

Keep your English  
up to date

## Teacher's pack

Lesson plan and student worksheets  
with answers

Lesson 8:  
Dis(s)



**BBC WORLD SERVICE**  
LEARNING ENGLISH



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# BBC Learning English – Keep your English up to date

## Lesson Plan: Teacher's notes

### Lesson 8: Dis(s)

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**Level:** Intermediate and above

**Topic:** Manners and respect

**Language:** A prefix: Dis  
Using prefixes

**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 writing  
Tapescript – Available in teacher's notes  
Recording of the talk – Available online at [bbclearningenglish.com](http://bbclearningenglish.com)

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### Lesson 8: Dis(s)

#### LESSON STAGES

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##### A

Explain to the students that they are going to listen to a talk by Professor David Crystal and that the talk is about the way the English language changes. This particular talk is about a prefix that has been used in a slang way with a new meaning.

##### 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 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 tapescript and play the complete talk as they read.

The language work focuses on other example of 'dis' in use

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#### TAPESCRIPTS

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#### Listening Section 1

Prefixes, almost by definition, don't occur as separate words. I mean, that's what they're for: they're for modifying a word, occurring before a word, and making it change its meaning - happy, un-happy, national, de-nationalise and all this sort of thing. They don't normally occur as words on their own. But occasionally they do.

You've perhaps heard 'anti' - he's very 'anti' something, a-n-t-i. Or he's very 'pro' something -- well they're prefixes which have suddenly become different words. Now they've been around a long time.

#### Listening section 2

Now they've been around a long time. A recent one, an absolutely fascinating one, is this prefix 'dis': d-i-s, or sometimes d-i-s-s. It's from the word 'disrespect', to show disrespect to somebody, from the noun, by insulting language, or insulting behaviour. It means basically to put somebody down.

It's American, black English slang really, and it's been around since about 1980. And what's happened, it's come to be used as a full verb. You can say now 'I dissed him' - to diss, I dissed him - or 'stop dissing her'. And that's the interesting thing, that it's the prefix that's become the verb! It's a most remarkable development.

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#### ANSWER KEY

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#### VOCABULARY

- 2.
- |                               |  |
|-------------------------------|--|
| a. <b>to modify something</b> | to change something                      |
| b. <b>to occur</b>            | to happen or to take place               |
| c. <b>insulting language</b>  | words which offend someone or are rude   |
| d. <b>insulting behaviour</b> | actions which offend someone or are rude |
| e. <b>slang</b>               | very informal language, usually spoken   |
| f. <b>remarkable</b>          | incredible / amazing                     |

#### LISTENING SECTION 1

- 3.
- a. Prefixes
  - b. iii. 'they don't occur as separate words...they don't normally occur as words on their own'
- 4.
- a. happy/unhappy and nationalise/denationalise
  - b. anti and pro
  - c. they are old – 'they've been around for some time'

#### LISTENING SECTION 2

- 5.
- a. dis and diss
  - b. it has become a verb
- 6.
- a. disrespect
  - b. ii. to treat someone badly, to be rude to someone
  - c. informal – it is American black English slang

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### Lesson 8: Dis(s)

#### EXTRA WORK

1.

- a. absolutely fascinating
- b. to put somebody down
- c. to come to be used as

#### LANGUAGE

2.

These three do not use 'dis' - **join look clean**

These seven can use 'dis' - **claim connect content cover infect like trust**

3.

- a. We disclaim all responsibility for this disaster. We will not pay any compensation.
- b. If there is a thunderstorm, I always disconnect my TV from the electricity
- c. The rumours about future redundancies caused a lot of discontent amongst the staff
- d. Do you think Columbus really discovered America?
- e. Wash the cut with antiseptic in order to disinfect it
- f. I really dislike it when people put their feet on the bus seats
- g. I am afraid I distrust our president. I simply don't believe him any more

4.

- a. it gives the opposite meaning

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## Dis(s)

### WORKSHEET 1

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

#### SPEAKING

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

a. How good are your manners? Do you do these things?

Say please and thank you

Hold doors open for people

Give up your seat for elderly people

Turn off the TV when a visitor arrives

Drop chewing gum in the street

Put your feet on seats on public transport

b. Do you respect these people? Why/why not and in what way?

Your parents

Your grandparents

Your political leaders

Nelson Mandela

George W Bush

Your religious leaders

Your friends

Your brothers and sisters

Celebrities

#### VOCABULARY

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

a. **to modify something**

actions which offend someone or are rude

b. **to occur**

incredible / amazing

c. **insulting language**

to happen or to take place

d. **insulting behaviour**

to change something

e. **slang**

words which offend someone or are rude

f. **remarkable**

very informal language, usually spoken

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## **Dis(s)**

### **LISTENING SECTION 1**

**3. Now, listen to Professor Crystal talking about a linguistic feature of English. Answer these questions.**

- a. What linguistic feature is he talking about?
  
- b. What does he say about them?
  - i. they are used after a word, at the end of a word
  - ii. there are many different ones
  - iii. usually, they do not exist as words themselves

**4. Listen again and answer these questions**

- a. Which words does he give as examples of normal prefixes?
  
- b. Which two prefixes does he give as examples of words that have broken the normal rule for prefixes?
  
- c. Are these last two prefixes new or old?

**WORKSHEET 2**

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**LISTENING SECTION 2**

**5. Professor Crystal now talks about a specific prefix. Listen and answer these questions.**

- a. There are two ways to spell this prefix. What are they?
- b. What is unusual about this prefix?

**6. Listen again and answer these questions.**

- a. From which word has this prefix been taken, to become a verb?
  - i. disrepute    ii. disrespect    iii. dissipate
- b. What does the new verb mean?
  - i. to move somebody from a high place to a low place
  - ii. to treat someone badly, to be rude to someone
  - iii. to ignore somebody
- c. Is it a formal or an informal word?

**Listen again to check your answers.**

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## Dis(s)

### WORKSHEET 3 - EXTRA WORK

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#### VOCABULARY

**1 Look at the tape script and find words or phrases that mean the following.**

- a. very interesting
- b. to make somebody feel small, to be negative towards someone
- c. to change job/role/function over a period of time

#### LANGUAGE

**2 Three of these words can't take 'dis' as a prefix. Which ones?**

cover    join    trust    infect    content  
claim    look    like    clean    connect

**3. Add 'dis' to the words above and put the correct word in each sentence.**

- a. We \_\_\_\_\_ all responsibility for this disaster. We will not pay any compensation.
- b. If there is a thunderstorm, I always \_\_\_\_\_ my TV from the electricity
- c. The rumours about future redundancies caused a lot of \_\_\_\_\_ amongst the staff
- d. Do you think Columbus really \_\_\_\_\_ America?
- e. Wash the cut with antiseptic in order to \_\_\_\_\_ it
- f. I really \_\_\_\_\_ it when people put their feet on the bus seats
- h. I am afraid I \_\_\_\_\_ our president. I simply don't believe him any more

**4.**

**5. Which phrase best describes the meaning of 'dis' as a prefix?**

- a. it gives the opposite meaning to the original word
- b. it gives a negative meaning
- c. it means 'without'
- d. it means 'do something again'