



ENGLISH PRACTICE MATERIAL

TEACHER'S MANUAL: READING

B1·B2



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General Comments

English Practice Material – vhs is a four-part series: Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking. The four parts can either be used individually or together in any combination. The units titles are the same in all four books. This series can accompany any textbook that is being used in an English course. The units can be flexibly combined. This has the advantage that teachers can put together activities according to their needs, i.e. activities for a particular skill, a particular CEFR descriptor or a particular emotion. Of course, the material can also be used as primary learning material, e.g. Speaking is ideal for a conversation course.

The book contains an audio CD so that students can practise listening and also practise reading the texts along with the CD and thereby improve their pronunciation. Not all the texts have been recorded. The ones that are on the audio CD are marked with a CD symbol. Since reading is not a communicative activity in itself, you can ask your students to prepare some of the reading as homework and then use the texts as a springboard for discussions. Or you can get your students to read the texts aloud in pairs or in small groups. Naturally, there is plenty of potential to work with the vocabulary in the texts, for example: working with synonyms and opposites, odd word out exercises and getting students.

Topic Neighbours and Paparazzi

Aim Vocabulary work

Warm Up

Ask the students if they have ever wanted to know what was being said on the other side of a door. Encourage them to let their imaginations run free: parents discussing Christmas presents, scientists discussing a new invention or discovery, criminals planning a robbery!

Part b: If the class is very big, you could do this as a group exercise rather than a partner exercise so that you have fewer dialogues for the class to listen to.

Activity 1

If you want to do more about the history of the phrase “nosy parker”, here is an interesting website: www.phrases.org.uk/meanings/nosy-parker.html

You can also talk about the organised groups that look after their neighbourhoods called Neighbourhood Watch. Here is the website valid for Britain:

www.ourwatch.org.uk/your_local_area/

You could also refer to the 2014 film “Bad Neighbours”.

Activity 2

Words could include:

friendly, unfriendly, unsociable, critical, crazy, annoying, interesting, fascinating, amusing, welcoming, reserved, quiet, loud, noisy, co-operative, etc.

You may want to compare the mind maps in class before the groups go on to talk about best and worst cases.

Activity 3

You could ask the students what they generally think of the paparazzi before they read the text. Ask the students to define what kind of people are rich and famous: singers, film stars, athletes, royalty

There are several words that are difficult to pronounce in the text: celebrity, photograph v. photographer, insensitivity, controversial, threatened, endangered, legislation. Practise where the stress lies to help students say the words.

You could also encourage your students to do some research on the Internet. There are several exhibitions on paparazzi at art museums and plenty of articles on the topic, for example: www.theguardian.com/media/2014/mar/02/paparazzi-unloved-profession-major-french-exhibition

Additional Ideas

You could refer to Princess Diana's accident. Can they remember hearing the news?

www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2013/08/31/the-night-princess-diana-died.html

Additional Activity

Get students to discuss the meaning of “Curiosity killed the cat”.

www.wisegeek.com/what-does-curiosity-killed-the-cat-mean.htm

Topic Customer Service / Suitable for Business English Classes

Aim Vocabulary work

Warm Up

The quote is from Stanley Gordon West. Talk with students about what a smile means in different cultures. Sometimes, people smile when they are happy or feeling positive. We might smile when something seems funny, or when we want to build a connection with someone new. In other cultures, a smile is a sign of embarrassment or is shown only to family members and close friends. Some people may say a smile is not enough, it's more important to have a positive inner attitude.

Here are other phrases students might discuss:

- "Smile and the world smiles with you." (When you are happy, you can help make others happy, too.)
- "The world looks brighter from behind a smile." (Smiling can make you feel happier when life seems difficult.)
- "Make your smile change the world, but don't let the world change your smile." (Do what you can to have a positive impact, and remember that things aren't always easy.)
- "You're never fully dressed without a smile." (A smile can be as important as the outfit you choose.)

Activity 1

Don't start reading the article before you have given your students plenty of space to talk about their experiences of customer service. For example: telephone hotlines, shops, hotels, airports, etc.

You could show some video clips of good/bad customerservice, e.g. video clips from Fawlty Towers (www.youtube.com/watch?v=tcliR8kAbzc).

Activity 2

Friendly customer service is the link between Activity 1 and Activity 2. You could discuss how good service influences their shopping and dining choices.

Activity 3

Discuss whether Tim's Place would be possible in your country or whether it is only possible in America. How do the students feel about hugs?

This is a true story and the video clips and newspaper articles are well worth looking at. For instance:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=PNMDrGEmbuw
www.youtube.com/watch?v=gx5eb4Zd7zl&feature=player_detailpage

Tim's Place also has its own website:

<http://timsplaceabq.com/>

Topic Apologizing in different cultures and situations

Aim Summarizing

Warm Up

You could play part of Elton John's song as an introduction.

Activity 1

Explain that apologize can also be written as apologise. More information about this for teachers can be found at www.metadyne.co.uk/ize.html

Text: Student A

Paragraph 2, 2nd line: explain to students that this is supposed to hint at "Actually, it was your fault!" Reference to the wrong kind of leaves is a British joke:

www.chroniclelive.co.uk/news/north-east-news/metro-passengers-right-frustrated-after-6240640

www.arrivatrainswales.co.uk/LeavesontheLine/ or the wrong kind of snow: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_wrong_type_of_snow

Text: Student B

Newspaper text about the Sorry Day speech: www.news.com.au/national/pm-moves-to-heal-the-nation/story-e6frfkw9-111115539560

Watch the video: www.youtube.com/watch?v=e5ShuSkgXx0

On 13 February 2008 the Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd officially apologized to Australia's Indigenous Peoples with specific reference to the Stolen Generations.

Students could also talk about similar policies in other countries where children were removed from families.

Activity 2

Examples: Politician Bill Clinton for his inappropriate relationship with Monica Lewinsky, golfer Tiger Woods for his affairs, cyclist Lance Armstrong for doping.

See 10 top apologies: <http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/0,28757,1913028,00.html>

The British government officially apologized for their Child Migrant policy where young children were shipped to foreign countries like Canada and Australia without parents' agreement.

Film: Oranges and Sunshine

Internet Links: www.childmigrantstrust.com/media-and-books/news-and-archives
<http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/8531664.stm>

Governments apologize for spying, wrong policies, violence, etc.

See the USA Senate's official apology for slavery. www.huffingtonpost.com/russell-simmons/the-healing-has-begunus-s_b_217901.html

On various occasions, popes have officially apologized to Jews, women and children, in fact to everyone who has suffered under the Catholic Church.

Activity 3

Ideally, students should select items of news relevant for the topic of apologizing but this depends what is in the news and may not always be possible.

Topic Customer Service / Suitable for Business English Classes

Aim Vocabulary work

Warm Up

Packing game

Tell your students that you are going on holiday and that some of them can join you if they pack the right items. Students suggest what they will pack and try to guess the connection, but should not share the connection with the class until the teacher ends the game.

Example: Teacher: I'm going on holiday and I'm going to take a beach ball. (Student's name), what will you take?

S1 - I'll take a book. T- Sorry, you can't come.

S2- I'll take a tennis racket. T – Great! You can come, etc.

*(The connection is sport.)

Other connections could be summer clothes, items for a camping holiday, etc.

Activity 1

Ask if anyone has ever been on a mystery trip (or knows someone who has) and could share their experience with the class before reading the text.

If you need extra reading homework or want to have a fun activity for students to use their mobile phones in class, use some of the mystery tour websites on the Internet.

You could get various groups of students each to present an agency offering mystery trips.

www.magical-mystery-tours.com/

www.shearings.com/our-holidays/mystery-breaks

www.magicalmysterytours.com/

You could also play part of the The Beatles song "The magical mystery tour".

www.youtube.com/watch?v=n4_TXuU9ars&index=1&list=PL4E9DE5384C195CB6

Activity 2

After reading the texts, your students can talk about these adverts generally in class or in small groups, before going on to part b.

House swapping: Would your students consider swapping homes, have they done this or do they know someone who has? If they were going to swap houses, what would they have to prepare before going away and what would they expect to find in the exchange house?

Additional activities

Find photographs from travel websites or brochures. Give a different one to each pair of students. They have to decide what type of traveller each trip or location is best suited to and draft an advert that will awaken expectations in the reader. They should then give the advert to another pair to read before showing them the picture. Does the picture match the expectations awakened by the advert?

Alternatively, display all the photos and get the class to guess which photo goes with the advert that is being read out.

Travel sites such as www.lonelyplanet.com or travel review sites such as www.tripadvisor.co.uk can provide many short texts ideal for use in class.

Discussion topic:

What kind of expectations do we have when we read these reviews?

Topic Terrifying experiences

Aim Understanding gist

The CEFR has been simplified in the book. Here is the original wording:

Identifying clues and inferring (Spoken and written)

B2 Can use a variety of strategies to achieve comprehension, including listening for main points; checking comprehension by using contextual clues.

B1 Can identify unfamiliar words from the context on topics related to his/her field and interests.

Can extrapolate the meaning of occasional unknown words from the context and deduce sentence meaning provided the topic discussed is familiar.



Warm up

You can get the students to write their ideas on cards that are then pinned on to a board. You could talk about the ideas that are mentioned the most and about the most unusual suggestions.

Activity 1 and Activity 2

These two texts are challenging because the idea is to help the students realise that they can understand the main gist of a text even if they do not understand every word. Get them to answer the questions and work on the True/False statements without going through the texts and looking at individual words.

Activity 3

Now you can start working with the meanings of various words.

You can add further synonyms for B2 students from the texts. For example:

In the text Synonym

tossed	thrown about
yank	pull
abate	to die away/weaken
crevice	gap/crack
painstaking	doing something carefully

Activity 4

You will need to prepare this activity before the class using the cards printed in the appendix. Tell the students they can add to the statements on the cards and they should try and make the incorrect meanings sound really possible so that the opposite team chooses the wrong option.

When the answer has been identified, make sure the students are aware of the correct form of the word – whether it is a verb or adjective, etc.

Alternatively in a large class, divide the students into groups of three and give each group one word with the explanations. The whole class then has to guess which is the correct meaning. The group which manages to make the most students choose incorrectly wins.

Topic Surprising facts about people and things

Aim Understanding factual texts

Warm up

Before the students start writing, look at the example sentences and give them some additional ideas: unusual hobbies or hidden talents the students might have; exotic pets; unusual things they have eaten; exotic places they've been to; etc.

Don't forget to write down five sentences about yourself and see if the students can guess that it's you!

Activity 1

Part b: To find more examples of surprising facts on the Internet, simply type in "entertaining facts", "fun facts", or "interesting facts".

If you do not have Internet access in class, consider assigning Activity 1b as homework. If the students do not like the three categories suggested in the book, they may also look for surprising facts about places, history, food, movies, etc.

Activity 2

Activity a: This type of activity is typical of telc examinations at levels B1 and B2 and can be used for exam preparation.

Activity b: For further discussion, you can talk about unusual laws in your country.

Activity 3

If you do not have Internet access in class, you might want to bring some additional examples to class. You can easily turn this activity into a game: Write a list of unusual laws on the board and ask the students to guess which country they may be from. You can find plenty of examples on the Internet. Simply type in "weird laws from around the world".

Topic Making decisions

Aim Guessing the meaning of a text

The CEFR has been simplified in the book. Here is the original wording:

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B2 Can use a variety of strategies to achieve comprehension, including listening for main points; checking comprehension by using contextual clues.

B1 Can identify unfamiliar words from the context on topics related to his/her field and interests.
Can extrapolate the meaning of occasional unknown words from the context and deduce sentence meaning provided the topic discussed is familiar.



Warm up

The area of Florida is 170,000 km² and England is 130,000 km².

There are lots of websites about eating spiders in your sleep, for instance:

<http://mentalfloss.com/article/50951/how-many-spiders-do-you-really-swallow-your-sleep>

It is worth surfing on the Internet about this topic!

Number of bones in adult body: 206

Number of bones in hands and feet: 110

Activity 1

Point out the reading tip on the sticky note on page 19. Get the students to do Activity 1 without going into the meaning of individual words.

Discuss why "Strategies for making decisions is the best answer" – because it sums up the content of the text best.

Activity 2

Get your students to work through all of this activity on their own first. They could then compare with a partner before the class discusses the answers. Start going into a more detailed understanding of the text with the students. Identify which sentence is relevant for each part of the exercise.

Activity 3

These are idioms and phrasal verbs. Once the students understand the meaning, get them to write their own sentences using these expressions.

Additional Activity

Discuss the process of decision making as a class. How do your students make decisions? When is it difficult, what helps, what hinders decision making?

Do the students find the text realistic / helpful?

Topic Newspapers

Aim Finding relevant information in newspaper articles

Warm Up

If possible, bring several current English-language newspapers to class, so that the students can work with authentic material. Ask them to look through the newspaper and identify the different sections.

For further discussion: Ask the students whether they prefer reading the newspaper or the online news.

Activity 1

For further practice: Cut up several newspaper articles and headlines (the articles should be short and fairly easy to read). Hand them out to the students and ask them to match the headlines to the articles. Point out that the students do not need to understand every word.

Activity 2

For further practice: You can easily create a similar activity that is specifically tailored to the interests and needs of your students. Collect suitable advertisements and short newspaper or magazine articles. Prior to class, prepare a list of questions about the information in the texts. The number of questions and the level of difficulty can vary, depending on the language proficiency of your students and the time you want to spend on this exercise.

The idea for this activity was taken from <http://busyteacher.org/7198-11-esl-newspapers-activities-classroom.html>. You might want to have a look at this website for further ideas on how to use newspapers in the classroom.

Topic Disappointing experiences

Aim Understanding texts about personal experiences

Warm Up

Additional examples can be found here:
www.buzzfeed.com/stmartinspress/20-brilliant-authors-whose-work-was-initially-rejected

www.onlinecollege.org/2010/02/16/50-famously-successful-people-who-failed-at-first/

Activity 1

Please note: Only the second half of the text has been recorded. The audio script for this part of the text is included in the answer key.

Activity 2

Part b: Point out the explanation for the expression "a blessing in disguise" on the yellow "sticky note". To make sure that the students understand it, ask them to come up with some examples of their own.

Part c: Some students may feel uncomfortable sharing disappointing experiences with their classmates. Remind them that there is no need to talk about life-shattering events. Instead, encourage them to think of small disappointments that led to a pleasant experience. Example: I was disappointed because the shoes that I wanted to buy were not available in my size. A few days later, I found the shoes in my size at a different store, and they were on sale!

Topic Helping Others Forum

Aim Matching questions and answers

Warm Up

- a Collect ideas on the board.
- b Either do this as a class activity or divide up into groups.
- c After the students have mimed the situations you could get them to repeat the exercise, but this time with words. Maybe practise some useful expressions beforehand.

Activity 1

It is a good idea to repeat these words after you have done Activity 2. Get the students to close their books and a) try and remember where the words were used b) make up their own sentences.

Activity 2

This kind of activity is used in the telc dual level exams so can be used as exam practice.

You can get students to work individually or in pairs and help each other. Alternatively you can divide the students into small groups, each group concentrating on finding the answer to one question.

The website mentioned in 2 e) really exists and the cartoon, "The Dragon Story", www.gloriousopportunity.org/thedragonstory.php is a short clip for kids about dealing with grandparents' dementia that you could show to your students.

Activity 3

After working with the texts in Activity 2 you might want to discuss when help can do harm/ when is it better not to help?

Additional Activity

Go to www.ted.com and listen to Ernesto Sirolli's speech on Ted Talks: **Want to help someone? Shut up and listen.**

Why does he talk about hippos? Why does he say financial aid causes damage?

Remember that it is possible to add subtitles to the Ted speeches to help students understand. Since it is quite long, you could just listen to the first part – up until when the hippos eat the tomatoes.

Answers

The hippos eat the tomatoes that were planted. Financial aid should be invested carefully. It is better to find out what the local people need and want and not to just do what works in the western world.

Topic The psychology of gratitude

Aim Increasing reading speed

Warm Up

You could ask the students if they have any similar sayings to the ones given in their own language and if they know any other sayings in English.

Activity 1

This is a difficult text but the students do not need to understand every word. Encourage them to read the text to get the general meaning so that they can talk about the ideas. Ask whether anybody keeps a diary and pre-teach "gratitude journal".

Activity 2

These statements should help the students understand the text better. Lead into Activity 3 by asking what the students think about the idea that being grateful will give you good health.

Activity 3

You could also suggest that students try and keep a "gratitude journal" for a week.

Activity 4

Make sure the students understand why the one word does not fit.

Optional Activity

Here is the link to the YouTube clip:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=smhzRqHkpZs&hd=1

Not everyone will feel happy doing this so, if you don't want to do it in class, it could be an optional homework activity.

Additional ideas

Get the students to browse the web for quotes, pictures, speeches, songs, poems, phrases or stories about gratitude and share with the class in the next lesson.

For B2 students who should be able to talk about more abstract matters, you could ask them to discuss the following quotes:

"Gratitude is the art of turning a difficult moment into a lovely picture." (Kak Sri)

"Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it."
(William Arthur Ward)

Topic Fictional letters from famous people

Aim Reading (& writing) correspondence

Warm Up

Encourage students to talk about letters they have received and sent and to compare the value of a letter now and last century.

Activity 1

Briefly talk about the four people with your students but leave details to be discussed later.

Activity 2

You could divide the students into four groups, asking each group to concentrate on one of the authors. They could use their smart phones to get additional information and then present what they have found out to the rest of the class.

Christopher Columbus

Known as 'the man who discovered America', Columbus was in fact trying to find a westward sea passage to the Orient when he landed in the New World in 1492. This unintentional discovery was to change the course of world history. Go to: www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/columbus_christopher.shtml

or an easy site with fun facts for kids:

www.ducksters.com/biography/explorers/christopher_columbus.php

Helen of Troy

In Greek mythology, Helen of Troy was the most beautiful woman in the world. One of the daughters of the god Zeus, she is best known for the part she played in causing the Trojan War, a story told by Homer in the Iliad and the Odyssey. Go to: www.mythencyclopedia.com/Go-Hi/Helen-of-Troy.html#b

Robin Hood

A heroic outlaw in English folklore. According to legend, he was a highly skilled archer. He is known for taking money from the rich and giving it to the poor, assisted by a group of fellow outlaws known as his Merry Men. Go to: www.robinhood.ltd.uk/robinhood/index.html

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

During his lifetime, Mozart was very well-known but spent money faster than he could earn it. He was poor and in debt when he died of kidney failure at the age of 35 and was buried in an unmarked grave. Mozart is considered by some to be the greatest composer who ever lived. While most composers specialize in certain kinds of pieces, Mozart created masterful works for almost every category of music - vocal music, concertos, chamber music, symphonies, sonatas and opera. Go to: www.dsokids.com/listen/by-composer/wolfgang-amadeus-mozart.aspx

Activity 3

This is a fun activity aimed at recycling some of the words from the letters.

Activity 4

This is also possible as homework.

Optional activity for B2 students

Letter from J.K. Rowling to Sacia Flowers. Read the letter on the website:

www.lettersofnote.com/2011/07/i-will-treasure-your-letter.html

Questions:

How do you think Sacia felt when she received this letter? / What problems did Sacia experience? / What encouragement does the author give?

Topic Superstition

Aim Understanding the main ideas and summarizing

Warm Up

If you have students with different cultural backgrounds in your class, this is a good opportunity to talk about superstitions in different countries. Even though this unit focuses on pessimism and bad luck, feel free to discuss symbols of good luck as well. You can find examples at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_lucky_symbols.

Activity 1

This quiz is primarily meant to be a fun activity, but it also provides an opportunity to teach some less frequent vocabulary (e.g. good luck charm, fortune teller, four-leaf clover, etc.)

For further discussion: Depending on the interests of the students, also consider talking about astrological signs. You could cut out the horoscope section of a current newspaper and bring it to class.

Activity 2

Finding the best headline for a text is a task type that appears in telc examinations at levels B1 and B2. After the students have completed Activity 2a, ask them to explain how they decided on the best headline. If they have problems with this activity, point out that the incorrect options are often either too general or too specific. In this case, the headline "Superstitions and their origins" is too general as the text deals with different aspects of one particular superstition. The headline "Why people fear black cats" only refers to parts of the text; the last two paragraphs are not about fear at all.

Additional topic: Halloween

Bring some pictures of Halloween costumes and decorations with you and teach relevant vocabulary first (e.g. bat, candy (AE) or sweets (BE), coffin, costume, creepy, evil, ghost, ghoul, grave(yard), haunted, jack-o'-lantern, pumpkin, pumpkin carving, skull, skeleton, spooky, tomb, trick or treat, vampire, witch, zombie). Then, provide some information on the origins of Halloween and typical Halloween activities (e.g. trick-or-treating, apple bobbing, pumpkin carving, throwing costume parties, visiting haunted houses).

You can find plenty of material on the Internet, for example:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Halloween> or
www.livescience.com/16677-halloween-superstitions-traditions.html.

Topic Enjoyable holiday experiences, hotel and restaurant reviews

Aim Guessing the meaning of unfamiliar words

Warm Up

You might want to bring some holiday photographs with you and talk about an enjoyable holiday experience of your own first.

Activity 1

For further practice: Collect advertisements for different types of holidays and bring them to class. Practice reading them and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of each type of holiday. Alternatively, assign this as homework and ask your students to look for advertisements on the Internet and bring them to the next lesson.

Activity 2

Review relevant vocabulary to describe places.

Option 1: Write different words on the board (or create a word cloud prior to class) and ask the students to sort the words into the right category: cities or landscapes. Select words that are appropriate to the language level of your students. Here are some examples of possible nouns and adjectives but feel free to use others: mountain range, monument, stream, skyscraper, waterfall, opera house, path, temple, castle, wildlife, memorial, hiking trail, busy, cosmopolitan, peaceful, charming, idyllic, crowded, famous, majestic, picturesque, medieval

Option 2: Write the adjectives on the left side of the board and the nouns on the right side. Ask the students to find matching nouns and adjectives.

Activity 3

For further practice: Draw the students' attention to the information on the yellow "sticky note" and discuss different examples of false friends in class. If you'd prefer to do some research beforehand and bring some examples to class, you can find false friends glossaries and quizzes on the Internet. Simply go to the Wikipedia entry "false friend" (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/False_friend) and then follow the links.

Topic Immigration

Aim Improving reading efficiency

Warm Up

Consider bringing a dictionary entry of the word "alien" to class and discuss the different meanings.

Additional warm up activity

Think of as many situations as possible where you might actually see the word "Welcome". Examples:

- on a mat before the front entrance of a home
- on a hotel television screen when you enter the room for the first time ...

Activity 1

The students can work on this activity individually or in pairs. After they have completed Activity 1a, check the answers in class. After they have completed Activity 1b, ask the students to listen to the texts on the audio CD first and see if they wish to make any changes to their answers. Then compare in class.

Activity 2

Depending on the interests of your students, consider creating a cookbook that contains your students' favourite recipes as well as some personal stories.

Additional activity

The British immigration test

Most countries require immigrants to take a test before they can become citizens. The British immigration test focuses on history and achievements. Look at a few sample questions and talk about them in class.

Examples:

1. Which landmark is a prehistoric monument which still stands in the English county of Wiltshire?
Stonehenge Hadrian's Wall Fountains Abbey
2. What flower is traditionally worn by people on Remembrance Day?
Poppy Daffodil Iris
3. From what age can you be asked to serve on a jury?
18 21 26

For further discussion: Do you think citizenship tests are a useful guide as to who makes the best citizens? Think of a few questions that you could contribute to a citizenship test for your country. Write them down and test them on your fellow participants.

Topic Formal and informal emails / Suitable for Business English classes

Aim Identifying the appropriate register

The CEFR has been simplified in the book. Here is the original wording:

Sociolinguistic appropriateness

B2 Can express him or herself confidently, clearly and politely in a formal or informal register, appropriate to the situation and person(s) concerned.

B1 Is aware of the salient politeness conventions and acts appropriately.



Warm Up

Happy Birthday
Happy New Year
Happy Anniversary
Happy Christmas
Happy Easter
Happy Thanksgiving
Many Happy Returns
Happy Mother's Day
Happy Father's Day

Happy St Patrick's Day
Happy Valentine's Day
Happy Diwali (the biggest Hindu Festival)
Happy Hanukkah (Jewish Festival)
Happy Ramadan (Muslim's month of fasting)
Happy Eid
(traditional Muslim greeting for festivals)
Happy Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year)

You might want to make this a time-limited exercise, and then students compete to see who can get the most in the time allowed. You could also play an excerpt from a song about such occasions: Abba: Happy New Year or Stevie Wonder: Happy Birthday

Extra Activity

Write some famous British/American etc. celebrations and dates/symbols/colours on the board. Students have to match the celebrations with the clues.

Activity 1

Suggested introduction to this exercise – ask students how many emails they get daily in their personal account/work account (if adults). Ask how many emails are really necessary.

Activity 2

You could lead into the exercise on register by writing on the board the possible openings: Dear Sir or Madam, Hello Steve, and Yo! Then elicit what is the difference between them.

Activity 3

In introducing this activity, make sure that the students know that only one of the three answers fits grammatically, as well as being in the right register.

Pre-teach: resumed, application, to drop someone a line, resident, retail.

Activity 4

If possible, introduce this by giving students an example of your own of when you got an email, letter or text that made you happy.

Additional Activity

You can get your students to look at this Internet site which gives lots of examples of formal and informal English:

www.antimoon.com/how/formal-informal-english.htm

Topic People losing their homes because of natural disasters

Aim Understanding newspaper articles

Warm Up

Part a: The students might bring up some “hot topics” such as wars, social conflicts, religious persecution or political instability. If you prefer to avoid controversial discussions, simply ask the students to list a few examples as suggested in the book and move on to the next activity. If you want to encourage your students to discuss controversial issues further, consider reading up on strategies for “Managing Hot Moments in the Classroom” by Lee Warren, Derek Bok Center: <http://isites.harvard.edu/fs/html/icb.topic58474/hotmoments.html>

Activity 1

After the students have completed Activity 1a and Activity 1b, draw their attention to the information on the yellow sticky note. If you have Internet access in class, show your students an example website (e.g. www.newslevels.com/#) and explain what type of information can be found there. If you do not have Internet access, encourage the students to explore the website at home. You could, for example, suggest a specific topic (e.g. earthquakes) and ask the students to look for headlines containing the word “earthquake”. Alternatively, ask the students to bring three examples of latest news headlines to class.

Activity 2

For further discussion: Consider talking about storm chasers and watch a video clip in class. You can find further information at <http://science.howstuffworks.com/nature/climate-weather/storms/storm-chaser5.htm>.
Video clip:
www.discovery.com/tv-shows/storm-chasers.

Activity 3

Consider reviewing some additional vocabulary about natural disasters and the weather.

Ask the students to work together in small groups. Give each group a set of vocabulary cards which you have prepared prior to class. Place the cards face down on the table. One student takes a card and reads out the vocabulary word on the card. The other students try to guess its meaning. The student who guesses the word first, gets to keep the card.

Possible vocabulary words: fog, hail, blizzard, thunder, lightning, tornado, avalanche, earthquake, flood, bushfire, sandstorm, ice, rain, cloud, tsunami, volcano, twister

Activity 4

Alternatively, feel free to talk about severe weather events in your area (e.g. an unusually cold winter, a heat wave in the summer, a severe thunderstorm).

Possible homework assignment: Ask the students to look for one additional newspaper article (in easy English), either about a current event or another natural disaster. Ask them to bring the article to the next lesson and briefly summarize (either orally or in writing) what it is about.

Topic Laughter is the best medicine!

Aim Reading for information

Warm Up

Encourage the students to speculate about the picture. Perhaps the person on the left was sad or upset and the other told them a joke or a funny story. Ask the students about how we use humour to cheer people up. Why does laughing make us feel better about life? Ask the students to share their ideas with the class. Maybe you have a personal experience to share.

Why is laughter infectious? You could play the students the 'Laughing Policeman' and see how long it takes them to crack a smile.

(www.youtube.com/watch?v=hl1nPd7hezM)

Activity 1

Part a: The students should be able to identify 'laughter is the best medicine' as an idiom and probably they will understand that it means that having a good time is better for your health than taking medicine. If not, help them.

Part b: Explain to the students that skimming the text means they should just look through it quickly and not read it in detail. After skimming, ask the students what evidence they have to support their answer. Refer them to the yellow "sticky note" on the next page.

Activity 2

This can be used as a B2 task by getting your students to talk about abstract questions.

After completing the tasks, ask the students what they think about the article. Do they agree with Dr. Kataria that societal pressure makes adults reluctant to laugh? Do they laugh more than 15 times a day? Do they think the concept of laughter yoga would work for them? What do they think about the idea of laughter yoga having positive physical effects on illness?

Activity 3

This activity allows students to analyse the writer's intentions in writing the article. The questions are a subset of the P.I.E.S. principle (Authors' Strategy: Persuade, Inform, Entertain, Share). English texts are often implicit in their meaning and as students begin to read more complex texts, they need to be able to recognise inferred meaning and purpose. Ask them to point out aspects of the text that lead them to their conclusions about the writer and the text.

Encourage the students to ask these questions of all the texts they read. You could also ask them to bring an article to the next class and use P.I.E.S. to analyse the writer's viewpoint.

Extra activities

Laughter Clubs exist all over the world so students could use the website link to find a club in their local area or to read testimonials from laughter yoga enthusiasts. For more information about Laughter Yoga: www.laughteryoga.org/english.

Using the 'Free Dictionary' link below, ask students to choose one or two idioms they like the sound of and then give examples of how and when we might use the expressions.

<http://idioms.thefreedictionary.com/laugh>

Topic Road rage, aggressive driving

Aim Understanding factual texts

Warm Up

Students who do not have a car can talk about the driving behaviour of a person they know well instead.

Activity 1

You might also want to review some more general vocabulary related to cars and driving (e.g. lane, vehicle, parking space, traffic jam, pedestrian, license plate, speed limit, intersection (AE) / cross-roads (BE), to avoid an accident, to change lanes, to hit a car, to overtake a car, to pass a car, reduced speed, etc.). Point out the differences between British and American English. You can find a few examples in Listening, Unit 13 Activity 2.

Activity 2

If your students are interested in cars and driving, consider discussing the topic further. Here are some ideas: Do you think the car a person drives says something about his/her personality? Why do people care so much about their car? Do you think the world would be a better place without cars?

Topic Things from the past

Aim Finding information in newspaper advertisements

Warm Up

For further discussion: Where do you store used items that you no longer need or use? How do you decide what you want to keep and what you want to get rid off? What do you do with the things that you do not want to keep? Do you throw them away? Sell them? Give them away?

Activity 1

Bring some items to class (e.g. an old leather bag, a postcard, a piece of jewellery, an old toy) and ask the students to describe them after they have finished Activity 1a and Activity 1b. Ideally, they should be able to use some of the words from Activity 1.

Activity 2

This task type is typical of telc English examinations at levels B1 and B2 and can be used for exam preparation.

Activity 3

For further practice: Give students other words for flea markets (e.g. car-boot sale, jumble sale, garage sale, yard sale) and brainstorm the kind of things that people buy and sell at flea markets or jumble sales (antiques, toys and games, children's clothes, kitchen utensils, etc.). Then discuss the following questions in class: Do you ever go to flea markets or antique markets? Do you go looking for anything specific or just to browse around? Are you good at bargaining?

Additional activity

bargaining

Role play buying and selling items at a flea market. Students take it in turns to write a short list on the board of the items "on their stand". Alternatively they can use items on their desk, in their bag or in the room. The other students take it in turns to bargain for one or two of the items. Example: How much do you want for the silver watch? Oh, it's very rare I want £50.00 for it. Oh, no, that's too expensive. How about £25.00? etc.

Before you start, brainstorm vocabulary and phrases for bargaining.

Creatively written by an international team of English language professionals and brought to life by telc, *English Practice Material – vhs* is a four-part series, using a fresh, flexible and practical approach. The parts are: Reading, Writing, Listening and Speaking.

Targeted at adult learners with upper B1 / lower B2 competence, each unit is based on a human emotion. A variety of aspects of each emotion are covered in a number of communicative situations. Learners are encouraged to compare and discuss their own experiences and emotional responses, thus covering all typical competencies of the Council of Europe's *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) levels B1 and B2. This material is designed in a way that provides immediate access for both teachers and learners. All the activities are clear and self-explanatory and there are plenty of opportunities for individual or group work, role-plays, interviews, debates and discussions.

Like building blocks, the material can be used together either comprehensively or individually in a workshop or short course. The units can also be used flexibly to supplement other teaching material. Most importantly, a variety of tasks typically found in telc examinations are featured, making this series excellent preparation for a telc language test.