

1. Can you believe it?

This week's lesson features three news stories that might appear peculiar or surprising. Two are genuine and one has been made up.

Level

Intermediate and above (equivalent to CEF level B1 and above)

How to use the lesson

1. Brainstorm on the subject of strange or surprising news stories – how many can your students think of from the recent news, both in their own country and internationally? Encourage them to recall as many details as possible.
2. Divide your students into pairs, then hand out Worksheet A and give them as much time as they need to read through it. Encourage them to look up new vocabulary. Can they identify which two stories are genuine and which one has been invented?
3. Check answers in open class, and encourage your students to explain what factors influenced their choices.
4. Keeping your students in their pairs, hand out Worksheet B and ask them to complete the crossword.
5. Check answers in open class.
6. Now divide the students into pairs, and ask them to turn over their copies of Worksheets A and B or to temporarily hand them back to you. Then hand out Worksheet C and ask the students to complete Exercise 3, which contains the genuine-story texts about the mass pillow fight and Big Ben from Worksheet A, with twenty incorrect words that they have to identify and correct. The words containing the mistakes are all in bold, as are five other words that are correct. Point out that the mistakes are all grammatical or lexical, and that no correction requires them to write any additional words.
7. Check answers in open class.

Answers:

Exercise 1

The genuine stories are numbers 1 and 2; the story involving the Chicago amusement park for unhappy teenagers (number 3) has been invented.

Exercise 2

1. hitting 2. parliament 3. landmark 4. bell 5. simultaneous
6. slightly 7. stage 8. write 9. experts

If the crossword has been completed correctly, *ninety-six* will read from top to bottom.

Exercise 3

1. rid 2. strangers 4. mass 5. taken 6. encouraged 7. boss 8. causing
9. whacking 10. intended 11. participants 12. stage 14. announced
16. popularly 18. fertile 20. crashing 21. attractions 22. insist
23. abnormal 24. announcement 25. naked

Words in bold that are correct: 3. got 13. live 15. by 17. little 19. pictured

2. Related websites

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

<http://www.5min.com/Video/Massive-Pillow-Fight-in-Shanghai-517252841>

A video clip with English subtitles of the mass pillow fight in Shanghai from 5min Media. Accessible to Intermediate level.

<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/12/28/us-china-pillowfight-idUSTRE7BP02I20111228>

A Reuters news article about the Chinese pillow fight. Challenging for Intermediate level.

<http://www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=7384316n>

A CBS News video on the official discovery that Big Ben is leaning slightly to one side. Challenging for Intermediate level.