

1. The key to happiness?

This week's lesson features the views of five different people on what brings happiness in life.

Level

Upper intermediate and above (equivalent to CEF level B2 and above)

How to use the lesson

1. What do your students think are the main things that bring people happiness? Do they think they are any things that are commonly undervalued/overvalued as sources of happiness, and if so, what are they? Do they think people in some countries are likely to be happier than people in others, and if so, why?
2. Tell students they are going to read the opinions of five people about the sources of happiness. Give your students five to ten minutes to read through Worksheet A, encouraging them to look up new vocabulary. You could ask them to check if any of their ideas are mentioned. 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 different types of comprehension questions in Exercises 1, 2 and 3.
4. Check answers in open class.
5. Ask the students if they particularly agree or disagree with any of the opinions expressed on Worksheet A, and if so, why.
6. Keeping the students in their pairs, ask them to turn over their copies of Worksheet A, or to hand them back to you temporarily. Then ask them to attempt Exercise 4 on Worksheet C, which contains the text from Worksheet A but with 25 mistakes: their task is to identify and correct these mistakes. Point out that the mistakes are all grammatical or lexical, and that no correction requires them to write more than one additional word.
8. Check answers in open class. You could also hand out copies of Worksheet D, which contains the full text with the 25 corrections in bold

Answers:

Exercise 1

1. Mia, Luke, Ed, Bill 2. Mia, Jasmine 3. Ed 4. Luke, Ed 5. Mia 6. Luke

Exercise 2

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

Exercise 3

1. She advises people not to worry about things that might and not to compare themselves with people in adverts.
2. Having a safe, comfortable place to live, and having a reasonable standard of living.
3. He thinks that having more money will certainly improve the life of someone who is very poor ('living in a slum and ... hungry') but not necessarily that of someone who already has quite a good standard of living ('developed countries ... certain level of material comfort')

Exercise 4 (correcting the 25 mistakes)

See Worksheet D.

2. Related Websites

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

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/happiness_formula/default.stm

A section of the BBC website (2006) devoted to the theme of happiness, including a test enabling you to 'discover how happy you are'. Accessible to upper-intermediate level.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/sci/tech/5169448.stm>

A BBC article (2006) about a survey that suggested the tiny Pacific island of Vanuatu is the happiest country in the world. It also refers to findings that levels of happiness in developed countries do not increase with ever greater wealth. Accessible to upper-intermediate level.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/comment/3557112/Happiness-is-the-measure-of-true-wealth.html>

The British philosopher AC Grayling discusses the relationship between wealth and happiness in the newspaper The Daily Telegraph (2008). Challenging for upper-intermediate level.