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## Teacher's pack

Lesson plan and student worksheets  
with answers

Lesson 24  
Bog standard



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# BBC Learning English – Keep your English Up to Date

## Lesson Plan: Teacher's notes

### Lesson 24: Bog standard

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**Level:** Intermediate and above

**Topic:** Consumerism

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

**Language:** Compound words – Bog standard

**Materials:** Worksheet 1 – Introductory speaking and vocabulary exercises,  
Listening section 1  
Worksheet 2 – Listening section 2  
Worksheet 3 – Extra work: Vocabulary and language  
Tapescript – Available in teacher's notes  
Recording of the talk – Available online at [bbclearningenglish.com](http://bbclearningenglish.com)

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## Lesson Plan: Teacher's notes

### Lesson 24: Bog standard

#### LESSON STAGES

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##### A

Explain to the students that they are going to listen to a talk by Professor Crystal and that the talk is about the way the English language changes. This particular talk is about compound words.

##### 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 listen to section 2 of the talk and check their answer for **Listening exercise 5**

##### F

Students try to answer **Listening Exercise 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 tapescript and play the complete talk as they read.

The language work explores how to make compound adjectives.

## **Lesson 24: Bog standard**

### **TAPESCRIPTS**

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#### **Listening Section 1**

It's pretty rare in English to find a compound word with a slang first part and a formal second part. Bog standard is one of those that's come in in the last few years. It means...what does it mean? It means to be basic, to be ordinary, to be unexceptional, to be uninspired – it just means ordinary. If you say something is 'bog standard', you mean it is perfectly ordinary. "He's got a bog standard car" means a perfectly ordinary car. "I've got a bog standard library book" means I've got a perfectly ordinary library book that's not exceptional or interesting in any way. It's a British slang thing; its origin is quite obscure; nobody quite knows where it came from.

#### **Listening Section 2**

Some people think that it's actually from early motorbike sales, because motorbikes used to come in a very large box you know when they were delivered – you didn't sort of drive them away, they were delivered. They came in what's called 'box standard' – and then that became 'bog standard'; in other words, out of the box, it's a perfectly ordinary kind of delivery, or ordinary kind of a bike that you bought. But people don't like that and they think that it's got a much more interesting etymology than that: a bog of course is a slang word for toilet in British English, and some people think that 'bog standard' has that kind of origin. Don't see it myself, somehow. I rather like the idea that bog means something rural, you know – the rural people are often in the bog, 'cause the bog's a muddy sort of area, full of peat and things like that. And so bog is often used to mean 'unsophisticated'. So I don't know: there's three possible etymologies for it; nobody quite knows where it comes from. It may have an ordinary meaning, but it certainly isn't an ordinary word.

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## Lesson Plan: Teacher's notes

### Lesson 24: Bog standard

#### ANSWER KEY

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#### VOCABULARY

2.

- a. **exceptional** very special, excellent
- b. **obscure** not clear, hard to know or understand
- c. **delivery** when someone brings something to your house e.g. letters or milk
- d. **etymology** the history of a word
- e. **rural** of the countryside, the opposite of urban
- f. **sophisticated** having a good knowledge of culture, fashion and modern urban life

#### LISTENING SECTION 1

3.

- a. ii – bog standard
- b. normal, usual, regular

4.

- a. False – “It’s pretty rare in English to find a compound word with a slang first part and a formal second part ”
- b. False – “Bog standard is one of those that’s come in in the last few years.”
- c. True – “its origin is quite obscure; nobody quite knows where it came from.”

#### LISTENING SECTION 2

5.

‘iv’ is not connected to the word ‘bog standard’

6.

- a. False – Motorbikes only
- b. True – “a bog of course is a slang word for toilet in British English.”
- c. True – “the rural people are often in the bog...so bog is often used to mean ‘unsophisticated’”
- d. True – “I rather like the idea that bog means something rural.”
- e. False – “It may have an ordinary meaning, but it certainly isn’t an ordinary word.”

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## Lesson Plan: Teacher's notes

### Lesson 24: Bog standard

#### EXTRA WORK

1.
  - a. basic
  - b. to see something “I don’t see it myself”
  - c. muddy

#### LANGUAGE

2.
  - i. well written, hand-made – past participle / easy-going, long-running – present participle
  - ii. built-up, run-down
  - iii. interest-free, iron-rich
  - iv. science-fiction, part-time
3.
  - a. run-down
  - b. built-up
  - c. interest-free
  - d. science-fiction
  - e. east-going
  - f. hand-made
  - g. part-time
  - h. iron-rich
  - i. long-running
  - j. well-written

## WORKSHEET 1

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### SPEAKING

#### 1. Discuss these questions with other students

- a. Have you bought a mobile telephone, a car, a TV, a computer, a music player or something similar recently? If not, do you have any of these or similar things?
- b. When you buy things like that, do you generally buy the top model with all the extra features, or, do you buy the basic model?  
For example, do you buy a mobile phone that has a camera, FM radio and internet, or do you buy a mobile phone which is only a phone?
- c. If you buy the top of the range model, why? If you buy the more basic model, why?
- d. Do you like to “keep up with the Jones’ s” – do you like to have things that are as good as or better than your friends’ or neighbours’ things?
- e. Do you think you live in a capitalist consumer economy? What are the benefits of such an economy, what are the drawbacks?

### VOCABULARY

#### 2. Match these words and phrases to their definitions

- |                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| a. <b>exceptional</b>   | not clear, hard to know or understand                             |
| b. <b>obscure</b>       | of the countryside, the opposite of urban                         |
| c. <b>delivery</b>      | having a good knowledge of culture, fashion and modern urban life |
| d. <b>etymology</b>     | very special, excellent   |
| e. <b>rural</b>         | the history of a word   |
| f. <b>sophisticated</b> | when someone brings something to your house e.g. letters or milk  |

**LISTENING SECTION 1**

**3. Now, listen to Professor Crystal talking about an unusual compound word - a word which is made up of two words. Answer these questions.**

**a. What is the word?**

- i. Bug standard
- ii. Bog standard
- iii. Bod standard

**b. Which three of these words have a similar meaning to the word?**

normal      special      unique      usual      different      regular

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

- a. It is normal for a compound word to have an informal first part and a formal second part
- b. Bog standard is a very old word
- c. People do not know when and how the word first appeared

## WORKSHEET 2

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### LISTENING SECTION 2

**5. Professor Crystal now talks about where the word might have come from. Before you listen, answer the question below.**

- a. There are three possible origins for the word 'bog standard'  
**Which one below do you think is NOT connected to the word?**
- i. Bog standard comes from box standard, a type of postal delivery
  - ii. Bog means toilet, so bog standard means not special
  - iii. A bog is a marsh (area of soft wet land), so bog standard means of low quality
  - iv. To be bogged down means to be stuck, to be unable to move forward. So, bog standard means not advanced or not developed.

Listen and check your ideas.

**6. Listen again to section 2. Are the following sentences true or false?**

- a. Bicycles and motorbikes were delivered in boxes
- b. Bog is an informal word for toilet
- c. Rural people are sometimes seen as being ignorant of fashion and culture
- d. Professor Crystal prefers the rural explanation for bog standard
- e. Bog standard is a very normal word.

Listen again to check your answers.

## WORKSHEET 3 - EXTRA WORK

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### VOCABULARY

1. Look at the tape script and find words or phrases that mean the following.
- low level, not advanced
  - to understand something, to accept something as true
  - dirty with soil or earth

### LANGUAGE

2. Bog standard is a compound adjective. There are different ways to make a compound adjective.
- The second word in a compound adjective is often a present or past participle
  - The second word may be a preposition
  - The second word may be an adjective
  - The second word may be a noun

Find examples for each type of compound adjective from the box below.

well-written      interest-free      science-fiction      built-up      run-down  
easy-going      hand-made      part-time      long-running      iron-rich

3. Put the compound adjectives in the correct sentences below.
- This is a poor area. Look at the \_\_\_\_\_ houses.
  - This area is very \_\_\_\_\_. There are no parks anywhere.
  - The bank is offering an \_\_\_\_\_ loan.
  - I like \_\_\_\_\_ films such as Star Wars.
  - He is very \_\_\_\_\_. He is always relaxed and never gets stressed.
  - At the market you can find many \_\_\_\_\_ things.
  - I have a \_\_\_\_\_ job so that I can also study at college.
  - Spinach is an \_\_\_\_\_ food.
  - This is a \_\_\_\_\_ TV show. They made the first one over twenty years ago.
  - This is a \_\_\_\_\_ book, I recommend that you read it.