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На английском языке

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Настоящее учебно-методическое пособие нацелено на формирование, развитие и тренировку коммуникативных навыков. В пособии представлены устные темы и вопросы для обсуждения, направленные на подготовку обучающихся к межкультурному взаимодействию и активизирующие их творческую деятельность. Материал пособия может быть использован для аудиторной и самостоятельной работы по дисциплинам «Иностранный язык», «Практика устной и письменной речи», «Практический курс английского языка».

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Пояснительная записка

Владение иностранным языком предполагает умение читать, строить собственное высказывание, воспринимать речь собеседника. Данное учебно-методическое пособие нацелено на формирование, развитие и тренировку коммуникативных навыков студентов. В пособии представлено 20 устных тем.

Особое внимание уделено вопросам для обсуждения на английском языке, представленным в каждой теме. Этот вид упражнений является эффективным средством закрепления и контроля усвоения пройденного материала, а также позволяет развивать умение правильно оформлять мысль на иностранном языке. Таким образом, данные задания могут использоваться для развития навыков устной и письменной речи.

Материал пособия может быть использован для аудиторной и самостоятельной работы студентов по дисциплинам «Иностранный язык», «Практический курс английского языка» и «Практика устной и письменной речи».

1 Family

1. Describe someone in your family who you like.

You should say:

How this person is related to you;

What this person looks like;

What kind of person he/she is and explain why you like this person.



Discussion questions

Family similarities

In what ways can people in a family be similar to each other?

Do you think that daughters are always more similar to mothers than to male relatives? What about sons and fathers?

In terms of personality, are people more influenced by their family or by their friends? In what ways?

Genetic research

Where can people in your country get information about genetic research?

How do people in your country feel about genetic research?

Should this research be funded by governments or private companies? Why?

2. Describe an elderly person in your family who you enjoy talking to.

You should say:

Who the person is;

What he/she is like;

How often you see him/her and explain why you enjoy talking to this person.



Discussion questions

Elderly people living with their families

In your country, do most grandparents live in the same house as their children and grandchildren? Why (not)?

What are the advantages and disadvantages for grandparents of living in the same house as their children and grandchildren?

Retirement

Do you think some people retire from their jobs too early?

Why do you think some people feel unhappy when they first retire from work?

What types of hobby do people enjoy doing after they have retired from work?

Old age in the future

What kinds of problem can be caused when the proportion of elderly people in a country keeps rising?

In what ways might the lives of elderly people be different in the future?

3. Describe someone who influenced you when you were a child.

You should say:

Who the person was;

What kind of person he/she was;

What your relationship was like and explain how he/she influenced you.



Discussion questions

Upbringing

Do children nowadays have too many toys, electronic games and so on?

Do parents give their children toys instead of paying attention to them?

How have approaches to upbringing changed over the last 100 years?

Is it the responsibility of schools or parents to teach children how to behave well?

Do you think attitudes to bringing up children differ in different parts of the world?

Growing up

What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of having siblings, compared to being an only child?

How important is it for children to spend time with their peers?

What is a bigger influence: family or friends?

4. Describe a family event you are looking forward to.

You should say:

What the event is;

When and where it will be held;

What you will do at this event and explain why you are looking forward to this event.

Discussion questions

Family celebrations

What type of occasions are usually celebrated in your country?

How important is it for families to celebrate occasions together? Why?

Are family occasions as important today as they were for previous generations?

Recent social changes

How has the role of elderly people changed in recent times?

Who has more power and influence in the family today, young people or grandparents?

What are the advantages and disadvantages for grandparents of living in the same house as their children and grandchildren?

In what ways might the lives of elderly people be different in the future?

5. Describe a memorable event in your life.

You should say:

When the event took place;

Where the event took place;

What happened exactly and explain why this event was memorable for you.

Discussion questions

The role of ceremony in our lives

How important are ceremonies in our lives?

Do you see the role of private and public ceremonies changing in the future?

Attitudes to marriage in your country

Have attitudes to marriage changed in recent years?

In what ways do men and women feel differently about marriage, do you think?

Events of national/global significance

What sort of national events make headlines in your country?

Do the media in your country pay more attention to national or global events?

6. Describe a special gift or present you gave someone.

You should say:

Who you gave the gift to;

What the gift was;

Where you got it from and explain why this gift was special.



7. Describe a present that someone gave you which you liked a lot.

You should say:

What the present was;

Who gave it to you;

Why the person gave you the present and explain why you liked that present a lot.

Discussion questions

Giving gifts in families

On what occasions do family members give gifts to each other?

Is giving gifts important in families?

How important is it to wrap presents in an attractive way?

Do people who receive a present open it straight away, or do they open it later? Why?

Gift-giving in society

On what occasions do people in your country usually give presents?

What situations in business are there when people might give gifts?

How important is gift-giving for a country's economy?

Do you feel the commercialization of gift-giving, e.g. Christmas in certain countries, has gone too far?

2 Friends

1. Describe one of your friends.

You should say:

What he/she looks like;

What kind of person he/she is;

How long you have known each other;

How you spend time together and explain why you like this person.



Discussion questions

Qualities of friends

What do you think are the most important qualities for friends to have?

Which are more important to people, their family or their friends? Why?

What do you think causes friendships to break up?

Other relationships

What other types of relationship, apart from friends or family, are important in people's lives today?

Have relationships with neighbours where you live changed in recent years? How?

How important do you think it is for a person to spend some time alone? Why/Why not?

2. Describe someone you met recently and liked.

You should say:

Who this person is;

What you were doing at the time;

How you met him/her and explain why you liked this person.

Discussion questions

First impressions

How important are first impressions?

Some people believe that it only takes two minutes to form an impression. Would you agree?

What factors influence our impression of someone we have just met?

Judging by appearance

Is it true that people are judged by appearance?

What are the drawbacks of doing so?

Are there any benefits?

How important is attractive appearance for success?

3. Describe a friend of your family you remember from your childhood.

You should say:

Who the person was;

How your family knew this person;

How often this person visited your family and explain why you remember this person.

Discussion questions

Friendship

What do you think makes someone a good friend to a whole family?

Do you think we meet different kinds of friend at different stages of our lives? In what ways are these types of friend different?

How easy is it to make friends with people from a different age group?

Influence of friends

Do you think it is possible to be friends with someone if you never meet them in person? Is this real friendship?

What kind of influence can friends have on our lives?

How important would you say it is to have friends from different cultures?

3 Hobbies and free time

1. Describe an interest or hobby that you enjoy.

You should say:

How you became interested in it;

How long you have been doing it;

Why you enjoy it and explain what benefits you get from this hobby or interest.



Discussion questions

The social benefits of hobbies

Do you think having a hobby is good for people's social life? In what ways?

Are there any negative effects of a person spending too much time on their hobby? What are they?

Why do you think people need to have a hobby or an interest?

Leisure time

In your country, how much time do people spend on work and how much time on leisure? Is this a good balance, do you think?

Would you say the amount of free time has changed much in the last fifty years?

Do you think people will have more or less free time in the future? Why?

2. Describe something you did that was new or exciting.

You should say:

What you did;

Where and when you did this;

Who you shared the activity with and explain why this activity was new or exciting for you.

Discussion questions

Doing new things

Why do you think some people like doing new things?

What problems can people have when they try new activities for the first time?

Do you think it's best to do new things on your own or with other people? Why?

Learning new things

What kinds of things do children learn to do when they are very young? How important are these things?

Do you think children and adults learn to do new things in the same way? How is their learning style different?

Some people say that it is more important to be able to learn new things now than it was in the past. Do you agree or disagree with that? Why?

4 Housing

1. Describe a room in your house/apartment which you like best.

You should say:

Where the room is;

What it is used for;

What it looks like and explain why you like this room best.



Discussion questions

Rooms in general

Which room do families usually spend most time in? Why?

What types of thing do people put on the walls of their rooms?

Is it more important for a room to look nice, or to be comfortable? Why?

What are the advantages and disadvantages of living in a house compared to living in a flat?

Interior design

How can different room colors affect the way people feel?

What is modern furniture like compared to older styles of furniture?

Do you think women are more interested than men in the way rooms are decorated?

Technology and housework

What kinds of machine are used for housework in modern homes in your country?

How have these machines benefited people? Are there any negative effects of using them?

Do you think all new homes will be equipped with household machines in the future? Why?

2. Describe a place that has a special meaning to you.

You should say:

What kind of place it is and where it is;

What it looks like;

What sounds you associate with it and explain why you particularly like this place.

Discussion questions

Leaving the family home

Why do many people leave home when they are still quite young?

What personal qualities are required for a young person to live on their own?

Moving from place to place

In many countries there has been large-scale migration from the countryside to the cities. Do you think this is positive or negative?

Do you think the possibility of working from home via the Internet will lead to many people going back to the countryside?

Growing cities

In what ways do the new megacities of Asia, Africa and South America differ from older ones such as London or New York?

Should there be a limit on the size of cities?

3. Describe an occasion when you were a guest in someone's house.

You should say:

Why you went to that person's home;

What you did while you were there;

How that person behaved towards you and explain how you felt about being a guest.

Discussion questions

Being a good guest

What qualities make someone a good guest? What qualities make someone a good host?

Do guests bring a gift when they visit someone's home in your country?

Should guests follow the rules accepted in the host's home?

Do people visit friends less than in the past? Why is this?

Visiting other countries

How important is it for tourists to find out more about the country they are going to visit?

What problems might there be if tourists do not know the rules of the host community?

What can people in the host community do to make tourists feel welcome?

5 Daily programme

1. Describe a typical day at school, university or work.

You should say:

What you do;

When you do it;

How long you've had this routine and explain what you would like to change in your work or study routine.

Discussion questions

How people feel about routines

Do young people and old people have different attitudes to routines where you live?

What are the benefits and drawbacks of having a daily routine?

Choice of routines

What factors influence most people's daily routines?

Do you think people get enough choice in their daily routines?

Why (not)?

Changes in routines

How are work or study schedules today different from those in the past? Why?

Is this a positive or negative development? Why?

How do you think people's routines and schedules will change in the future?

2. Describe a typical day in your life when you were in your early teens.

You should say:

What you did;

Who you spent time with;

How you felt about the things you had to do and explain what was the best and worst part of the day for you.

Discussion questions

Being a teenager

What are some of the difficulties associated with teenage years? What are some of the benefits?

Do teenagers have more independence in your country than they used to?

Who are the role models for teenagers in your country? Do you think they are good ones?

Family relationships

What causes the most arguments between parents and teenagers?

In what way is the relationship between parents and teenagers differ from the relationship between parents and younger children?

Should teenagers be treated like adults?

6 Meals

1. Describe a traditional meal in your country.

You should say:

What the meal is;

How it is prepared;

When it is usually eaten;

What, if any, is the significance of the meal and explain whether you enjoy the traditional food of your country.

Discussion questions

Healthy eating

What foods do you consider are good for you? Why?

What kind of things do people eat that are bad for them?

Why do you think people eat such things, if they are not good for them?

Eating habits

How do you think people's eating habits have changed over the years?

How could people's eating habits be improved?

Why do you think people are concerned about chemicals and other additives in their food?

2. Describe a restaurant that you enjoyed going to.

You should say:

Where the restaurant was;

Why you chose this restaurant;

What type of food you ate in this restaurant and explain why you enjoyed eating in this restaurant.

Discussion questions

Restaurants

Why do you think people go to restaurants when they want to celebrate something?

Which are more popular in your country: fast food restaurants or traditional restaurants?

Why do you think that is?

Some people say that food in an expensive restaurant is always better than food in a cheap restaurant – would you agree?

Producing food

Do you think there will be a greater choice of food available in shops in the future, or will there be less choice?

What effects has modern technology had on the way food is produced?

How important is it for a country to be able to grow all the food it needs, without importing any from other countries?

7 Study

1. Describe your university.

You should say:

- What university you study at;
- Where the university is situated;
- When was it founded;
- What year you are in;
- What subjects you study.



Discussion questions

- What is your future profession?
- What must a good teacher pay attention to?
- Can you name the problems of upbringing?
- What is your favourite subject?
- Where are you going to work after University?

2. Describe an idea you had for improving something at university or work.

You should say:

- When and where you had your idea;
- What your idea was;
- Who you told about your idea and explain why you thought your idea would make an improvement.

Discussion questions

Ideas and education

Some people think that education should be about memorising the important ideas of the past. Do you agree or disagree? Why?

Should education encourage students to have their own new ideas? Why?

How do you think teachers could help students to develop and share their own ideas?

Ideas in the workplace

Should employers encourage their workers to have new ideas about improving the company? Why?

Do you think people sometimes dislike ideas just because they are new? Why?

What is more difficult: having new ideas or putting them into practice? Which is more important for a successful company?

3. Describe a teacher who has influenced you in your education.

You should say:

Where you met he/she;

What subject he/she taught;

What was special about him/her and explain why this person influenced you so much.

Discussion questions

Developments in education

How has education changed in your country in the last 10 years?

What changes do you foresee in the next 50 years?

How do the expectations of today's school leavers compare with those of the previous generation?

What role do you think extracurricular activities play in education?

Different styles/methods of teaching and learning

What method of learning works best for you?

How beneficial do you think it is to group students according to their level of ability?

Competitions in school

Why do you think some school teachers use competitions as class activities?

Do you think it is a good thing to give prizes to children who do well at school? Why?

Would you say that schools for young children have become more or less competitive since you were that age? Why?

8 Careers

1. Describe a job or career that you have, or hope to have.

You should say:

What the job is;

What it involves;

Why you chose it and explain whether it is rewarding.

Discussion questions

Work

What do most people consider as important when deciding on a job or career?

A lot of people work too hard these days. What are the effects of this?

How could the problems of overworking be avoided?

Retirement

At what age do you think people should retire from work?

Do you think this should be the same for all jobs?

Technologies in the workplace

What kinds of equipment do most workers need to use in offices today?

How have developments in technology affected employment in your country?

Some people think that technology has brought more stress than benefits to employed people nowadays. Would you agree or disagree? Why?

What further changes in the way people work do you think we will see in the future?

2. Describe a job that you have done.

You should say:

How you got the job;

What the job involved;

How long the job lasted and explain how well you did the job.

Discussion questions

Young people working

What are the advantages and disadvantages for young people of being involved in some kind of work?

What jobs and types of employment are more suitable for young people? Why is this?

Should young people be free to choose a career for themselves, or should parents do this?

Choosing a career

When do you think is the right time to choose a career?

What factors influence one's choice of a career or job?

In the past, people used to have one career. Nowadays, however, they tend to change jobs and even careers several times during their life. Do you think this is a positive change?

Staff motivation

What methods of staff motivation do employers use? Are they effective?

Are there better ways to motivate employees?

9 Clothes

1. Describe your favorite style of dress.

You should say:

What kind of clothes you like to wear;

What fabrics and colors you prefer;

What (or who) influences you in your choice of clothes and explain whether clothes are important to you or not.



Discussion questions

Uniforms and dress code

Do you think it is a good idea to have formal dress-code at work? Why (not)?

What do you think of school uniforms? Are they a good idea?

Judging by appearance

Is it true that people are judged by appearance?

What are the drawbacks of doing so?

Are there any benefits?

How much can you say about a person judging by the clothes they wear? How accurate can those judgements be?

Fashion

Do young people and old people feel the same about fashion?

Why is this?

Do you think the fashion industry has a bad influence on young people?

10 Shopping

1. Describe an open-air or street market which you enjoyed visiting.

You should say:

Where the market is;

What the market sells;

How big the market is and explain why you enjoyed visiting this market.



Discussion questions

Shopping at markets

Do people in your country enjoy going to open-air markets that sell things like food or clothes or old objects? Which type of market is more popular? Why?

Do you think markets are more suitable places for selling certain types of things? Which ones? Why do you think this is?

Do you think young people feel the same about shopping at markets as older people? Why is that?

Shopping in general

What do you think are the advantages of buying things from shops rather than markets?

How does advertising influence what people choose to buy? Is this true for everyone?

Do you think that any recent changes in the way people live have affected general shopping habits? Why is this?

The internet and shopping

Why do you think some people use the Internet for shopping?
Why doesn't everyone use it in this way?

What kinds of things are easy to buy and sell online?

Do you think shopping on the internet will be more or less popular in the future? Why?

2. Describe something you own which is very important to you.

You should say:

Where you got it from;

How long you have had it;

What you use it for and explain why it is so important to you.

Discussion questions

How values can change

What kind of possessions show status in your country?

Do you think it was different for your grandparents?

The consumer society

Modern society is often called 'materialistic'. Why do you think this is?

Do you think consumerism is a positive or a negative development?

The consumer market

What is the role of advertising?

How do you think the Internet will affect buying patterns in the future?

11 Travelling

1. Describe an interesting place that you have visited as a tourist.

You should say:

Where this place is;

Why you went there;

What you did there and explain why you thought this place was so interesting.



Discussion questions

Places that tourists visit

What areas of a town or city do tourists often like to visit?

How important is it for local governments to look after popular tourist attractions?

Should people pay to visit attractions such as museums and galleries? Why (not)?

Being a tourist

How should tourists behave when they are in a different country?

What can local people do to help tourists enjoy their visit?

What can tourists learn from visiting new places?

2. Describe an interesting historic place.

You should say:

What it is;

Where it is located;

What you can see there now and explain why this place is interesting.

Discussion questions

Looking after historic places

How do people in your country feel about protecting historic buildings?

Do you think an area can benefit from having an interesting historic place locally? In what way?

What do you think will happen to historic places or buildings in the future? Why?

The teaching of history at school

How were you taught history when you were at school?

Are there other ways people can learn about history, apart from at school? How?

Do you think history will still be a school subject in the future? Why?

3. Describe a journey [e.g. by car, plane, boat] that you remember well.

You should say:

Where you went;

How you travelled;

Why you went on the journey and explain why you remember this journey well.

Discussion questions

The effects of tourism

How can tourism benefit local people and places?

Are there any drawbacks of tourism?

Does tourism help to promote international understanding?

How?

Reasons for daily travel

Why do people need to travel every day?

What problems can people have when they are on their daily journey, for example to work or school? Why is this?

Some people say that daily journeys like these will not be so common in the future. Do you agree or disagree? Why?

Benefits of international travel

What do you think people can learn from travelling to other countries? Why?

Can travel make a positive difference to the economy of a country? How?

Do you think a society can benefit if its members have experience of travelling to other countries? In what ways?

4. Describe a part of the world you would like to visit.

You should say:

Where it is;

How and what you know about it;

What you would like to do there and explain why you would like to visit this part of the world.

Discussion questions

International tourism

Why do you think people want to visit other countries?

What makes some places attractive to tourists?

Some people say it's important to find out some information about another country before visiting it. Do you agree?

How useful is it for people to understand the language of the country they visit?

Do people travel abroad more or less than in the past? Why (not)?

Will international tourism increase or decrease in the future?

TV programs about other places

What kinds of TV programs about other places are popular in your country?

Can people learn more about geography from TV than they can from books? Why (not)?

Do you think TV programs about different places encourage people to travel themselves? Why (not)?

12 Transport

1. Describe a transport problem in your town or city.

You should say:

What the problem is;

What the causes are;

How it affects you and explain how you think it might be solved.



Discussion questions

Private cars

Do you think everyone has the right to have their own private transport?

What do you think the effects would be if everybody had their own car?

What measures, if any, should the government take to restrict the use of private cars?

Transport systems

How have transport systems changed in the last 50 years?

Have these been positive or negative developments?

What kind of transport systems do you think might be developed in the future?

2. Describe your journey to school or work.

You should say:

What forms of transport are involved;

How long it takes;

Whether it is enjoyable or not and explain how you would make your journey more pleasant if you could.

Discussion questions

Commuting to work/school

Do you think getting to work is easier or more difficult than it used to be?

What are the effects of daily commuting on people?

Some people think that a lot of problems can be solved by reducing the need for people to travel to work/school. Would you agree?

Transport problems

How have methods of transport changed?

Are there any problems that have been created by new transport systems?

How can these problems be solved?

13 Entertainment

1. Describe a film or a TV program which has made a strong impression on you.

You should say:

What kind of film or a TV program it was;

When you saw the film or TV program;

What the film or TV program was about and explain why this film or TV program made such an impression on you.



Discussion questions

People's cinema-going habits nowadays

Do you think the cinema has increased or decreased in popularity in recent years?

In your opinion, will this trend continue into the future?

Making a film or TV drama of real/fictional events

What are the advantages and disadvantages of making films of real-life events?

How important do you think it is for a film-maker to remain true to the original story?

Censorship and the freedom of the film-maker/TV producer

Should films and television be censored or should we be free to choose what to see?

How do you think censorship laws will change in the next 20 years?

2. Describe a TV series which you enjoy watching.

You should say:

What the series is about;

Who presents it/acts in it;

How often it is on and explain why you enjoy watching the series so much.

Discussion questions

Foreign TV programs

What kind of foreign TV programs are popular in your country?

What are the advantages of having foreign-made programs on TV?

Some people think governments should control the number of foreign-made TV programs being shown. Do you agree? Why?

Children and TV

What do you think are the qualities of a good children's TV program?

What are the educational benefits of children watching TV?

Many people think adults should influence what children watch. Do you agree? Why?

Changes in the media

What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of having TV broadcast 24 hours a day?

In what ways have advances in technology influenced the way people watch TV?

What changes do you think will occur in broadcast media in the next 20 years?

3. Describe a TV or radio program you enjoyed when you were a child.

You should say:

What the program was about;

When it was on;

Where you watched or listened to it and explain why you enjoyed this program.

Discussion questions

TV and radio in your country

In your country, which do people prefer: watching TV or listening to radio? Why?

What kind of programs are most popular?

Do men and women tend to like the same kind of programs? Why (not)?

The effects of TV

Some people think that watching TV can be a negative influence. Would you agree?

What benefits can TV bring people?

What priorities do you think TV stations should have?

Developments in interactive TV

What kind of interactive programs are there in your country?

Are these a good or a bad development? Why?

What kind of programs will there be in the future, do you think?

4. Describe a song or a piece of music you like.

You should say:

What the song or music is;

What kind of song or music it is;

Where you first heard it and explain why you like it.



Discussion questions

Music and young people

What kinds of music are popular with young people in your culture?

What do you think influences a young person's taste in music?

Music and society

How important is it for a culture to have musical traditions?

Why do you think countries have national anthems or songs?

Music and technology

How has technology affected the way we make, play and listen to music?

Do you think these are positive developments?

5. Describe a music video or a concert that has made an impression on you.

You should say:

Which kind of music it was and who performed it;

What it was like musically;

What it was like visually and explain why you liked or disliked it.

Discussion questions

Music in the world

Why is pop music so popular globally?

Which do you prefer: traditional music from your country or classical music from abroad?

The psychology of music

How do different kinds of music affect the way people feel?

What is the best music to listen to while studying?

Changes in music

What are the main differences between music today and that of previous decades?

Which contributes more to the success of modern singers and bands: their music, or their appearance and image? Why do you think so?

What kinds of music will people be listening to in ten years?

6. Describe a book that has influenced you.

You should say:

What the book was about;

Why you read it;

How the writer made it interesting and explain why this book influenced you.



Discussion questions

Reading

What kind of books are popular in your country?

Why do people read?

How important is reading?

Libraries

What is the role of libraries?

How should they be funded, by the government, private companies or citizens?

What can be done to make libraries more popular?

Books and technologies

How have modern technologies influenced people's reading habits?

Some people believe that with the growing popularity of the Internet, books will soon become unnecessary. Would you agree?

What can be done to encourage people to read more?

7. Describe a newspaper or magazine article that you found interesting.

You should say:

What it was about;

Where you read it;

How it made you feel and explain why you found this article interesting.

Discussion questions

Mass-media coverage

What sort of national events make headlines in your country?

Do the media in your country pay more attention to national or global events?

Are the media biased in any way?

The media and technologies

How have modern technologies changed the media?

Some people believe that the development of technologies makes traditional media redundant. Would you agree?

8. Describe an interesting story that you heard or read about in the news.

You should say:

When you heard or read about the story;

What the story was about;

Why the story was in the news and explain why you thought the story was interesting.

Discussion questions

Reading newspapers

When do people like to read the newspaper?

How important is it for people to have a choice of newspaper?

What does a 'good' newspaper contain?

The future of newspapers

Why do some people choose to read the news on the Internet rather than in a newspaper?

How is Internet news different from the news you read in the newspaper?

Will Internet news ever replace newspapers? Why (not)?

14 Culture and arts

1. Describe a museum or art gallery that you have visited.

You should say:

Where it is;

Why you went there;

What you particularly remember about it
and explain why it impressed you so much.



Discussion questions

The role of museums

What role do museums and art galleries play in our society?

How could this role change in the future?

What functions do they serve?

What can be done to make museums more interesting to the public?

Other forms of art and technologies

What other forms of art, besides traditional museum art, are appreciated today?

Would you say graffiti is a form of art or an act of vandalism?

How are modern technologies changing traditional museums?

2. Describe an outstanding building in your town/city.

You should say:

What the building is;

What it looks like;

Where it is located and explain why you think it is impressive.

Discussion questions

Protecting historic buildings

How do people in your country feel about protecting important historic buildings?

What can be done to protect them?

Who should be responsible for protecting historic buildings?

Should it be governments, citizens, charities or businesses? Why?

City living

How have cities changed in the last 100 years?

What are the advantages of living in a city compared to the countryside?

What are some of the most serious urban problems where you live?

What can be done to make living in cities more enjoyable?

3. Describe a photograph you have taken which is important to you.

You should say:

What the picture shows;

When and why you took it;

Where you keep it and explain what is special about it.

Discussion questions

Photography

Would you say that photography is a form of art?

Is photography becoming more or less popular these days, in your experience? Why do you think this is?

Why do you think image sharing services, such as Instagram, have become so popular nowadays?

Images

Some people believe that the written word is losing its importance, and images are becoming more powerful. Would you agree?

Do you think advertising can have harmful effects?

News photographers sometimes take pictures of people in distress, after a disaster, for example. Do you think this is justified?

4. Describe your favorite photograph.

You should say:

What/who is in the photo;

When and where you took it;

Where you keep it and explain why this photograph is important to you.

Discussion questions

Photographs

Why do you think people take photographs?

What is the role of family albums?

Would you rather have a photograph or a painting of yourself?

What are advantages and disadvantages of digital photography compared to traditional photography?

The power of images

Nowadays everyone can use a camera. The process of taking and sharing pictures has become incredibly simple. Do you think that photography will lose its artistic value due to this?

Why do advertisers use images to promote their products?

Some people think that image is becoming more powerful than written word. Would you agree?

15 Charity

1. Describe a person who has done a lot of work to help people.

You should say:

Who this person is/was;

Where this person lives/lived;

What he/she has done to help people and explain how you know about this person.



Discussion questions

Helping other people in the community

What are some of the ways people can help others in the community? Which is most important?

Why do you think some people like to help other people?

Some people say that people help others in the community more now than they did in the past. Do you agree or disagree? Why?

Community Services

What types of services, such as libraries or health centres, are available to the people who live in your area? Do you think there are enough of them?

Which groups of people generally need most support in a community? Why?

Who do you think should pay for the services that are available to the people in a community? Should it be the government or individual people?

2. Describe a person you know who has helped you in some way.

You should say:

How you know this person;

What abilities this person has;

How this person helped you and explain how this help has influenced your life.

3. Describe a time when you helped someone.

You should say:

Who you helped and why;

How you helped this person;

What the result was and explain how you felt about helping this person.

Discussion questions

Helping neighbors

What are some practical things people can do to help neighbors?

Do you think neighbors should help each other? Why (not)?

Would you say that people in small towns help each other more than people in cities?

Jobs that involve helping people

What are some of the jobs that focus on helping other people?

What qualities do people need to do those jobs?

It is generally believed that salaries for jobs that involve helping others are too low. Would you agree?

Attitudes towards helping other people

What are some of the reasons why people are sometimes unwilling to help others?

Do you think some people deserve help more than others?

16 Nature

1. Describe a place you know that has a beautiful natural environment.

You should say:

Where it is located;

What it looks like;

When you first went there and explain why you find this place especially beautiful.



Discussion questions

Nature

What kind of natural environment makes a place attractive for visitors?

Why do people enjoy spending time outside?

What are the benefits of being out in nature?

Environmental issues

What do you think is the main environmental problem in your country?

What could be done to deal with this problem?

Do you think this problem will get better or worse in the future?

2. Describe a river, lake or sea which you like.

You should say:

What the river, lake or sea is called;

Where it is;

What the land near it is like and explain why you like this river, lake or sea.

Discussion questions

Water-based leisure activities

What do people enjoy doing when visit rivers, lakes or the sea? Why do you think these activities are popular?

What benefits do you think people get from the activities they enjoy in the water?

What are the different advantages of going to the sea or to a swimming pool to enjoy yourself? What do you think the disadvantages are?

The economic importance of rivers, lakes and seas

How does water transport, like boats and ships, compare with other kinds? Are there any advantages of water transport?

How important is it for a town or city to be located near a river or the sea? Why?

Have there been any changes in the number of jobs available in fishing and water transport industries?

Why do you think this is?

17 Animals

1. Describe an animal which belonged to you or someone you know.

You should say:

What type of animal it was;

What personality it had;

What it typically did and explain your own personal reaction to it.



Discussion questions

Pets

Do many people have pets where you live?

Why do people have pets?

Are some animals more common as pets than others? Why do you think this is?

Animals helping people

How can animals help people do different jobs?

Do you think they should be treated the same way other employees are?

18 Sports

1. Describe something healthy you enjoy doing.

You should say:

What you do;

Where you do it;

Who you do it with and explain why you think doing this is healthy.



Discussion questions

Keeping fit and healthy

What do most people do to keep fit in your country?

How important is it for people to do some regular physical exercise?

Health and modern lifestyles

Why do some people think that modern lifestyles are not healthy?

Why do some people choose to lead unhealthy lives?

Should individuals or governments be responsible for making people's lifestyle healthy?

What could be done to encourage people to live in a healthy way?

2. Describe a competition (e.g. TV, college, work or sports competition) that you took part in.

You should say:

What kind of competition it was and how you found out about it;

What you had to do;

What the prizes were and explain why you chose to take part in this competition.

Discussion questions

Competitions in school

Why do you think some school teachers use competitions as class activities?

Do you think it is a good thing to give prizes to children who do well at school? Why?

Would you say that schools for young children have become more or less competitive since you were that age? Why?

Sporting competitions

What are the advantages and disadvantages of intensive training for young sportspeople?

Some people think that competition leads to a better performance from sports stars. Others think it just makes players feel insecure. What is your opinion?

Do you think that it is possible to become too competitive in sport? In what way?

3. Describe a game or sport you enjoy playing.

You should say:

What kind of game or sport it is;

Who you play it with;

Where you play it and explain why you enjoy playing it.

Discussion questions

Children's games

How have games changed from the time when you were a child?

Do you think this has been a positive change? Why?

Why do you think children like playing games?

How important do you think this is for children to play games?

Games and competition

Do you think competitive games are good or bad for children?

In what ways?

How can games sometimes help to unite people?

Why is competition often seen as important in today's society?

4. Describe a sports match which you saw and which you found enjoyable.

You should say:

What the sport was;

Who was playing in this game;

Where you watched it and explain why you enjoyed watching the match so much.

Discussion questions

Young people doing sports

What sports do most young people in your country enjoy doing?

What are the main benefits for young people of learning to play different sports?

Can you suggest some ways to encourage young people to play more sport?

Sports on TV

What kinds of sport do people in your country most often watch on TV? Why?

What do you think are the disadvantages of having a lot of coverage of sports on TV?

How do you think the broadcasting of sports on TV will change in the next 20 years?

International sports competitions

Why do you think international sports competitions (like the Football World Cup) are so popular?

What are the advantages and disadvantages to a country when it hosts a major international sports competition?

What should governments invest more in: helping their top sports people to win international competitions, or promoting sport for everyone? Why?

19 Technologies and devices

1. Describe a useful website you have visited.

You should say:

What the website was;

How you found the address for this website;

What the website contained and explain why it was useful for you.



Discussion questions

The Internet

What are the advantages and disadvantages of the Internet?

How reliable is information available on the Internet?

Some people believe that the Internet needs to be censored.

How far do you agree or disagree?

What can be done to protect children from inappropriate web content?

The internet and shopping

Why do you think some people use the Internet for shopping?

Why doesn't everyone use it in this way?

What kinds of things are easy to buy and sell online?

Do you think shopping on the internet will be more or less popular in the future? Why?

2. Describe a piece of electronic equipment that you find useful.

You should say:

What it is;

How you learned to use it;

How long you have had it and explain why you find this piece of electronic equipment useful.

Discussion questions

Technology and housework

What kinds of machine are used for housework in modern homes in your country?

How have these machines benefited people? Are there any negative effects of using them?

Do you think all new homes will be equipped with household machines in the future? Why?

Technology in the workplace

What kinds of equipment do most workers need to use in offices today?

How have developments in technology affected employment in your country?

Some people think that technology has brought more stress than benefits to employed people nowadays. Would you agree or disagree? Why?

20 Communication

1. Describe a telephone conversation which was important to you.

You should say:

When and where the conversation took place;

Who you talked to;

What you talked about and explain why this conversation was important to you.



Discussion questions

Kinds of communication

How do people prefer to get in touch with each other in your country?

What are the advantages and disadvantages of face-to-face interaction compared to other types of communication?

Communication technologies

How have communication technologies, such as mobile phones, email, Skype and others, changed the way we communicate with each other?

Have these changes been positive or negative?

How do communication technologies affect relationships between people?

The Internet and communication

What effect has the Internet had on the way people generally communicate with each other?

Why do you think the Internet is being used more and more for communication?

2. Describe a meeting you remember going to at work, university or school.

You should say:

When and where the meeting was held;

Who was at the meeting;

What the people at the meeting talked about and explain why you remember going to this meeting.

Discussion questions

Going to meetings

What are the different types of meeting that people often go to?

Some people say that no-one likes to go to meetings – what do you think?

Why can it sometimes be important to go to meetings?

International meetings

Why do you think world leaders often have meetings together?

What possible difficulties might be involved in organizing meetings between world leaders?

Do you think that meetings between international leaders will become more frequent in the future? Or will there be less need for world leaders to meet?

3. Describe an important message you received.

You should say:

What the message was about;

Who you received it from;

How it made you feel and explain why this message was important.

Discussion questions

Communication technologies

What are some of the advantages and disadvantages of text messages compared to phone calls?

How have modern communication technologies changed the way we communicate with each other?

Have these changes been positive or negative?

How do you think people will communicate in the future?

Intercultural communication

What can be done to promote intercultural communication and understanding?

How important is it for travelers to find out more about the country they are going to visit?

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