

Wall reading

Worksheet 1A

Days lost through illness cost Britain over £10 billion a year, with stress and back pains being the leading causes. The average worker takes about seven days off for illness each year, and the figures for the public sector are significantly higher than for those who work for private employers and small companies. It is estimated that about 13% of these sick days may not be genuine and employers know that absenteeism increases dramatically when England is playing in the World Cup. If you are sick, you do not have to get a sick note from your doctor until after the seventh day of absence. This may seem a long time, but in some parts of the country, you may have to wait four or five days for an appointment with your doctor.

- What are the rules concerning sick leave in your school or college?
- Do you think these rules should be changed in any way? Why or why not?
- How much of a problem is absenteeism?

One of the most famous buildings in the world, with a roof resembling a collection of capsized ships, the Sydney Opera House was opened in 1973. It was designed by the Danish architect, Jørn Utzon, after a competition for which over 200 plans were submitted. Utzon had previously won a number of architectural competitions, but this was the first of such projects to be built. The Australian government had been hoping that construction would take about five years, but it took an additional ten years and the final cost was 1,400% higher than the first estimates. Situated near the equally famous Sydney Harbour Bridge, the Opera House has recently been included in a list of the New Seven Wonders of the World.

- What is the most well-known building in your town?
- What do you know about it?
- What do you like or dislike about the design of this building?

Canada has a population of over 31 million people although fewer than 4% are descended from the indigenous tribes of North America. The territory was colonized by the French and English from the seventeenth century, although Vikings had been there 700 years before. The majority of Canadians now speak either English (59%) or French (23%), but the country has the highest rate of immigration in the world. In the last ten years, over 200,000 people have arrived per annum, and there are more than 30 ethnic groups with a population of over 100,000 people. Germans, Italians, Chinese and Ukrainians are the largest of these communities. Since the 1970s, the government has had a policy of multiculturalism that recognizes the value to Canada of this ethnic and cultural variety.

- What ethnic groups are there in your country?
- Do they suffer from racism?
- How do most people feel about new arrivals in your town?

If you hear someone in Britain talking about 'chavs', they are referring to poorly educated, working-class people who wear designer sportswear (branded trainers, tracksuits and 'hoodies' – sweatshirts with a hood) and a lot of gold jewellery. The stereotypical chav is antisocial, drunk and violent, and is involved in minor crime and football violence. Similar expressions are found in other countries: 'dres' in Poland or 'coatto' in Italy, for example. However, like all stereotypes, the use of the word says as much about the person speaking as the person they are speaking about. Some commentators have said that the use of the word is simply an expression of snobbery or class prejudice. The word first appeared in British dictionaries in 2005 and has become part of everyday vocabulary.

- How would you describe a stereotypical working-class youth in your country?
- What kinds of class prejudice do you find in your town?

Wall reading

Worksheet 1B

In the late 1970s in a run-down part of the English south-coast town of Brighton, a small shop was selling a range of cosmetics made from exotic ingredients. Along with neighbouring shops selling second-hand records, punk fashions and organic food, it was especially popular with students. Unlike other shops, the Body Shop, as it was called, sold products that had not been tested on animals and advertised its commitment to environmental causes and fair trade. The idea for the shop originally came from a store with the same name that the Body Shop's founder had seen in California. The shop's popularity grew fast and it now has over 2000 stores in 55 countries. In 2006, the company was sold to the French cosmetics group, L'Oréal, for 650 million pounds.

- How popular are environmentally-friendly and organic products in your country?
- In what ways, if any, does your choice of places to shop reflect your politics?

The Irish author, James Joyce (1882–1941), is often considered to be one of the most important literary figures of the 20th century. His most well-known novel, 'Ulysses', was published in 1922. The plot, which all takes place in one day, explores life in the city of Dublin, but is based on the 'Odyssey' of Homer. At first, it was banned in the United States after a judge ruled that it was obscene, but it was recognized by most critics as a masterpiece. Despite its fame, it is a book that few people have actually read. Its extreme length is off-putting to many readers and, even if they begin it, many do not finish, finding the complex language too difficult. The contemporary Irish writer, Roddy Doyle, described 'Ulysses' as overrated, and admitted that he had only got as far as the third page of 'Finnegan's Wake', the follow-up to 'Ulysses'.

- Who is the most important literary figure in your country? Why?
- Have you read any of their works? What did you (honestly!) think of them?

Most people have heard of the British Commonwealth, although few realize that it is now called the Commonwealth of Nations or that the British have no power over the other member states. Most of the 53 Commonwealth countries belonged at one time to the British Empire, but some, like Mozambique or Namibia, have never been ruled by the British. The Commonwealth's main function is to encourage cooperation and consultation, both economic and cultural, between the member states. Its aims include the promotion of human rights and democracy. Representing about a quarter of the world's population, the Commonwealth is an important organization, but it has no political or economic power.

- What international organizations does your country belong to?
- What benefits does membership of these organizations bring to your country?

Singaporeans take their health very seriously. The country has one of the highest life expectancy rates in the world and experts believe that it will have overtaken European countries like Spain and France by 2030. All schools in Singapore have to take part in a National Physical Fitness programme and tests are regularly carried out to find out how fast children can run and how well they can do exercises such as sit-ups and pull-ups. Singapore has only ever won one medal in the Olympic Games – a silver for weightlifting in 1960 – but the country only has about three and a half million citizens.

- In what ways do schools and colleges in your country promote health?
- What are / were your feelings about taking part in sport and physical exercise at school?

Wall reading

Worksheet 2

Part 1

1. How is the fitness of Singaporean children tested?
2. How long did the Sydney Opera House take to build?
3. How many countries belong to the Commonwealth?
4. How many people migrate to Canada each year?
5. How much time do British people take off sick each year?
6. How was the design for the Sydney Opera House chosen?
7. In how many countries can you find Body Shops?
8. In which sport did Singapore win an Olympic medal?
9. What are the most common health problems in Britain?
10. What is the Polish equivalent of a *chav*?
11. What is the population of Singapore?
12. What is the primary purpose of the Commonwealth?
13. What was special about cosmetics from the Body Shop?

14. When did the Vikings visit Canada?
15. When did the word '*chav*' become common in England?
16. When do English people dishonestly take time off work?
17. Where was the architect of the Sydney Opera House from?
18. Where was the first Body Shop?
19. Who wrote '*Finnegan's Wake*'?
20. Why was '*Ulysses*' banned in America?

Part 2

Find words or phrases that match the definitions below.

1. a message from a doctor saying that you cannot work because you are ill
2. an unreasonable feeling of not liking a particular group of people
3. encouraging or supporting something
4. given formally to someone so that they can make a decision about it
5. in bad condition because no one has spent money on repairs
6. the length of time that someone is likely to live
7. used for describing something that you want to avoid because it is unpleasant and not attractive
8. used to describe someone who lived in a place for a long time before other people came there

Wall reading

Worksheet 3A

Days lost through illness cost Britain over £10 billion a year, with stress and back pains the leading causes. The average worker (1) *has taken / is taking / takes* about seven days off for illness each year, and the figures for the public sector are significantly higher than for those who work for private employers and small companies. It is estimated that about 13% of these sick days may not be genuine and employers know that absenteeism increases dramatically when England is playing in the World Cup. If you (2) *are / will be / were* sick, you (3) *do not have to / have to / must not* get a sick note from your doctor until after the seventh day of absence. This (4) *may / should / will* seem a long time, but in some parts of the country, you may have to wait four or five days for an appointment with your doctor.

One of the most famous buildings in the world, with a roof resembling a collection of capsized ships, the Sydney Opera House was opened in 1973. It (5) *could have been / has been / was* designed by the Danish architect, Jørn Utzon, after a competition for which over 200 plans were submitted. Utzon (6) *had / has / was* previously won a number of architectural competitions, but this was the first of such projects to be built. The Australian government (7) *had been hoping / is hoping / may be hoping* that construction (8) *can / will / would* take about five years, but it took an additional ten years and the final cost was 1,400% higher than the first estimates. Situated near the equally famous Sydney Harbour Bridge, the Opera House has recently been included in a list of the New Seven Wonders of the World.

Canada has a population of over 31 million people although fewer than 4% are descended from the indigenous tribes of North America. The territory was colonized by the French and English from the seventeenth century, although Vikings (9) *had been / have been / would be* there 700 years before. The majority of Canadians now speak either English (59%) or French (23%), but the country has the highest rate of immigration in the world. In the last ten years, over 200,000 people (10) *arrived / had arrived / have arrived* per annum, and there are more than 30 ethnic groups with a population of over 100,000 people. Germans, Italians, Chinese and Ukrainians (11) *are / had been / have been* the largest of these communities. Since the 1970s, the government (12) *has / has had / had* a policy of multiculturalism that recognizes the value to Canada of this ethnic and cultural variety.

If you (13) *are hearing / hear / will hear* someone in Britain talking about ‘chavs’, they (14) *are referring / referred / will refer* to poorly educated, working-class people who wear designer sportswear (branded trainers, tracksuits and ‘hoodies’ – sweatshirts with a hood) and a lot of gold jewellery. The stereotypical chav is antisocial, drunk and violent, and is involved in minor crime and football violence. Similar expressions are found in other countries: ‘dres’ in Poland or ‘coatto’ in Italy, for example. However, like all stereotypes, the use of the word says as much about the person speaking as the person they (15) *are speaking / speak / will speak* about. Some commentators (16) *have said / might have said / said* that the use of the word is simply an expression of snobbery or class prejudice. The word first appeared in British dictionaries in 2005 and has become part of everyday vocabulary.

Wall reading

Worksheet 3B

In the late 1970s in a run-down part of the English south-coast town of Brighton, a small shop (17) *is selling / sells / was selling* a range of cosmetics made from exotic ingredients. Along with neighbouring shops selling second-hand records, punk fashions and organic food, it was especially popular with students. Unlike other shops, the Body Shop, as it was called, sold products that (18) *can't have been / had not been / will not be* tested on animals and advertised its commitment to environmental causes and fair trade. The idea for the shop originally came from a store with the same name that the Body Shop's founder (19) *had seen / used to see / was seeing* in California. The shop's popularity (20) *grew / grows / should have grown* fast and it now has over 2000 stores in 55 countries. In 2006, the company was sold to the French cosmetics group, L'Oréal, for 650 million pounds.

The Irish author, James Joyce (1882-1941), is often considered to be one of the most important literary figures of the 20th century. His most well-known novel, 'Ulysses', was published in 1922. The plot, which (21) *all takes / had all taken / may all be taking* place in one day, explores life in the city of Dublin, but is based on the 'Odyssey' of Homer. At first, it was banned in the United States after a judge (22) *ruled / rules / was ruling* that it was obscene, but it was recognized by most critics as a masterpiece. Despite its fame, it is a book that few people have actually read. Its extreme length is off-putting to many readers and, even if they (23) *begin / will begin / would begin* it, many do not finish, finding the complex language too difficult. The contemporary Irish writer, Roddy Doyle, described 'Ulysses' as overrated, and admitted that he (24) *had only got / only gets / will only get* as far as the third page of 'Finnegan's Wake', the follow-up to 'Ulysses'.

Most people (25) *have heard / hear / heard* of the British Commonwealth, although few realize that it is now called the 'Commonwealth of Nations' or that the British have no power over the other member states. Most of the 53 Commonwealth countries belonged at one time to the British Empire, but some, like Mozambique or Namibia, (26) *are never ruled / have never been ruled / were never ruling* by the British. The Commonwealth's main function is to encourage cooperation and consultation, both economic and cultural, between the member states. Its aims (27) *are including / include / would include* the promotion of human rights and democracy. Representing about a quarter of the world's population, the Commonwealth is an important organization, but it (28) *does not have / has / is having* no political or economic power.

Singaporeans take their health very seriously. The country has one of the highest life expectancy rates in the world and experts believe that it (29) *has overtaken / overtakes / will have overtaken* European countries like Spain and France by 2030. All schools in Singapore (30) *can't / don't have to / have to* take part in a National Physical Fitness programme and tests are regularly carried out to find out how fast children (31) *can / could have / must* run and how well they can do exercises such as sit-ups and pull-ups. Singapore (32) *has won / wins / won* only one medal in the Olympic Games – a silver for weightlifting in 1960 – but the country only has about three and a half million citizens.