

## Week 1- Unit 1: Education

### Ling 1-101: Language Mastery I

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- a) The pursuit of happiness (skim, scan, intensively read)
- b) Types of meaning: polysemy, synonymy, connotation, denotation, collocation
- c) Vocabulary building
- d) Language awareness (exercises): derivatives, gap-filling clues

## PART B

### The Pursuit of Happiness

Compared with misery, happiness is a relatively unexplored terrain for social scientists. Only recently, researchers have begun a systematic study of what makes people happy.

During the past two decades, dozens of investigators throughout the world have asked several hundred thousand representative sampled people to reflect on their happiness and satisfaction with life or what psychologists call "subjective well-being". The findings uncovered are somewhat surprising.

People are happier than one might expect, and happiness does not appear to depend significantly on external circumstances. **(1)** \_\_\_\_ Three in 10 Americans say they are very happy, while one in 10 chooses the most negative description "not too happy". The majority describe themselves as "pretty happy".

How can social scientists measure something as hard to pin down as happiness? Most researchers simply ask people to report their feelings of happiness or unhappiness and to assess how satisfying their lives are. **(2)** \_\_\_\_ Furthermore, those who say they are happy and satisfied seem happy to their close friends and family members and to a psychologist-interviewer. **(3)** \_\_\_\_ Self-reported happiness also predicts other indicators of well-being. Compared with the depressed, happy people are less self-focused, less hostile and abusive, and less susceptible to disease.

The even distribution of happiness cuts across almost all demographic classifications of age, economic class, race and educational level. In addition, almost all strategies for assessing subjective well-being - including those that sample people's experience by polling them at random times with beepers - turn up similar findings. **(4)** \_\_\_\_ Similarly, men and women are equally likely to declare themselves "very happy" and "satisfied" with life.

**(5)** \_\_\_\_ People have not become happier over time as their cultures have become more affluent. Even though Americans earn twice as much in today's dollars as they did in 1957, the proportion of those telling that they are "very happy" has declined from 35 to 29 percent.

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Even very rich people are only slightly happier than the average American. Those whose income has increased over a 10-year period are not happier than those whose income is stagnant.

### A) READING

1. Five sentences were removed from the newspaper article. Of the sentences **A – F** that you find below, you should choose the one which fits each gap (**1 – 5**). There is one extra sentence you don't need to use.

#### Sentences A - F

- A. Such self-reported well-being is moderately consistent over years of retesting.
- B. Interviews with representative samples of people of all ages, for example, reveal that no time of life is notably happier or unhappier.
- C. As a result, it is impossible to tell whether the happiness of people in wealthier nations is based on money or is a by-product of other felicities.
- D. Although viewing life as a tragedy has a long and honorable history, the responses of random samples of people around the world about their happiness paints a much rosier picture.
- E. Wealth is also a poor predictor of happiness.
- F. Their daily mood ratings reveal more positive emotions, and they smile more than those who call themselves unhappy.

**1) TYPES OF MEANING** (McCarthy, M. & O'Dell, F. 2006. *English Vocabulary in Use (Advanced)*. Cambridge: C.U.P)

**i. BASIC:** She has *fair* hair (=light, opposite of dark)

**ii. POLYSEMY:** multiple meanings

That wasn't a very **fair** thing to say. [adj: just]

My **fair** lady. [adj: beautiful]

His knowledge of French is **fair**. [adj: neither very bad nor very good]

She has a **fair** chance of winning. [adj: reasonable]

**Fair** weather is forecast for tomorrow. [adj: dry and pleasant]

There's a **fair** on at the park this week. [n: public event with games and rides]

**iii. SYNONYMY:** many different words with similar but slightly different meanings

e.g. **Fair:** light, blonde, pale, bleached, colourless

**1a) Choose a synonym to complete the gaps below:**

*annoying - appropriate - brilliant - excruciating - famished - gorgeous - pouring - worn out*

- Are you hungry? Yes, I'm \_\_\_\_\_.

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- Is she an intelligent girl? Yes, she's absolutely \_\_\_\_\_.
- Your little boy looks tired. Yes, he's \_\_\_\_\_.
- I like her dress. Yes, isn't it \_\_\_\_\_?
- Is it raining? Yes, it's \_\_\_\_\_.
- The film was pretty bad, wasn't it? Yes, I thought it was \_\_\_\_\_.
- Did you think the sentence was fair? Yes, I thought it was \_\_\_\_\_.
- Does she deliberately wind him up? Yes, she loves \_\_\_\_\_ him.

iv. **CONNOTATION:** words have meanings but also associations. E.g. *Fair* meaning *beautiful* has associations with fairy tales (*Who's the fairest of them all?*) and stories about the past.

**1b)** Which of the following have lucky connotations in British English: i) horseshoe, ii) mascot, iii) black cat, iv) number 13?

**1c)** Mistletoe is a kind of parasitic plant, but what are its special connotations?

v. **REGISTER** (some words are used in formal or informal speech/in specific genres)  
E.g. *Apparel* is a formal or literary word for clothing.

**1d)** Give the standard and the informal meaning of i) loaf, ii) nick, iii) kid, iv) wicked

vi. **COLLOCATION:** *Hair* can be *fair, light, blonde* but not *colourless* like *liquids*.

**1e) Match the words on the left with their collocates on the right:**

1. to contemplate	a. a worker
2. to dismiss	b. a mistake
3. to do	c. a good time
4. to dribble	d. your future
5. to have	e. a rope
6. to make	f. a compliment
7. to pay	g. innocence
8. to plead	h. cards
9. to set	i. some gardening
10. to shuffle	j. an opportunity
11. to waste	k. a ball
12. to wind	l. an example

(*English vocabulary in use-Advanced, M. McCarthy, F. O'Dell, CUP*)

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### 1f) Collocations

#### A) Student Life

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### Courses and qualifications



When she was a small child, Amelia's teachers identified her as having unusual intelligence and remarkable **mental agility**<sup>1</sup>, and they put her on a special programme for **gifted children**. Amelia **won a scholarship** to **attend** a local grammar school. By the age of eighteen, she was a **straight A student**<sup>2</sup>, and she **secured a place**<sup>3</sup> at one of the country's most prestigious **seats of learning**<sup>4</sup> to **read**<sup>5</sup> English Literature.

In the first **academic year** of the English Literature programme, the **core subjects**<sup>6</sup> were *The development of the novel* and *Contemporary poetry*. Amelia had a large number of **set texts**<sup>7</sup> to read. It was hard work but she loved it. Her professors were all **distinguished scholars** and her courses were taught by some of the world's **leading authorities** in the field. She completed her studies with considerable success and **graduated from university** last year. In the meantime, her parents have decided that it is time they made up for their lack of **formal education** and they have **signed up** for a number of **evening courses**<sup>8</sup>. Eventually they hope to **meet the entry requirements** for university entrance and to be able to complete a degree as **mature students**<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> ability to think quickly and clearly

<sup>2</sup> a student who always gets very good marks

<sup>3</sup> (formal) was accepted as a student;  
(informal: **got a place**)

<sup>4</sup> (very formal) educational institution  
with a very good reputation

<sup>5</sup> (formal and increasingly old-fashioned) do or study

<sup>6</sup> subjects which all the students on the course  
have to do

<sup>7</sup> specific books which students must study

<sup>8</sup> or **enrolled on ... courses**

<sup>9</sup> students who are older than average

### Answer the questions using collocations from A.

- 1 What happens when you successfully complete a degree course?
- 2 What do you call students who are in their thirties or older?
- 3 What are, for example, Harvard, the Sorbonne and Cambridge University?
- 4 What kind of people teach at Harvard, the Sorbonne and Cambridge University?
- 5 What do you call children who are particularly intelligent or have special talents?
- 6 What do you call students whose marks are always excellent?

(*English collocations in Use – Advanced, CUP, 2008*)

2) Complete the teacher's letter to the parents of a pupil. To do so, you should use the words given below. You may need to change the word form in some cases:

*attend, enrol, natural, mark, requirement, show, truant, wander, win*

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Dear Mr and Mrs Wolf,

We are very concerned about Peter's behaviour. He has played (1) ..... from school three times this month and has been seen in town in school hours. When he does come to class, his attention (2) ..... and he does not seem able to concentrate on his lessons. He does not seem to understand the work and yet he never asks any questions or requests any help. The only time he (3) ..... any initiative is in devising excuses for not having done his homework. Although he has a (4) ..... talent for art, he is not even taking any interest in art lessons.

This is disappointing, as last year there was a (5) ..... improvement in Peter's work and we hoped he might (6) ..... a scholarship. However, unless he starts to (7) ..... school regularly and to put more effort into his studies, he will certainly not even meet the (8) ..... for the college course he has plans to (9) ..... on next year.

I would be grateful if you could come into school to discuss this situation further.

Yours sincerely,

Thomas Chips

(Headteacher)

*(English collocations in Use – Advanced, CUP, 2008)*

### 3. Gap filling activity – Raising language awareness

*Fill in the gap with the word you think best fits in. An example is given at the beginning (0).*

I found it relatively easy to decide **(0) which** course to do; it was **(1)** \_\_\_\_ to go which I found harder to decide. As good as a course **(2)** \_\_\_\_ be, I think it is equally important to live in a town or a city which you can relate to.

The main reason for going to university is to get an academic qualification, but personally, I think that the social side of things and developing as a person **(3)** \_\_\_\_ equally important. The good thing about university life is that you are left to your **(4)** \_\_\_\_ devices, unlike school, where you're told what to do and how to do it. It's important to socialise and meet new friends. It **(5)** \_\_\_\_ some people longer than others. If a student has any problems, about anything, there's student counselling available at all universities, where they try and help **(6)** \_\_\_\_ as much as possible. I've been a volunteer for our Student Counselling Scheme for some time now. I've found it very rewarding, not only with helping other students through university life but also **(7)** \_\_\_\_ an extra-curricular activity.

You have to learn to balance your academic work and social life. At first, I **(8)** \_\_\_\_ too much time going out and hardly any time in the library. You learn from your mistakes and you soon learn **(9)** \_\_\_\_ to balance it all.

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I'm in my second year, so I share a house with friends. It was difficult at first, what with (10) \_\_\_\_ your own washing, ironing and cooking, but you soon get used to it. Last year I (11) \_\_\_\_ just eat chips and beans and spend the rest of my money on beer, but this year I'm trying to cut (12) \_\_\_\_ on the chips and beans and eat a bit more healthily. It's great (13) \_\_\_\_ in rented accommodation, but sometimes you can have problems with landlords. If you (14) \_\_\_\_ have any, there's a Student Welfare Service, which advises you (15) \_\_\_\_ what to do if you have a problem.

University has been the best time of my life. It's three years of hard work and great fun. It's a positive thing to do!

0. which	1.	2.	3.
4.	5.	6.	7.
8.	9.	10.	11.
12.	13.	14.	15.

4. **DERIVATIVES:** Fill in the gaps using the words given in the parentheses.

Attempts to communicate in a foreign language can easily go wrong. I'm always  (APPOINT) by my attempts to speak Greek on holidays. The waiter on Samos  (UNDERSTAND) what I wanted and instead of beetroots brought me mushrooms. I  (LIKE) mushrooms greatly but when I asked him to  (PLACE) them with beetroots he smiled, went into the kitchen and  (TURN) with a plateful of aubergines. He also  (TAKE) my friendly attitude towards everyone I meet and when I complained that they had  (COOK) the meat, Manuel (that was his name if I am not  (TAKE)) grinned and spun his moustache. To top it all, I  (READ) the bill and accused the poor waiter of  (CHARGE) me. Everything was my fault. It was my poor Greek again.

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### Fill in the gap clues



- Names and pronouns (Jack ... he ... this ...)
- Chronology (Then ... Finally ...)
- Quotation marks ("I couldn't believe it.")
- Contrast words (However; but)
- Verb tenses (had gone ... will have finished)
- Cause and effect (Therefore, ... as a result ...)
- Rephrasing (in other words ...)
- Substitution: 'vehicle' instead of 'car', 'piece of furniture' instead of 'table'



### Techniques to use while Reading for Comprehension

- Skimming
- Scanning
- Intensive reading

Good/fast readers read several words at a time, in **CHUNKS** (i.e., blocks of words).

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**Skim** • to understand the **gist** of a passage

**Scan** • to look for **specific** words, numbers, details, facts, figures

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### How to SKIM to get the gist?

Read the **title**

Read the **subtitle** or **introduction**; if any, the **sub-headings** to identify the main ideas of the text

Read the **1st sentence** of each paragraph. Try to predict the direction of the forthcoming explanations/arguments

Notice any pictures, charts, graphics, italicized or bold words

Read carefully the **concluding paragraph**. What seems to be the intention of the author?

Skimming is 3 to 4 times faster than normal reading!!

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## Scanning is rapidly running your eyes over the text to

- locate specific details, e.g. a **particular fact or figure**,
- see whether the text mentions a **subject** you're **researching** (vital to academic research)

You have a *question in mind* and you read a passage only to find the answer, *ignoring what's unrelated*.

Three steps to scanning include:

search for key words



move quickly over the page



less reading, more searching

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## WHAT ABOUT INTENSIVE READING?

When you need to read through *every* word from beginning to end

1. scan the title/abstract/text to see if it's relevant
2. skim the text to get a rough idea of its content and confirm how centrally relevant it is
3. intensively read the whole text to comprehend it and evaluate its content in depth

Depending on your reading purpose, you may need to exercise, one, two or all of these strategies.

Keep in mind: Practice helps automaticity!!

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