

## Keep your English up to date 2

### Lesson Plan: Teacher's notes

#### *Bless*

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#### **Teacher's notes contents**

1. Level, topic, language, aims, materials
2. Lesson stages
3. Answers
4. Audio scripts
5. Student worksheets 1, 2, 3

**Level:** Intermediate and above

**Topic:** The use of the word 'bless' to talk about sweet or cute things

**Language:** The word 'bless' and 'blessing'

**Aims:** Listening skills – A short talk

**Materials:** Worksheet 1 - Introductory speaking and vocabulary exercises, listening section 1  
Worksheet 2 - Listening section 2  
Worksheet 3 - Extra work: Vocabulary and language  
Audio script - Available in teacher's notes  
Recording of the talk - Available online at:

[http://www.bbclearningenglish.com/radio/specials/1130\\_uptodate2](http://www.bbclearningenglish.com/radio/specials/1130_uptodate2)

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## LESSON STAGES

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### A

Explain to the students that they are going to listen to a talk by Professor Crystal from the University of Wales and that the talk is about the way the English language changes. This particular talk is about the word 'bless'.

### B

Hand out **Student Worksheet 1**. Students do **Speaking Exercise 1** in small groups or pairs.

### C

Students do the **Vocabulary Exercise 2**, without dictionaries at first.  
Practise the pronunciation of the vocabulary, as they will hear it in the talk.

### D

Students read **Listening Exercise 3** and then listen to Section 1 of the talk.  
They answer the questions.

Students listen again and answer **Listening Exercise 4**

### E

Hand out **Student Worksheet 2**

Students answer **Listening Exercise 5**

Students read the three summaries and then listen to section 2 of the talk to choose the best one.

### F

Students try to answer **Listening Exercises 6**. They listen again to **Listening Section 2** to check/complete their answers.

### G

If you wish to do some extra work with the class, hand out **Student Worksheet 3**

For the vocabulary exercise, give the students copies of the audio script and play the complete talk as they read.

## AUDIO SCRIPTS

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### Listening Section 1

There's quite a range of explanations using 'bless' in English, all originally from the religious use of the word. 'Bless you!' somebody says after a sneeze. 'Ah! Bless my soul!' – a rather older fashioned one. 'Bless you!' An interesting one is, 'Bless your heart!' used mainly by adults talking down – 'Ah! Bless your heart!' - to a child. And in the 1990s, this remarkable use, the verb by itself, usually preceded by the interjection, 'Ah!' - 'Ah! Bless!' – that sort of use. Notice the tone of voice there. I heard it when a little child had a cat snuggling up to her and the parent said, 'Ah! Bless!' And then the child hurt her finger, 'Ah! Bless!' People at the zoo, looking at penguins, 'Ah! Bless! Isn't it sweet!'

### Listening Section 2

Of course, when you get a usage like that it can get ironic very quickly. A politician now in parliament complains of harsh treatment and somebody says, 'Ah! Bless! Isn't it sad that he's so upset!' Or somebody's really trying to do something but not succeeding, 'Ah! Bless!' once again. It's a general expression of indulgent sympathy - 'Isn't that sweet?' – always with that distinctive tone of voice, always a hint of talking down. Never, never, never, use it to your boss, not if you want to keep your job!

## ANSWER KEY

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### VOCABULARY

#### TASK 2

a) a sneeze	when air comes noisily from your nose because you have a cold
b) to snuggle up to someone	to get physically close to someone in order to feel warm and comfortable
c) parliament	the place where politicians meet to discuss and make laws
d) harsh	severe, cruel or unkind
d) indulgent	when you allow someone to have a special treat or something enjoyable
f) sympathy	when you feel sorry for someone who is in a bad situation

### LISTENING SECTION 1

#### TASK 3

- a.    i.    Bless you!                      b.    i and ii            c.    iii and iv  
      ii.    Ah! Bless my soul.  
      iii.    Bless your heart.  
      iv.    Ah! Bless.

#### TASK 4

- a.    True – ‘originally from the religious use of the word’  
b.    True – ‘in the 1990s’  
c.    False – Adults often use it when talking to or about children

### LISTENING SECTION 2

#### TASK 5

The best summary is ‘b’.

## TASK 6

- a. True – ‘complains of harsh treatment’
- b. False – ‘always a hint of talking down’ – this means the speaker feels superior to the other person.
- c. True – ‘never use it to your boss’

## EXTRA WORK VOCABULARY

1.

- a. interjection
- b. remarkable
- c. ironic

## LANGUAGE

2.

a – 3

b – 2

c – 4

d – 1



## Keep your English up to date 2

### Lesson plan for students

#### *Bless*

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#### Worksheet 1

You are going to listen to a short talk given by Professor Crystal of the University of Wales about language change and new developments in English.

#### SPEAKING

##### Exercise 1:

Sort these things into four groups and compare them with your partner. Explain why you put each thing in each group.

Kittens	Small children crying	Teddy bears and dolls
Pink clothes	Puppies	Small children dressing up in adult clothes
Motorbikes	Horses and ponies	Leather jackets Cigarettes
Goldfish	Computer games	Very small cars e.g. the Mini, the Smart car
Rabbits	Cigarettes	Small country cottages with roses in the garden

<b>Group 1: Things I think are cool and stylish</b>	<b>Group 2: Things I think are sweet and cute</b>
<b>Group 3: Things I think are boring or stupid</b>	<b>Group 4: Things I don't have an opinion about</b>

**VOCABULARY:**

**Exercise 2:**

**Match these words and phrases to their definition**

<b>a) a sneeze</b>	when you feel sorry for someone who is in a bad situation
<b>b) to snuggle up to someone</b>	when you feel sorry for someone who is in a bad situation
<b>c) parliament</b>	to get physically close to someone in order to feel warm and comfortable
<b>d) harsh</b>	when you allow someone to have a special treat or something enjoyable
<b>e) indulgent</b>	severe, cruel or unkind
<b>f) sympathy</b>	the place where politicians meet to discuss and make laws

## **LISTENING: SECTION 1**

### **Exercise 3**

**Listen to Professor Crystal talking about the use of the word 'bless' in English and answer these questions.**

a. Complete these expressions, as mentioned by Professor Crystal.

i. Bless \_\_\_\_\_!

ii. Ah! Bless my \_\_\_\_\_.

iii. Bless your \_\_\_\_\_.

iv. Ah! \_\_\_\_\_.

b. Which of these expressions do we say after we sneeze?

c. Which ones do people use when they see something cute or sweet?

**1. Listen again and decide if the following statements are true or false, according to Professor Crystal.**

d. The original use of the word bless is connected with the church.

e. The use of the verb on its own appeared at the end of the last century.

f. Children often use the phrase 'Ah! Bless'.

## Worksheet 2

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### LISTENING: SECTION 2

#### Exercise 4

**Listen to Section 2 of the talk and choose the best summary of this part of the talk.**

- a. The phrase 'Ah! Bless' is only used when people think someone is sweet or cute. We always use the same intonation and you need to be careful to whom you say it.
- b. The phrase 'Ah! Bless' is not always used when people think someone is sweet or cute. Sometimes, people mean the opposite; or they are not being sincere. It is important to say it with the right intonation and you should be careful to whom you say it.
- c. The phrase 'Ah! Bless' is not always used when people think someone is sweet or cute. Sometimes it means ugly or boring. It is important to say it with the right intonation and you can use it anywhere and at anytime.

**2. Are the following sentences true or false? Listen and check.**

- c. In Professor Crystal's example, the politician thinks people have been cruel or unkind.
  - d. The special intonation used with this phrase makes people feel equal.
  - e. Someone who is your superior, or more important than you, might get angry if you say it to them.
- Worksheet 3 - Extra work
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## Worksheet 3

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### VOCABULARY

- 1 Look at the tape script and find words or phrases that mean the following.
- a sound like 'ah!' or 'wow!'
  - incredible and special
  - using words that are the opposite of what you mean, often for a joke

### LANGUAGE

2. The original use of 'bless' has a religious meaning: if God blesses someone, God protects or helps that person. From this use, we get the word 'blessing', which can mean something which happens that is good because it improves or helps your life. Look at these expressions with 'blessing' and match them to the explanations below.

- The invention of the aeroplane has been a **mixed blessing**. It means we can travel around the world so easily, but it also pollutes and therefore destroys the world.
- Romeo and Juliet were determined to marry, even without their parents' **blessing**.
- Getting lost was a **blessing in disguise**. At first I was annoyed because I would be late, but then I found a lovely secret park.
- Stop complaining and eat your dinner. You should **count your blessings**; there are many children who don't get a meal a day in this world.

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| 1. remember how lucky you are                | 2. someone's approval or agreement   |
| 3. something which has a good and a bad side | 4. something which seems to be unlucky at first, but in the end it is actually lucky |

### DISCUSSION

- Have you ever done something without your parent's blessing?
- Can you think of something that has been a blessing in disguise in your life?
- Can you think of any examples of things that have been a mixed blessing?
- What kinds of things make you count your blessings?