
e-lesson

Week starting: September 7, 2009

1. Back to school

The theme of this week's lesson is the big event in late August/early September for students and teachers in the USA: 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 summer vacation, 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 determine 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 fill-in-the-blanks 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 figure 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 more vacation time every year (about "six times" the two weeks they have).
3. Because they say he and his friends 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. Seven or eight
7. Six 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. bored 2. miles 3. ride 4. hang out 5. chemistry 6. break 7. forward
8. envious 9. times 10. co-workers 11. freedom 12. homework 13. separate
14. mess around 15. miss 16. quickly 17. forever 18. principal
19. issues 20. switch off

2. Related Websites

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

<http://pbskids.org/wayback/summer/index.html>

A fun PBS website giving students ideas of things to do during summer vacation. Accessible to pre-intermediate level.

http://www.cnn.com/2009/POLITICS/02/27/education.school.year/index.html?eref=rss_mostpopular

A CNN article (February 2009) about the debate surrounding the length of US schools' summer vacations, and possible reforms in store. Intermediate level and above.

http://kidshealth.org/teen/school_jobs/school/back_to_school.html

A guide for teenagers on coping with going back to school. Accessible to pre-intermediate level.