

Words In The News

Teacher's pack

Lesson plan and student worksheets
with answers

Ancient book –
2 August 2006



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LEARNING ENGLISH



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Level: Intermediate and above

Topic: Ancient book found in Ireland

Language: Vocabulary of news report

Aims: Reading skills – Understanding a short news report
Language skills – Practising the passive
Writing skills – Practising writing fluency

Materials: Worksheet 1 – Comprehension questions
Worksheet 2 – Vocabulary matching task
Worksheet 3 – Grammar/language focus – passives
News story – Available online at:
http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/newsenglish/witn/2006/08/060802_boo_k.shtml

LESSON STAGES

A Stimulate student interest in text

Generate interest about today's topic by asking students to call ideas of things that archaeologists look for when they are digging. Write their suggestions on the board. You will use these suggestions later in the lesson.

(possible answers):

bodies
bones
coins
crockery (plates, vases etc)

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.

fragile

easy to destroy, delicate, not strong

to survive

to remain whole

to overlook

to not notice

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to spot

to notice

a peat bog

a field of partly decomposed vegetable matter forming a brown soil-like deposit which can be used as fuel

vellum

fine writing material made from animals' skins

initial checks suggest

first tests, or examinations make you think

a fragment

a piece

legible

possible to read

miracle

extraordinary

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:

fragile (adj)

to survive

to overlook

to spot

a peat bog

vellum

initial checks suggest

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a fragment

legible (adj)

miracle (adj, n)

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?

bodies
bones
coins
crockery (plates, vases etc)

E Check answers

Elicit students' answers and highlight the correct answer on the board (paragraph 1 mentioned 'document' and 3 mentions 'book').

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.

I Check answers

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

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J Language focus

Hand out worksheet 3 which focuses on using passives. Ask students to complete the sentences by filling in the correct verb forms.

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: Writing

Tell the students they are going to make a time capsule to bury in their gardens for archaeologists to find 2000 years from now. Ask for suggestions of what things are usually put in a time capsule (letters, music CDs, photographs, newspaper, something personal, some everyday items, like a tin-opener or a mobile phone, etc.). Write their suggestions on the board but encourage students to think of other ideas later in the task.

Give students 5 minutes to decide on their list of 5 things they'll put in their time capsule. When they have decided on their items, ask them to write a letter to the person (or alien) who will find their capsule. Their letters should explain what each item is, how it is used, and why they decided to include it in their time capsule.

Circulate, while they are working, giving help with grammar and spelling, if necessary and unobtrusively making notes of any errors you hear.

M Feedback

Collect the students' work. If possible, stick the letters up where everyone can see them. Ask students to look at each letter. Have a class vote to decide on the best one.

Give praise for content (e.g. which student had the most original ideas about what to include in the capsule). 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. | Archaeologists are surprised that this delicate old book has been found. | T/F |
| 2. | A building worker was looking for ancient things while digging in a field. | T/F |
| 3. | The book is written on very fine thin paper so it was important that it was looked after it was first discovered. | T/F |
| 4. | Archaeologists are certain the book was written 2200 years ago. | T/F |
| 5. | Archaeologists were able to read almost all of the book as soon as they found it. | T/F |
| 6. | Pat Wallace thinks finding this ancient book is incredible. | T/F |

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WORKSHEET 2

VOCABULARY MATCHING TASK

Match these words and phrases to their definitions

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| 1. fragile | A. fine writing material made from animals' skins |
| 2. to survive | B. to notice |
| 3. to overlook | C. extraordinary |
| 4. to spot | D. a field of partly decomposed vegetable matter forming a brown soil-like deposit which can be used as fuel |
| 5. a peat bog | E. easy to destroy, delicate, not strong |
| 6. vellum | F. a piece |
| 7. initial checks suggest that | G. to not notice |
| 8. a fragment | H. first tests, or examinations make you think |
| 9. legible | I. possible to read |
| 10. miracle | J. to remain whole |

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

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WORKSHEET 3

LANGUAGE FOCUS – Passive

Passive

There are a lot of example of the passive in today's news text. The passive is used in news reporting because we are often more interested in what has happened (an ancient was found) rather than who did the finding (the construction worker). So, for example, rather than saying 'Somebody discovered the document' (active), the news report says 'It was discovered'.

Put the verb into the correct form, present, past, active, passive, statement or question. The first one has been done for you.

1. Cheese is made (make) from milk.
2. Five people _____ (kill) in the accident.
3. The ancient book _____ (write) over 2000 years ago.
4. What happened after the book _____ (uncover)?
5. All the trains _____ (cancel) because of the bad weather yesterday.
6. The best whisky in the world _____ (distil) Scotland.
7. She was born in London but _____ (grow up) in New York.
8. He _____ (give) a huge reward for finding their cat.
9. For years she _____ (work) for the Russians, then changed sides and _____ (employ) by the Americans.
10. No-one know who really _____ (invent) the internet but lots of people claim that they _____ (do).

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ANSWER KEY

WORKSHEET 1

1. True - Paragraph 1 says 'Archaeologists are amazed that such a fragile ancient document could have survived for so long'
2. False - Paragraph 2 says 'It was spotted by a construction worker who was using a shovel to dig into a peat bog.'
3. True - Paragraph 2 say 'Crucially, after it was uncovered, the landowner placed damp soil over it to protect the book, which was written on vellum.'
4. False - Paragraph 3 says 'Initial checks suggest that the book ... was written around 800 AD.'
5. False - Paragraph 3 says 'A fragment of Psalm 83 is legible but it will take much longer to analyse the whole manuscript.'
6. True - Paragraph 4 says – 'Pat Wallace...called the ... discovery ..."a miracle find.".'

WORKSHEET 2 ready for today

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

WORKSHEET 3

1. is made
2. were killed
3. was written
4. was uncovered
5. were cancelled
6. is distilled
7. grew up
8. was given
9. worked/was employed
10. invented/did