete the four sentences using the four linking words from exercise 5.

Key:

1 Students' own answers.

2 3 The main points in the infographic are:

- REM sleep: fast and random movement of the eyes; we pass through this stage several times; we normally dream during this stage; our bodies are paralysed.
- Emotions: joy, happiness, fear and anxiety are mentioned; negative emotions are more common in dreams.
- The age of 10: most people over this age dream from 4 to 6 times a night.
- A lucid dream: we know we are dreaming and we can direct and control it.
- Blind people: do not experience images but they do experience other senses. Their dreams are as vivid and complex as a sighted person's dream.
- After you wake up: you forget 95% of what you dreamed. The part of the brain responsible for memory doesn't work when we dream.
- Colour: we dream both in colour and black and white although 80% of our dreams are in colour.



DREAM, DREAM, DREAM ...

- 4** *typified: characterised*
 swift: fast
 recall: remember
 joy: happiness
 apprehension: fear
 vivid: clear
 random: irregular
 pick out: choose

5

Contrast		Surprising example	
Conjunction + clause	Discourse marker	Adverb + noun	Conjunction + clause
although 80% of them are	however	even babies	even though you are asleep

- 6** 1. *Even though*
 2. *although*
 3. *However*
 4. *even*

RELATED WEBSITES

The following websites might be useful for either you or your students.

www.dreammoods.com/dreamdictionary/

www.csun.edu/~vcpsy00h/students/dreams.htm

www2.ucsc.edu/dreams/FAQ/

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dream

www.psychologytoday.com/basics/dreaming



DREAM, DREAM, DREAM ...

- 1 Work in pairs and answer the following questions together.
- Can you remember your last dream? If you can, what was it about?
 - Is it possible to control your own dreams?
 - Have you ever woken up from a dream and been unable to move?
 - Are your dreams mainly positive or negative? Give reasons.
 - Do you dream in colour or black and white?

2 Read the infographic about dreams. Now turn the text over and summarize the information with a partner using the words in the box.

REM SLEEP	emotions	THE AGE OF 10	a lucid dream
blind people	after you wake up	colour	

- 3 Now look at the infographic again and check your answers.
- 4 Find the words on the left in the text and match them to their synonyms on the right.

typified	apprehension
swift	vivid
recall	random
joy	pick out

clear	characterised
happiness	fast
choose	fear
irregular	remember

5 Find the following words in the text and put them into the correct column in the box below, along with any other words necessary.

however	although	even though	even
---------	----------	-------------	------

Contrast		Surprising example	
Conjunction + clause	Discourse marker	Adverb + noun	Conjunction + clause

- 6 Complete the following sentences with words from exercise 5.
1. _____ you don't recognize strangers in your dreams, you have actually seen them somewhere before in real life.
 2. Many people think that dreams have a hidden meaning _____ there is no definitive answer to this.
 3. Studies show that babies and young children dream. _____, their dreams are less frequent and less detailed.
 4. Animals also dream, _____ mice.



DREAM, DREAM, DREAM ...

DREAM, DREAM, DREAM...

What happens when we dream? Why do we dream? How often? Can we remember our dreams? Do we dream in colour? Here we look at some interesting facts about dreams.

Rapid eye movement (REM) sleep is a normal stage of sleep characterised by fast and random movement of the eyes. We go through this stage of sleep several times during the night. There are short phases at the beginning of our sleep and longer phases towards the end before we wake up. The dreams we vividly recall mostly happen during REM sleep. During REM sleep the voluntary muscles in our bodies are paralysed. This prevents us from acting out the movement that occur in our dreams.

Sleep and dreams

R.E.M.
RAPID
EYE
MOVEMENT

Dream facts

We experience many emotions in our dreams. For example: joy, happiness and fear. The most common is anxiety. Negative emotions are much more common than positive ones. Dreams that contain negative emotions are called nightmares.

Most people over the age of 10 dream at least 4 to 6 times per night. This normally happens during REM sleep but there is evidence that we can also dream during non REM sleep.

A lucid dream is one in which you are aware that you are dreaming even though you are asleep. When you have this type of dream you can normally direct and control it.

Everybody dreams even babies. Blind people also dream. Those who are blind from birth do not experience images. However, they experience small, sound, emotion and touch. This makes the dreams both complex and vivid.

Dream stats



95% of what you dream slips your mind soon after you wake up. Brain scans of sleeping individuals during experiments have shown that the area of the brain responsible for memory is inactive during REM sleep.

Not all of your dreams are in colour although 80% of them are. In studies in which dreamers were asked to pick out colours from a chart that matched their dreams, soft pastel colours were those most commonly chosen.

Mobile Phones: Reading

I don't have one, and if I can help it, I won't ever get one in the future. And I hate the assumption that I need one, or that I'm strange not having one. I opened a new bank account the other day and the woman who was helping me (and this is a true story) asked me if I was serious when she found out I didn't have one. She simply couldn't see how I could live my life without one. I don't see why – I can be contacted at home, or work, so what's the problem?



Yes, I have a laptop computer and instant access to the Internet; yes, I have a digital camera and yes I have a microwave oven and an i-Pod but I absolutely refuse to get a _____!

Of course I can see how useful they *could* be, and that if there was a *real* emergency they could come in handy, but that's not always the case. There was a story of a guy who had a parachuting accident and found himself on top of a cliff with two broken legs. He had his mobile with him but – guess what? He wasn't able to use it because he was in a remote area! So, in great pain, he had to pull himself along the ground with his elbows until he got to a road and could stop a motorist. So not much help for him then, was it? And once when I very reluctantly rang a friend on her mobile (from a telephone box on the platform) because she was very late arriving at a train station she didn't answer it. Why? Because, she said (when she eventually arrived) that the battery was flat! So what's the point? (And calling mobiles is so expensive!)

Other times they create the emergency themselves. Remember that awful story of the Kenyan student? She dropped hers into a pit latrine while 'answering a call of nature'. So she offered the equivalent of \$13 to anyone who could get it for her and what happened? Three men died, intoxicated by the fumes because they were so desperate for the money. That's awful. And don't they cause cancer? Apparently, the general scientific opinion at the moment is that the benefits seem to outweigh any known dangers but it's best to use a hands-free kit. I'm not sure about that. An independent report recommends that under-16s use theirs only for essential calls – ha! Try telling that to a teenager!

And no gentle burr burring either but we have to listen to the theme tune of a soap opera, or a national anthem, or ringing bells while the owner rummages in the bottom of their bag to find the offending item.

But these aren't my main bugbears. No, what I hate is how my daily life is affected negatively by other people using theirs. Take a restaurant – I really, really hate it when friends arrive and the first thing they do is put their mobiles on the table so that, in the (likely) event of it going off they stop talking to you and start ignoring you. Are they doctors? Are they giving advice on open-heart surgery? Are they talking to long-lost friends? Sick relatives? NO! It'll be their mother who they saw recently, or other friends they're going to meet soon. For me it's the height of rudeness. And of course I also have to put up with the same happening on the next-door table too. And how inept and pointless the conversations! 'I'm with Jenny and we're having Dim Sum.' The person

needs to know that? 'Hi, I'm on the train now and will be there in about 10 minutes.' So? Are they not expected? Can't they just turn up in 10 minutes and say 'I'm here.'? I don't want to know what strangers did yesterday, what they plan to do tomorrow or what they're doing now (I can see what they're doing now!).

I'm also affected by the light – do the owners really not realize how bright they are? OK maybe the stupid thing is on vibration but when it's opened in the cinema, or at a concert the owner is all lit up and then I can't concentrate on what I'm watching. I was at a concert not long ago, up on the balcony, and looking down on the audience there were always at least five people using their mobiles. Why didn't they switch them off? Why are they going tappety tap tap instead of watching the show? It drives me so mad! The mate of mine sitting next to me actually answered his and started whispering loudly – but when he saw the look on my face he instantly apologized. 'Sorry – it's my sister.' So?

Finally, it's an excuse to be late. If the waiting friend can be contacted 'Just to let you know I'm going to be half an hour late', then somehow being late is therefore OK. No! Just make an effort to arrive on time! Sometimes friends even blame *me* for sitting alone for twenty minutes when it was *they* who were late because, they insist, I couldn't be contacted! No – I'm *never, ever* going to get one!



VALENTINE'S DAY

Level: Pre-intermediate to intermediate (equivalent to CEFR level A2 / B1)

Age: Teenagers / Adults

Time: 60 minutes

Summary: This lesson and infographic look at interesting facts and figures about Valentine's Day.

Materials: One copy of the worksheet per student; access to a projector or IWB to project the infographic from onestopenglish.

HOW TO USE THE LESSON

1 There are hundreds of songs with *love* in the title. If possible, bring in a few and play 'guess that tune' at the start of the lesson. Play each one for five seconds and see how many people can guess the song. Before the lesson, make a list of ten songs and write them on the board, leaving out the word *love*, and ask students to insert the word in the correct place. Depending on the songs you choose, they may need to change the form of the missing word, eg *loving*, or *loved*.

2 Allow students a moment to read through the information on the infographic before doing exercise 2, which is in two parts. First of all they should complete each sentence with the correct word (*much* or *many*). They then find the answer to the questions in the infographic.

For questions 4 and 6, you could point out that the correct answer is *much* because *how much* in this sentence means *how much money*, and *money* is a singular noun in English, but the verb is *do* because *roses* (question 4) and *people* (question 6) are plural. In question 3, you could point out that *a dozen*, which means 12, is an old unit of measure still used today for some things such as *roses* and *eggs* (which are sold in boxes of 6 – *half a dozen* – or 12 – *a dozen*), and where we mean 'more than a few but not very many', e.g. *There were about a dozen people in the room*.

For question 5, you could point out that *confectionery* refers to any kind of *sweets* (US: *candy*) or *chocolate*. You could also point out that *sweets* is always plural when it refers to confectionery, while *candy* can be singular or plural (*candies*).

3 At this stage you can focus more on some of the words themselves in the infographic. Do the

first one as an example, then let the students do the others.

4 An alternative to exercise 4 would be to ask students to copy the individual words on scraps of paper, mix up all the papers and put them on the table in front of them. They then put the words into groups. Go over the answers, clarifying any unknown words.

5 Put students into small groups or pairs to choose questions to discuss before whole class feedback.

6 Finish by asking students the last question in open class. Can they think of important calendar dates or celebrations in their country that are used to sell lots of things? Do they think this is good for the economy, or that it ruins a good holiday?

Key:

1 *Students' own answers.*

2 1. *many: 37 million; 2. much: £47; 3. many: 150 million; 4. much: \$75 average; 5. much: 63 million kilos 6. much: \$274*

3 1. *celebrate; 2. annually; 3. single; 4. industry; 5. big spender*

4 *jewellery: bracelet, earring, necklace, ring; confectionery: chocolate, fudge, liquorice, caramel; flowers: lily, orchid, rose, tulip; other: meal, date, gift*

5 *Students' own answers.*

6 *Examples of important dates in the retail calendar in the USA: St. Patrick's Day (March); Easter (March / April) Independence Day (July)*



VALENTINE'S DAY

1 Do you know any songs with the word *love* in the title? What are they?

2 Read the infographic *Love by the numbers*. Complete the questions with *much* or *many*. Then answer the questions.

- How _____ dates are there each year in Britain?
- How _____ does an average British single person spend on a date?
- How _____ Valentine's Day cards does Hallmark sell every year?
- How _____ do a dozen roses cost in the US on Valentine's Day?
- How _____ confectionery is sold every Valentine's Day in the US?
- How _____ do people in the Far East spend at Boticca every Valentine's Day?

3 Find words in the infographic that mean ...

- to do something enjoyable to show that an occasion is special
- every year
- unmarried
- business
- person who spends a lot of money

4 Put the words below into four groups: jewellery, confectionery, flowers, other. Use a dictionary to help you.

bracelet caramel chocolate date earring fudge gift lily
 liquorice meal necklace orchid ring rose tulip

jewellery	confectionery	flowers	other

5 Work in pairs. Choose three of the questions below and discuss with your partner.

- Is Valentine's Day a popular holiday in your country?
- Do you celebrate Valentine's Day? What do you do?
- Do you think Valentine's Day is too commercial?
- What is the perfect gift for someone you love?
- Do you believe in 'love at first sight'?
- What is the perfect date? Describe it.

6 Valentine's Day is one of the first important dates in the retail calendar (the calendar of sales in a shop) in the USA. What other celebrations are important in the retail calendar in your country?



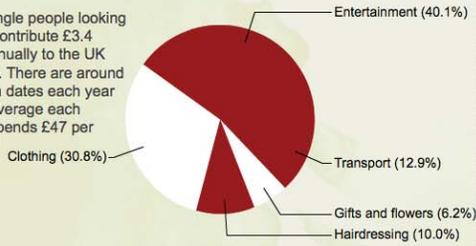
VALENTINE'S DAY

Love by the Numbers

Love may be free, but it is certainly good for business. It's Valentine's Day, and in the countries that celebrate this holiday, many businesses are getting ready to sell sell sell.

From UK with love...

British single people looking for love contribute £3.4 billion annually to the UK economy. There are around 37 million dates each year and on average each person spends £47 per date.



American Sweetheart



There are more than 1,400 kinds of Valentine's Day cards made by Hallmark. They sell 144 million every year.

More than 200 million roses are produced especially for Valentine's Day. Average cost is \$75/dozen.

140 million pounds (63 million kilos) of candies are sold every year. 60% of this goes on chocolate.

The jewellery industry makes more than \$4 billion dollars on this day every year.

\$127 = average spent by each American who celebrates Valentine's Day

World Big spenders?



According to the jewellery, bags and accessories store Boticca, the men who spend the most money on Valentine's Day are in the Far East with an average of \$274 spent per buyer.

Created by:
Lindsay Clandfield and
the global team

Tourism: Reading

I was told Coconut Island was developing fast. Presumably this meant it was a once pristine island on the downhill slope to environmental ruin caused by uncontrolled tourist development. Perhaps they meant it in a more positive light. I wasn't sure. I went there to find out.



Driving down the east coast expressway, you don't see much. The landscape is pretty flat most of the way with just a few trees and roadside shacks selling pineapples. Oh, and of course the usual construction teams in the never-ending process of widening and 'improving' the road. However, once you get to the end of the road and the ferry terminal, you look across the sea and see a huge mountainous, almost forbidding, island rising up in front of you. I felt a frisson of excitement, or was I just a bit nervous, as I had also just seen a rusting car ferry approaching the small pier?

We crossed without mishap, but left the ferry stuck behind a convoy of trucks carrying construction materials ready to concrete over this beautiful island. From the ferry stop, the road rises abruptly over a small hill and then as it comes down the other side we enter tourist land. Although we knew the sparkling white beach was just metres from the road, we were denied a first sight for quite some time. Not by rows of palm trees but by rows of shops selling tourist tat. We couldn't even see these too well because of all the dust thrown up by the trucks. Fortunately the tourist shops thinned out within 20 minutes and shortly afterwards we arrived at our destination: Seaview Resort. We weren't disappointed. We had been promised fine white sand and clear turquoise water and we got it. Only problem was there was just a few feet of white sand and that was mostly covered in beach towels from the overweight European tourists who had got there before us. Ah well not to worry, we could explore the beach for a quiet spot later. We checked out the rooms and facilities and everything was just as you would expect from a mid-range hotel. It also had quite a nice little restaurant right on the beach and therefore great for a cold beer and our first sunset - perfect!

The following morning after cold bacon and eggs for breakfast it seemed that the same people from yesterday were hogging the sun beds and beach space again so we decided to walk down the beach and explore a little further afield. In actual fact I was very pleasantly surprised. I was expecting the whole beach to be lined with resorts packed side to side but actually on this beach there was still plenty of space for developers. The closest buildings to us were a couple of beachside family-run cheap and cheerful restaurants with bamboo chairs and tables. At 300 metres away, they were also just too far away for most of the package tourists. And this was generally where we spent most of our days. An added bonus was that at the shack - White Sands to give it its official name (the name was on a piece of driftwood tacked to a nearby palm tree), the food was far, far superior to the resort. Whereas the resort chefs had removed any local flavour from their creations, the White Sands staff had managed to keep their food authentic.

So, most of our days were spent relaxing by the sea but one day we went with the imaginatively titled 'Fun' cruise for a trip round the islands further south. We were ready at the appointed place and time (8.40) and sure enough at 8.40 local time (9.15 by my watch) the boat appeared to pick us up from the beach. We climbed aboard to see it was already quite full. More room for everyone cries the captain - plenty of room on the floor! It wasn't an auspicious start but I must admit it got better throughout the day.

We steamed south. From the sea we could see the extent of the development on Coconut Island. There were plenty more resorts being built, the backdrops of swaying palms had become construction sites and the lush green hillsides had become bare red scars soon to be covered with tourist developments. However, our day was spent steaming from one little island to the next with plenty of opportunity for snorkelling and swimming. At four we turned around and were dropped off at our hotel just after sunset. I'm usually sceptical of these organized trips but I would certainly recommend this one. Not too bad for the price - Oh, I forgot to mention the lunch on board was excellent also.

Before too long our sojourn on Coconut Island was over. Overall, I was pleasantly surprised. Okay, it's getting developed but you can still find pristine beaches by spending a little bit more effort to get there. In general most of the development is on the beach and so the interior is still magnificent. It'll take another few years yet to spoil it, so my advice is to enjoy it while you can.

It's never too late to learn a new language

Level 3 • Advanced

1 Warmer

What is easy and what is difficult when learning a new language? Put these in order from 1 (easiest) to 6 (most difficult).

- | | |
|----------|---|
| 1. _____ | a. learning vocabulary |
| 2. _____ | b. pronunciation |
| 3. _____ | c. using grammatical structures correctly |
| 4. _____ | d. understanding what people say |
| 5. _____ | e. reading texts |
| 6. _____ | f. holding a conversation |

2 Key words

Fill the gaps in the sentences using these key words from the text.

constraints	bilingual	brainchild	animated	reservations
accessible	irrelevant	dementia	stroke	preconceptions

- _____ is a serious illness affecting someone's brain and memory in which they gradually stop being able to think or behave in a normal way.
- If you are _____, you are lively or active.
- A _____ is a clever system, idea or plan that someone thinks of and develops.
- If someone is _____, they can speak two languages extremely well.
- A _____ is a medical condition in which blood is suddenly blocked and cannot reach the brain.
- _____ are feelings of doubt about whether something is good or right.
- _____ are opinions about something that people form before they have a lot of information about it or experience of it.
- _____ are things that limit people's freedom to do what they want.
- If something is _____, it is easy for people to use.
- If something is described as _____, it is not important to what you are discussing or doing.

3 Find the information

Find the following information in the text as quickly as possible.

- Which four languages are offered in courses provided at care homes in Scotland?
- Which other three languages are mentioned in the text?
- In which Scottish city will a language hub open in 2018?
- What is Thomas Bak's profession?
- When was Lingo Flamingo started?
- How much does a Lingo Flamingo language course normally cost?

It's never too late to learn a new language

Level 3 • Advanced

The care-home residents proving it's never too late to learn a new language

French and Italian classes are improving self-confidence and wellbeing, as well as cognition – even for those with dementia

Emma Sheppard

25 July, 2018

- 1 When a notice appeared advertising French classes in Dundonald House Care Home in Ayrshire, Mari Dougan was surprised her parents were interested in attending. Dougan's mum, Patricia, has lived at the home for two years and has had dementia for the past nine, losing most of her speech. Despite this, the course was something she and her husband, Eric, could do together and the whole family has noticed a change in her.
- 2 "I think Dad decided he'd take Mum purely for her benefit," says Dougan. "But he loved it just as much as she did. After they did the French course, they did Italian. It became the highlight of their week. Mum knows she's there, she's joining in and she'll pick up the pen and answer back the odd word – that's huge. She's much more animated since she's been going to the classes."
- 3 The language classes are the brainchild of entrepreneur Robbie Norval, who started Lingo Flamingo in 2015 to provide lessons for older adults. The social enterprise employs 35 tutors who work in care homes and community centres across Scotland. So far, it has worked with more than 800 people.
- 4 Courses in French, Italian, German and Spanish typically run in blocks of ten weeks for an hour a week. Norval says running the courses has not always been easy. "When you initially tell people you teach language learning in care homes, they say, 'Why on earth would you do that?' Thankfully, that opinion is changing."
- 5 Working with Thomas Bak, a psychologist from Edinburgh University, has been key to building credibility. Bak's research into dementia over 20 years has found that people who are bilingual develop the condition up to four years later than those who are monolingual. There are also better cognitive outcomes for people who have had a stroke. "The term used is 'cognitive reserve'," says Bak. This means that people who have a stroke are better able to cope. "If your brain is better interconnected, better trained, you might still get dementia but you'll cope with it a bit longer," he says.
- 6 Even for people who aren't bilingual, learning a language in later life has benefits, Bak says. He has found improvements among older adults' attention, verbal fluency and memory, regardless of IQ and often to a greater degree than younger learners. Language learning can also have an impact relatively quickly – Bak found there was a marked difference in concentration levels among participants after just one week of intensive learning.
- 7 Bak believes it is never too late to learn a language. "If anything, it becomes more important with age," he says, adding that what is particularly valuable about language learning is the variety of tasks involved. "You have to learn to distinguish different sounds. You have to learn new concepts that might be very different from your mother tongue. You have to learn grammar and how to use words in a conversation," he says. In contrast, according to Bak, doing a sudoku puzzle is like going to the gym and spending all your time on a single machine.
- 8 Many care homes had reservations. One thought it would confuse the residents so much they'd become agitated and need sedating but that hasn't happened. Norval has also had to challenge preconceptions about learning languages, including that it is hard or not something for working-class people. There are also budget constraints – it typically costs £400 for the whole course, regardless of the number of participants.
- 9 The course material has been designed to be accessible, with textbooks printed in a larger font, incorporating colours that those with dementia can recognize and using sensory learning to include those who might be unable to speak. One group writes postcards to a twinned care home in France and has held a lesson with local schoolchildren.
- 10 "Apart from the cognitive research, we've found it really increases wellbeing and self-confidence," Norval says. "If an adult living with dementia can learn a couple of words, they think to themselves, 'Actually, I can learn new things.' They don't fear Alzheimer's as much. They realize they're not forgetting everything, which is a really important message as well."
- 11 Norval has recently introduced a volunteer befriending programme to pair linguists with those with dementia who revert to their mother tongue (such as Urdu, Punjabi or Polish) and may be feeling isolated in a care home. He is also opening a language hub in Glasgow in 2018 with the

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money raised from paying participants used to fund courses in care homes.

- 12 In Aberdeen, Sarah Duff, service manager at the Dementia Resource Centre, is arranging a graduation party, complete with flamenco guitarist, for participants finishing their first Spanish course. She was initially concerned that the teacher wouldn't be able to cater for different levels of dementia but says everyone has really enjoyed the classes since they started in January, often regardless of how much Spanish they've learned.
- 13 "It's been such a great group," she says. "It's brought in people who didn't attend other things. When you've got a diagnosis like dementia, it's

good to learn a new language and stimulate the brain but it's also good to feel you belong and make new friends and have fun."

- 14 Dougan adds that the joy of the class for her parents has been that the dementia becomes almost irrelevant. "Everyone is on a level playing-field. Nobody is any better at speaking the language than anybody else, whether you have dementia or not. For that period of time, the dementia is not there."

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4 Comprehension check

Choose the best answer according to the text.

- What benefits can learning a language in later life have?
 - It can improve a person's IQ.
 - It can help people with dementia live up to four years longer.
 - It can improve verbal fluency and memory.
- What, according to Thomas Bak, is particularly valuable about learning a language?
 - It includes a variety of tasks and this is good for the brain.
 - Language is logical and this is good for memory and understanding.
 - It is more effective than doing Sudoku puzzles.
- How can learning a couple of words help someone with dementia?
 - It can stop them forgetting everything.
 - It can help them realize that they are not forgetting everything.
 - It can make them realize that learning a language isn't hard.
- How has Mari Dougan's mother benefited from the language classes?
 - She has become bilingual in French.
 - She has become much more animated.
 - She has regained her speech.

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5 Find the word

Find the following words and phrases in the text.

1. a two-word phrasal verb meaning *do an activity with people who are already doing it* (para 2)
2. a noun meaning *the qualities that someone or something has that makes people believe or trust them* (para 5)
3. a noun meaning *the possible or likely result of something* (para 5)
4. a noun meaning *an effect or an influence* (para 6)
5. a verb meaning *give someone a drug that makes them calmer* (para 8)
6. a two-word phrasal verb meaning *return to a previous state or way of behaving* (para 11)
7. a two-word phrasal verb meaning *provide people with things they want or need* (para 12)
8. a three-word noun phrase meaning *a situation that is fair or the same for all the people involved* (para 14)

6 Verb + noun collocations

Match the verbs in the left-hand column with the nouns or noun phrases in the right-hand column.

- | | |
|--------------|--------------------|
| 1. run | a. preconceptions |
| 2. develop | b. an impact |
| 3. have | c. self-confidence |
| 4. challenge | d. a course |
| 5. increase | e. money |
| 6. raise | f. a condition |

7 Word-building

Complete the sentences using the correct form of the word in brackets at the end of each sentence.

1. Each course costs £400, _____ of the number of participants. [REGARD]
2. Learning a language can improve verbal _____. [FLUENT]
3. _____, the idea that teaching a language in a care home is strange is changing. [THANK]
4. Language learning can have an effect _____ quickly. [RELATE]
5. Course material includes _____ learning to involve people who might be unable to speak. [SENSE]
6. In a volunteer programme, linguists will _____ dementia sufferers who revert to their mother tongue. [FRIEND]

8 Discussion

Discuss the statements.

- It's never too late to learn a language.
- The older you get, the more difficult language learning becomes.
- Learning a language opens a door to the world.

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KEY

2 Key words

1. dementia
2. animated
3. brainchild
4. bilingual
5. stroke
6. reservations
7. preconceptions
8. constraints
9. accessible
10. irrelevant

3 Find the information

1. French, Italian, German, Spanish
2. Urdu, Punjabi, Polish
3. Glasgow
4. psychologist
5. 2015
6. £400

4 Comprehension check

1. c
2. a
3. b
4. b

5 Find the word

1. join in
2. credibility
3. outcome
4. impact
5. sedate
6. revert to
7. cater for
8. level playing-field

6 Verb + noun collocations

1. d
2. f
3. b
4. a
5. c
6. e

7 Word-building

1. regardless
2. fluency
3. thankfully
4. relatively
5. sensory
6. befriend