

1. Back to school

The theme of this week's lesson is the big event in September for students and teachers in many countries in the Northern Hemisphere: the beginning of the school year.

Level

Pre-intermediate and above (equivalent to CEF level A2-B1 and above)

How to use the lesson

1. Ask your students how they feel (or used to feel) about going back to school after the summer holidays, and why. Do they remember any particularly good or bad things that happened at the beginning of the school year?
2. Give your students five to ten minutes to read through Worksheet A, encouraging them to look up new vocabulary. Tell them they are going to answer a series of questions on the text, but that they shouldn't write anything down at this stage.
3. Divide the students into pairs and hand out Worksheet B. Ask them to work together to complete the comprehension questions in Exercise 1 and the true/false/doesn't say questions in Exercise 2.
4. Check answers in open class.
5. Ask the students to put away Worksheets A and B or to temporarily hand them back to you. Then, keeping the students in pairs, hand out Worksheet C and give them another ten minutes for the gap-fill exercise in which they have to complete the missing words from the text. If the students cannot remember what the words are, encourage them to try to work them out from the context of the sentence. You might also want to point out that some of the words feature in the glossary.
6. Check answers in open class.

Answers:

Exercise 1

1. Three or four
2. Because he has much longer holidays (about 'three times' the five weeks they have).
3. Because they say he and his mates mess around too much.
4. Because it seemed too far away.
5. He won't be bored any more (because he'll see his friends more often), and he won't have to study some of the subjects he didn't like.
6. Six and seven
7. Seven o'clock
8. 'Sweet' and 'awful' respectively

Exercise 2

1. T 2. F 3. T 4. D 5. D 6. F 7. T 8. D 9. F 10. T

Exercise 3

1. tiny 2. miles 3. lift 4. hang out 5. chemistry 6. break 7. forward
 8. envious 9. times 10. colleagues 11. freedom 12. homework 13. mates
 14. mess around 15. miss 16. quickly 17. forever 18. headteacher
 19. issues 20. switch off

2. Related Websites

Send your students to these websites, or just take a look yourself.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/cbbcnews/hi/newsid_7590000/newsid_7590500/7590556.stm

A BBC *Newsround* forum (September 2008) entitled 'Back to school: how do you feel?', with contributions from children and younger teenagers. Accessible to pre-intermediate level.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/education/7418899.stm>

A BBC article (2008) about a study suggesting that some school pupils in the UK are falling behind in class because the summer holidays are too long. Intermediate level and above.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2008/sep/01/primaryschools.schools>

'How to survive the first day at school' – a guide (2008) for parents and teachers in the British newspaper *The Guardian*. Could be adapted for intermediate level and above.