Keep your English up to date 3

Teacher’s pack
Lesson plan and student worksheets with answers

D-list

BBC WORLD SERVICE
LEARNING ENGLISH
Level: Intermediate and above
Topic: Celebrities and fame
Aims: Listening skills – A short talk
Language – ‘D-list’ and other similarly formed words

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

This plan was downloaded from:

bbcleareningenglish.com/radio-specials/1130_uptodate2/page2.shtml
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 word ‘D-list’.

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 question ‘a’.

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 words which are formed by combining a letter with another word.

The final activity is a role-play interview – a journalist interviews a celebrity who has reached the end of their career.
D-list. A few years ago, a US entertainment journalist called James Ulmer worked out a scale to assess how valuable movie stars were. He called it the Ulmer Scale and it became very popular, a lot of people use it now. And the top movie stars, you know, people like Tom Hanks, are A-list – they are the tops, they are the stars, they are the real ones. Movie stars that are not quite so valuable are B-list. And then ones that are still less valuable are C-list. I mean, obviously, everybody wants to be on the A-list but, inevitably, you get A, B and C. But that’s where the list stops. There is no ‘D-list’. And, of course, as soon as people realised that, they invented precisely such a word! ‘A D-list’, in other words, is a celebrity who is so obscure that he or she doesn’t even get on to the scale. In other words, ‘a D-list’ is a bottom-of-the-heap kind of situation.

Well, of course, it immediately attracted some kudos because some people who were really quite well known, didn’t get on to the list for whatever reason and made the most of this. There was a 2005 TV show called – by Kathy Griffin – called My Life on the D-list which was very popular – it was a satirical take on the whole business of Hollywood and listings and things like that.

And now, in a kind of inverted-snobbery sort of way, there are all kinds of D-list things. There are D-list celebrity T-shirts, D-list cartoons, D-list blogs. This particular programme is not, however, on the D-list!
ANSWER KEY

VOCABULARY

Exercise 2
a. assess — analyse and judge
b. valuable — important or worth a lot of money
c. obscure — unimportant or unknown
d. heap — a pile of things
e. kudos — respect or fame
f. satirical — humorous or funny, in a way that criticises something

LISTENING: SECTION 1

Exercise 3
a. It is a bad thing as it means you are not a valuable, or important, celebrity

Exercise 4
a. False – He was a journalist who reported on the world of entertainment.
b. True – ‘The top movie stars, you know, people like Tom Hanks, are A-list.’
c. False – ‘There is no ‘D-list’. And, of course, as soon as people realised that, they invented precisely such a word! ‘A D-list’’

LISTENING: SECTION 2

Exercise 5
a. Some well-known people did not appear on the official A, B and C lists. Therefore, this meant you could be on the D-list and be with some people who were actually quite well-known.

Exercise 6
a. False – ‘There was a 2005 TV show...’
b. True – ‘There are D-list celebrity T-shirts.’
c. False – ‘This particular programme is not, however, on the D-list!’
EXTRA WORK

VOCABULARY

Exercise 7

a. worked out
b. precisely
c. inverted-snobbery

LANGUAGE

Exercise 8a

a. On hot days, if I’m not at work, I usually wear a T-shirt.
b. Drive slowly here, this is a dangerous S-bend.
c. They usually take an X-ray if they want to check for a broken bone.
d. He’s made a complete U-turn. Last week, he said he supported the war, but now he says he is against it.
e. All really famous people have a special secret charm or charisma known as the X-factor. No-one can say exactly what it is, but great singers definitely have it.
f. At the end of this road, you’ll come to a T-junction. Turn left there, not right.
g. A magazine which is only published on the Internet is known as an E-zine.
h. One of my favourite meals is a T-bone steak, served with chips.
WORKSHEET 1

SPEAKING

1. Discuss these questions with your partner.
   a. Who do you think are the five most famous living people in the world, from the world of show business i.e. films, music etc.?
   b. Can you think of five other people who are famous, but less famous than your first five?
   c. Are there people who are famous in your country who are probably not famous around the world?
   d. Why do you think people want to become famous?
   e. Do you think that being famous makes people happy?
   f. What are the disadvantages of being a famous celebrity?
   g. In your country, are there some people who are celebrities who haven’t actually done or achieved very much? How did they become famous?
   h. Would you like to be a celebrity?

VOCABULARY

2. Match these words and phrases to their definitions.
   a. assess  
      respect or fame
   b. valuable  
      unimportant or unknown
   c. obscure  
      analyse and judge
   d. heap  
      humorous or funny, in a way that criticises something
   e. kudos  
      a pile of things
   f. satirical  
      important or worth a lot of money
LISTENING SECTION 1

3. Now, listen to Professor Crystal talking about the use of the word ‘D-list’ in English and answer this question.

a. For a celebrity, is being on the D-list a good or a bad thing?

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

a. James Ulmer was a famous celebrity in the USA.
b. Tom Hanks is an example of a very important celebrity.
c. James Ulmer added the D-list to his scale because people wanted it.
LISTENING SECTION 2

5. Listen to Section 2 of the talk and answer this question.

a. Why did being on the D-list become less of a bad thing?

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

a. A film was made about actors and stars on the D-list.
b. You can buy clothes which have pictures of unimportant celebrities on them.
c. Professor Crystal thinks ‘Keep Your English Up-to-date’ is not very important.
WORKSHEET 3 - EXTRA WORK

VOCABULARY

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

a. designed, created or calculated
b. exactly
c. prejudice which is opposite to the usual prejudice

LANGUAGE

8. There are many other words which are made by combining a letter – always written as a capital letter – with another word. Complete the words in the sentences with the words in the box.

bend  junction  shirt  bone  ray  factor  turn  zine

a. On hot days, if I’m not at work, I usually wear a T-________.
b. Drive slowly here, this is a dangerous S-_______.
c. They usually take an X-________ if they want to check for a broken bone.
d. He’s made a complete U-________. Last week, he said he supported the war, but now he says he is against it.
e. All really famous people have a special secret charm or charisma known as the X-_______. No-one can say exactly what it is, but great singers definitely have it.
f. At the end of this road, you’ll come to a T-_______. Turn left there, not right.
g. A magazine which is only published on the Internet is known as an E-________.
h. One of my favourite meals is a T-________ steak, served with chips.
ROLE-PLAY: Interview

9a. Prepare for a role-play in which a journalist interviews a famous celebrity who has just retired from show business. Read the role-play information in the boxes below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Celebrity</th>
<th></th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Childhood</td>
<td>How you got started in show business</td>
<td>Your early career</td>
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<tr>
<td>Your greatest successes</td>
<td>Your biggest failures</td>
<td>Your personal life</td>
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<tr>
<td>Your best times</td>
<td>Your worst times</td>
<td>Money</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The joys of fame</td>
<td>The drawbacks of fame</td>
<td>Creativity / talent</td>
<td></td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Journalist</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>His/her childhood</td>
<td>How he/she got started in show business</td>
<td>His/her early career</td>
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<tr>
<td>Success and failure</td>
<td>Good and bad times</td>
<td>His/her personal life</td>
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<tr>
<td>Money</td>
<td>The good and bad things about fame</td>
<td>Creativity / talent</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

9b. Work with a partner and take it in turns to be the celebrity and the journalist.