

Keep your English
up to date 2

Teacher's pack

Lesson plan and student worksheets
with answers

Get a life



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Lesson Plan: Teacher's notes

Get a life

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Level: Intermediate and above

Topic: The way we use our lives

Aims: Listening skills – A short talk

Language – ‘Get a life’ and other phrases with ‘life’

Materials: Worksheet 1 – Introductory speaking and vocabulary exercises, Listening section 1
Worksheet 2 – Listening section 2
Worksheet 3 – Extra work: Vocabulary, language and discussion
Audio script – Available in teacher’s notes
Recording of the talk – Available online at bbclearningenglish.com

This plan was downloaded from:

bbclearningenglish.com/radio/specials/1130_uptodate2/page2.shtml

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LESSON STAGES

A

Explain to the students that they are going to listen to a talk by Professor David Crystal, an expert on the English language, and that the talk is about the way English is changing. This particular talk is about the phrase 'get a life'.

B

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

C

Students do **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: Section 1, Exercise 3** and then listen to Section 1 of the talk.
They answer question 'a'.

Students listen again and do **Listening: Section 1, Exercise 4**.

E

Hand out **Student Worksheet 2**
Students read **Listening: Section 2, Exercise 5** and then listen to Section 2 of the talk.
They answer questions 'a' and 'b'.

F

Students try to answer **Listening: Section 2, Exercise 6**. They listen again to 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.

The language work focuses on other expressions that use 'life'.

The final discussion activity is connected to the language work, using the new phrases.

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AUDIO SCRIPTS

Listening Section 1

This familiar old noun 'life', now used widely in the phrase 'get a life!', usually in a derogatory tone of voice like that – 'Get a life, why don't you!' Well, it's said to somebody who the speaker feels is leading an unfulfilling existence, your life is empty, dull, there's more to life than what you're doing, start living!

It can be serious, but it's usually jocular. It can be used for instance to a workaholic, or for anybody obsessed with something like a television programme, always watching a particular soap, shall we say. That person might be told to 'get a life'.

Listening Section 2

The phrase goes back a couple of decades. It was US slang in California, years and years ago, and then it became the name of a US television show. And then it became all sorts of usages around radio, television, novels, short stories – don't take things too seriously!

Chill out! Get a life!

It happens to the best of us ... people who pity my obsession with linguistics, often tell me to 'get a life'!

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ANSWER KEY

VOCABULARY

Exercise 2

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| a. derogatory | negative and critical |
| b. unfulfilling | not satisfying |
| c. jocular | light-hearted |
| d. soap | a TV drama series |
| e. Chill out | relax; take it easy |
| f. obsession | something you can't stop thinking about or doing |

LISTENING: SECTION 1

Exercise 3

- a. i. it is immoral and bad

Exercise 4

- a. True – 'usually in a derogatory tone of voice like that'
b. False – 'It can be serious, but it's usually jocular'
c. False – 'It can be used for instance to a workaholic, or for anybody obsessed with something like a television programme, always watching a particular soap'

LISTENING: SECTION 2

Exercise 5

- a. The United States of America
b. ii. you need to be less serious about something

Exercise 6

- a. False – 'The phrase goes back a couple of decades'
b. True – 'it became the name of a US television show'
c. True – 'people who pity my obsession with linguistics, often tell me to 'get a life!''
-

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EXTRA WORK

VOCABULARY

Exercise 7

- a. existence
- b. workaholic
- c. pity

LANGUAGE

Exercise 8a

work full expectancy soul still sentence private

- a. I try **to live life to the full**.
- b. It is important to get your **work-life balance** right.
- c. The problem with being famous is that **your private life** is often in the newspapers.
- d. Make sure you invite Peter – he's always **the life and soul of the party**.
- e. ...but I don't like **still life pictures**.
- f. In many countries, **life expectancy** is increasing because people are smoking less.
- g. The judge gave the murderer **a life sentence**

8b Match the phrases from Exercise 8a to the definitions below.

- i. **a life sentence**
- ii. **the life and soul of the party**
- iii. **work-life balance**
- iv. **your private life**
- v. **to live life to the full**.
- vi. **life expectancy**
- vii. **still life pictures**

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WORKSHEET 1

SPEAKING

1. Discuss these questions with a partner

- a. Do you have any hobbies or particular interests? What are they? How much time do you spend doing these things?
- b. If not hobbies, do you have some other things that you feel you have to see or do? How much time do you spend doing these things? Use the ideas in the box to help.

watch a particular TV programme

read a newspaper

listen to one particular pop group's music

telephone friends

go clothes shopping

spend time on-line

- c. Do you think that any of these things that you do are a waste of time, or do you think they help you have a better life? Why/why not?
- d. In general, is there anything you would like to change in your life? Is it possible to make your life more satisfying or useful?

VOCABULARY

2. Match these words and phrases to their definitions

- | | |
|------------------------|--|
| a. derogatory | light-hearted; not serious |
| b. unfulfilling | negative and critical |
| c. jocular | relax; take it easy |
| d. a soap | not satisfying |
| e. Chill out! | something you can't stop thinking about or doing |
| f. obsession | a TV drama series |

LISTENING SECTION 1

3. Now, listen to Professor Crystal talking about the use of the phrase 'get a life' in English and answer this question.

a. If someone says 'get a life' to you, what do they think of your life?

- i. it is immoral and bad
- ii. it is boring and unsatisfying
- iii. it is successful and productive
- iv. it is too busy and too fast

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

- a.** We generally say the phrase with a negative and critical voice.
- b.** It is only used in a serious way.
- c.** It might be said to someone who washes too often.

WORKSHEET 2

LISTENING SECTION 2

5. Listen to Section 2 of the talk and answer these questions.

- a. Which country does the phrase come from?
- b. What other meaning for 'get a life' does Professor Crystal give?
 - i. you need to be less angry about something
 - ii. you need to be less serious about something
 - iii. you need to be more careful about something

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

- a. 'Get a life' is a very old phrase.
- b. It was once the title of a TV programme.
- c. Some people say Professor Crystal spends too much time studying language.

WORKSHEET 3 - EXTRA WORK

VOCABULARY

7. Find the phrases in the text that have the following meanings.

- a. life, or state of being
- b. someone who works a lot; they are addicted to work
- c. to feel sad for someone, perhaps with a sense of superiority

LANGUAGE

8a. There are many phrases that use the word 'life'. Complete the example sentences with the words in the box.

work	full	expectancy	soul	still	sentence	private
------	------	------------	------	-------	----------	---------

- a. I try to live life to the _____. I don't waste time watching TV or worrying about little things.
- b. It is important to get your _____-life balance right. If you spend too much time doing your job you miss out on your family and friends.
- c. The problem with being famous is that your _____ life is often in the newspapers.
- d. Make sure you invite Peter – he's always the life and _____ of the party. He's really funny and friendly to everyone.
- e. When I go to art galleries I like to see the landscapes and portraits, but I don't like _____ life pictures.
- f. In many countries, life _____ is increasing because people are smoking less.
- g. The judge gave the murderer a life _____

8b Match the phrases from Exercise 8a to the definitions below.

- i. a criminal must spend the rest of their life in prison
- ii. someone who creates a positive atmosphere at a social event

(exercise continues on following page)

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- iii. the time you spend at work compared with the time you spend at leisure
- iv. your personal life - leisure activities and relationships with family and friends
- v. to enjoy your life as much as possible
- vi. how long people generally live
- vii. pictures of objects; often bowls of fruit and everyday objects

DISCUSSION

9. Discuss these questions with your partner.

- a. Do you know someone who is the life and soul of the party? Describe him/her.
- b. Have you got a good work-life balance? What changes could you make to improve it?
- c. Do you like to read about the private lives of celebrities?
- d. What kind of art do you/don't you like?
- e. Do you believe in capital punishment for murderers, or should they get life sentences?
- f. What are the reasons for the differences in life expectancy between different countries?
- g. Do you think you live your life to the full? In what ways yes or no?
- h. Do you know anyone who needs to get a life?