

Words In The News

Teacher's pack

Lesson plan and student worksheets
with answers

Romanian spy kids –
19 July 2006



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BBC Learning English – Words in the News

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Level: Intermediate and above

Topic: Children spying on parents

Language: Vocabulary of news report

Aims: Reading skills – Understanding a short news report
Language skills – Practising prepositions with nouns and verbs
Speaking skills – Practising speaking fluency

Materials: Worksheet 1 – Comprehension questions
Worksheet 2 – Vocabulary matching task
Worksheet 3 – Grammar/language focus – prepositions with nouns and verbs
News story – Available online at:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/newsenglish/witn/2006/07/060719_romania.shtml

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LESSON STAGES

A Stimulate student interest in text

Generate interest about today's topic by asking students to call any words they associate with spies and spying. Write their suggestions on the board. You will use these suggestions later in the lesson.

(possible answers):

excitement
James Bond
Russia
USA

B Pre-teach essential vocabulary

Elicit/present key vocabulary that students need either to understand the key points in the text or to understand and/or answer any questions that you'll set them later in the lesson. The vocabulary is from Words in the News (so you can elicit the vocabulary by using the explanations provided online or below).

You could either pre-teach the vocabulary at this stage of the lesson or you could use the vocabulary building activity from further down in this lesson plan. Have students working in small groups together and ask them to try to match the vocabulary with the definitions. Encourage them to work with the other groups to pool their knowledge.

When they have done as much as they can, if they have dictionaries, ask them to look up the words to check their answers and to find out the definitions of any words they were not sure of. If they don't have dictionaries, check their answers and give them help with any words they don't know.

Whichever method you use to elicit/present the vocabulary, you should then model it (say it clearly, highlighting the word stress) and get them to repeat the words after you.

informers

people who give information to the police or security services about people they know

to greet with genuine shock

to react to with real surprise and disappointment

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secret police operatives recruited networks of children

people from the secret police got groups of children to work for them

a carrot and stick approach

a technique using the possibility of rewards and the threat of punishment

to get into trouble

to do something wrong and being caught by teachers, for example

to offer a way out

to give a chance to escape punishment

sketchy

unclear

to deem something a success

to think that something is a success

to stir a nationwide debate

to become a topic that the whole country discussed

to come to terms with

to accept and to recover from the unpleasant experience of

C Written record of vocabulary

Write the words on the board, eliciting spelling as you write. Elicit and show the word stress of each item and word class, if appropriate. Give students some time to copy your boardwork into their notebooks

You can listen to how the words are pronounced by going to this day's Words in the News page and clicking on the link **Listen to the words**:

Boardwork:

informers

to greet with genuine shock

secret police operatives recruited networks of children

a carrot and stick approach

to get into trouble

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to offer a way out

sketchy

to deem something a success

to stir a nationwide debate

to come to terms with

D Set a scanning question.

Tell the students they are going to read a text about spying. Give them a time limit (1 - 2 minutes) to read the text quickly to find the answer to the question on the board.

It's not important that the students understand every word of the text at this stage. The point of this task is to get them interested in the text and to read it quickly once.

Boardwork

How many of our ideas are mentioned in the text?

excitement
James Bond
Russia
USA

E Check answers

Elicit students' answers and highlight the correct answer on the board. It's probably unlikely that any of their ideas will be mentioned in the text because it's about children spying, which is very unusual.

F Set specific information questions

Hand out worksheet 1 or use the online quiz. Students complete the worksheet to help them understand the text in more detail. Give them a time limit (5 - 6 minutes) to read the text in more detail and to answer the questions.

G Check answers

Elicit True or False answers. Direct attention to a particular paragraph if an answer is wrong to try to elicit the correct answer (see worksheet 1 and answer key).

H Vocabulary consolidation/building

Before the lesson, make enough copies of worksheet 2 so that there is 1 worksheet for every 4 – 5 students. Cut up the vocabulary and explanations.

In class tell students to match the correct word with the right definition.

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I Check answers

Elicit answers. If an answer is wrong, ask other students to try to elicit the correct answer.

J Language focus

Hand out worksheet 3 which focuses on using prepositions after nouns and verbs. Ask students to complete the sentences by matching the noun or verb with the correct idiom.

K Check answers

If an answer is wrong, ask other students to try to elicit the correct answer (see worksheet 3 and answer key).

L Follow-up activity: Speaking

Tell the students they are going to assemble the perfect spy. Ask for suggestions of ideal spy qualities (physical, emotional, intelligence). Write their suggestions on the board (and add more if necessary) so that you have a list of 15 qualities.

Each person should decide on the 3 qualities s/he wants to make the ideal spy. Give them a minute or two to decide on their qualities.

Then split the class into small groups of 4 or 5. Each group is only allowed to carry 5 qualities in total. Each person should explain to the group why they have selected each quality, what its benefits are and why it is better than the suggestions other people made. The group must agree on the final 5 items to make up their ideal spy. If there is time, they might like to sketch their spy with all her/his ideal attributes.

While they are speaking, move around the room listening to them unobtrusively. Make a note of any errors you hear.

M Feedback

Ask a few groups to show their sketches and/or tell the class about their spies.

Give praise for content (e.g. which one had the best art work). Give praise for correct English you read. Give feedback on incorrect language you heard. You could write some example phrases or sentences on the board and elicit from students which ones are correct and which ones are wrong and why.

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WORKSHEET 1

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

Are the following sentences true or false?

- | | | |
|----|---|-----|
| 1. | Most people weren't surprised that children spied on their parents in Communist Romania. | T/F |
| 2. | Groups of children were made to spy on adults by their parents. | T/F |
| 3. | Children reported their teachers and parents for activities that in today's Romania seem every-day and ordinary. | T/F |
| 4. | To get children to become spies, the Securitate sometimes offered rewards and other times threatened the children with punishments. | T/F |
| 5. | Everyone now thinks that using children as spies was a complete failure in Romania. | T/F |
| 6. | A lot of people in Romania are continuing to try to accept the positive and negative aspects of their country's recent history. | T/F |

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WORKSHEET 2

VOCABULARY MATCHING TASK

Match these words and phrases to their definitions

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. informers | A. to think that something is a success |
| 2. to greet with genuine shock | B. people from the secret police got groups of children to work for them |
| 3. secret police operatives recruited networks of children | C. a technique using the possibility of rewards and the threat of punishment |
| 4. a carrot and stick approach | D. people who give information to the police or security services about people they know |
| 5. to get into trouble | E. unclear |
| 6. to offer a way out | F. to accept and to recover from the unpleasant experience of |
| 7. sketchy | G. to react to with real surprise and disappointment |
| 8. to deem something a success | H. to give a chance to escape punishment |
| 9. to stir a nationwide debate | I. to do something wrong and being caught by teachers, for example |
| 10. to come to terms with | J. to become a topic that the whole country discussed |

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.

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WORKSHEET 3

LANGUAGE FOCUS – Prepositions

Prepositions

In the sentences below, match the nouns and verbs (from today's text) with the correct prepositions. The first one has been done for you:

of	on	with	in	to	for
----	----	------	----	----	-----

1. He greeted me _____ with a big "Hello!" as if he hadn't seen me in years.
2. She's active _____ all sorts of sports – tennis, football, golf, anything with a ball really.
3. At the end _____ their university days, most students go to a graduation ceremony.
4. Even if they did something wrong, I don't think I could inform _____ my parents.
5. You can get around the city easily using the huge network _____ trains and busses.
6. The details _____ the business are top secret.
7. She thought she could do it but when it came _____ it, she just couldn't.
8. For years she spied _____ the Russians, then changed sides and started working for the Americans.
9. She thought her husband was having an affair so she hired a private detective to spy _____ him.
10. They gave him a reward _____ finding their cat.

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ANSWER KEY

WORKSHEET 1

1. False - Paragraph 1 says 'news that those informers included schoolchildren has been greeted with genuine shock.'
2. False- Paragraph 1 says 'the ... secret police operatives recruited networks of children to spy on their elders.'
3. True – Paragraph 3 say 'informing on adults for listening to foreign radio stations or telling jokes about the Ceaucescu family.'
4. True - Paragraph 3 says 'When it came to recruitment, the Securitate, it seems, used a carrot and stick approach.'
5. False – Paragraph 4 says 'It's also unclear if it was deemed a success.'
6. True- Paragraph 4 says – 'But the revelations have stirred a nationwide debate in a country still coming to terms with its communist past.'

WORKSHEET 2 ready for today

- | | | | | | | | | | |
|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|-----|
| 1. | 2. | 3. | 4. | 5. | 6. | 7. | 8. | 9. | 10. |
| D | G | B | C | I | H | E | A | J | F |

WORKSHEET 3

1. with
2. in
3. of
4. on
5. of
6. of
7. to
8. for
9. on
10. for