

Words In The News

Teacher's pack

Lesson plan and student worksheets
with answers

Israel's secret service
goes public – 19 March
2008



BBC WORLD SERVICE
LEARNING ENGLISH



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BBC Learning English – Words in the News

Israel's secret service goes public – 19 March 2008

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Level: Intermediate and above

Topic: The Israeli Secret Service has launched a new blog written by four of its agents

Language: Vocabulary of a news report

Aims:

Reading skills	– Understanding a short news report
Language skills	– Vocabulary – direct and reported speech
Writing skills	– Writing a job advertisement

Materials:

Worksheet 1	– Comprehension questions
Worksheet 2	– Vocabulary matching task
Worksheet 3	– Grammar/language focus – vocabulary

News story – Available online at:

http://www.bbclearningenglish.com/newsenglish/witn/2008/03/080319_shin_bet.shtml

Preparation: Before the lesson, make enough copies of worksheets 1, 2 and 3 for the students. Cut up the vocabulary and explanations to make a matching exercise.

If possible, bring some job adverts from newspapers, magazines or the internet for the fluency activity at the end of the lesson.

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LESSON STAGES

A Stimulate student interest in text

Ask students to match the country with its Secret Service.

Country	Secret Service
The UK	General Directorate of Intelligence
The USA	MI5 (or Security Service)
Israel	Stasi (or Ministry for State Security)
Cuba	FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation)
Former East Germany	Shin Bet (or General Security Service)

Answers:

Country	Secret Service
The UK	MI5 (or Security Service)
The USA	FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation)
Israel	Shin Bet (or General Security Service)
Cuba	General Directorate of Intelligence
Former East Germany	Stasi (or Ministry for State Security)

Ask students if they would like to be secret agents. Why/why not?

B Pre-teach essential vocabulary

Elicit/present key vocabulary that students need either to understand the key points in the text or to understand and/or answer any questions that you'll set them later in the lesson. The vocabulary is from Words in the News (so you can elicit the vocabulary by using the explanations provided online or below).

You could either pre-teach the vocabulary at this stage of the lesson or you could use the vocabulary building activity from further down in this lesson plan. Have students working together in small groups and ask them to try to match the vocabulary with the definitions. Encourage them to work with the other groups to pool their knowledge.

When they have done as much as they can, if they have dictionaries, ask them to look up the words to check their answers and to find out the definitions of any words they are not sure of. If they don't have dictionaries, check their answers and give them help with any words they aren't sure of.

Whichever method you use to elicit/present the vocabulary, you should then model it (say it clearly, highlighting the word stress) and get them to repeat the words after you.

chatty

conversational and friendly in style

facetious

trying to be funny or amusing about subjects most people think should be serious

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in silhouette

with faces hidden by shadows

sole

only

work-life balance

a fixed expression to talk about spending enough time with your family, friends, at home, doing hobbies etc. as well as doing your paid job effectively (rather than spending too much time on your work and not enough on your life outside work)

the private sector

industries or businesses run by private individuals rather than by the government or other public bodies

dubbed

given an official sounding title or nickname

to debunk a few myths

to tell the truth about things that people think are true and have said were true for many years but actually aren't

the recruitment section

the section of a website or newspaper where jobs are advertised or offered

beyond just

not only

C Written record of vocabulary

Write the words on the board, eliciting spelling as you write. Elicit and show the word stress of each item and word class, if appropriate.

Give students some time to copy the boardwork into their notebooks.

Boardwork:

chatty

facetious

in silhouette

sole

work-life balance

the private sector

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dubbed

to debunk a few myths

the recruitment section

beyond just

D Set a skimming question

Tell the students they are going to read a text about secret agents in Israel. Put this question on the board:

Members of the public want to find out about:

- A. Secret Service salaries
- B. what agents eat
- C. both of the above
- D. neither of the above

Students read text the first time.

Give them a time limit (1 - 2 minutes) to read the text quickly to find the answer to the question. They do not need to understand the details of the text to answer it.

E Check answers

C. both of the above. Paragraph 4 says ‘members of the Israeli public (are) keen to find out more about ... the pay, and even the food.’

F Set specific information questions

Hand out worksheet 1 or use the online quiz. Students complete the worksheet to help them understand the text in more detail. Give them a time limit (5 - 6 minutes) to read the text a second time in more detail and to answer the questions.

G Check answers

Elicit True or False answers. Direct attention to a particular paragraph if an answer is wrong to try to elicit the correct answer (see worksheet 1 and answer key).

H Vocabulary consolidation/building

Students do the vocabulary matching exercise (worksheet 2 that you cut up before the lesson). In small groups they match the correct word with the right definition.

I Check answers

Elicit answers. If an answer is wrong, ask other students to try to elicit the correct answer.

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J Language focus: Grammar – direct and reported speech

Elicit or tell students the difference between direct speech and reported or indirect speech (direct speech can be written as dialogue while indirect speech uses a reporting structure instead of the exact words spoken).

Ask students to find two examples of reported speech in paragraph 3. Ask them to re-write them as direct speech. Remind them of the need for quotation or speech marks, i.e. single or double inverted commas to open and close the quotation.

Answers:

'We don't work in a basement' he said.
He said they didn't work in a basement.

'We have to sit in traffic jams' he said.
He said they had to sit in traffic jams.

Here are some of the main rules of indirect speech. Elicit or teach as many (or as few) of them as are relevant for your class and their level.

Indirect or reported speech often moves the tenses back following a past tense reporting verb. This is sometimes called 'backshift'. For example, the sentence 'I want you to do the next exercise' can be re-written, with backshift, as 'She **said** that she **wanted** us to do the next exercise'.

The tenses usually shift as follows:

Direct speech	Reported speech
Present simple	Past simple
Present continuous	Past continuous
Present perfect	Past perfect
Present perfect continuous	Past perfect continuous
Past simple	Past perfect
Past continuous	Past perfect continuous
Present perfect continuous	Past perfect continuous

Note however that if we are reporting a fact or something that is still true, we can use the same direct speech form in indirect speech. So, for example, from today's text, in paragraph 2:

As indirect speech: She says she **went** to the agency because it **offered** her a better work-life balance.

As direct speech: She says 'I **went** to the agency because it **offered** me a better work-life balance'

Other changes:

Going to	Was going to
Was going to	Had been going to
Will	Would
Can	Could
If	Whether

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Pronouns (I, you, he, she, him, we, they) and possessive adjectives (his, her, my etc.) change according to the identity of the reporter.

Then use worksheet 3 to focus on direct and indirect speech.

K Check answers

If an answer is wrong, ask other students to try to elicit the correct answer (see worksheet 3 and answer key).

L Follow-up activity: Writing

Show students some examples of job adverts from the internet, newspapers or magazines. Elicit what information is common to all these adverts (a brief description of the job, skills and qualifications needed, pay and conditions offered, interview date, closing date for applications etc.).

Tell students they are going to write a job advert for agents for Shin Bet (or for a different non-fictional or fictional secret service).

Give them 5 minutes to brainstorm ideas and plan their writing in pairs or small groups, and 5 - 10 minutes to write their adverts. They can choose to write their adverts in groups or by themselves.

Circulate, while they are working, giving help with grammar and spelling, if necessary.

M Feedback

If possible, display the job adverts around the room. Ask the students to look at each one and decide which job they would most like to apply for and why. Ask one or two students to tell the rest of the class about their choices. Give praise for correct language, and give feedback on incorrect language. You could write some example phrases or sentences on the board and elicit from students which ones are correct and which ones are wrong and why.

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STUDENT WORKSHEET 1

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

Are the following sentences true or false?

1.	The bloggers always write in a very serious style.	T/F
2.	Half the bloggers are women and half are men.	T/F
3.	Agent Chet says her job with the Secret Service offers her more chance to combine her job with her home life than her last one.	T/F
4.	Agent Aleph's work is very similar to what most people think secret agents do.	T/F
5.	The blogs were set up in part to get people interested in join Shin Bet.	T/F
6.	The Shin Bet official said that the public aren't very interested in learning about the Secret Service.	T/F

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STUDENT WORKSHEET 2

VOCABULARY

Match these words and phrases to their definitions.

1.	chatty	A.	the section of a website or newspaper where jobs are advertised or offered
2.	facetious	B.	conversational and friendly in style
3.	in silhouette	C.	given an official sounding title or nickname
4.	sole	D.	a fixed expression to talk about spending enough time with your family, friends, at home, doing hobbies etc. as well as doing your paid job effectively (rather than spending too much time on your work and not enough on your life outside work)
5.	work-life balance	E.	to tell the truth about things that people think are true and have said were true for many years but actually aren't
6.	the private sector	F.	only
7.	dubbed	G.	trying to be funny or amusing about subjects most people think should be serious
8.	to debunk a few myths	H.	not only
9.	the recruitment section	I.	industries or businesses run by private individuals rather than by the government or other public bodies
10.	beyond just	J.	with faces hidden by shadows

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STUDENT WORKSHEET 3

Direct And Reported Speech

Re-write each of the following sentences as direct or reported speech.

1. A Shin Bet official told the BBC that the idea was to inform the public.

‘ _____ ,

a Shin Bet official told the BBC.

2. The official said that the agency had been cheered by the feedback from members of the Israeli public.

‘ _____ ,

the official said.

3. She said, ‘There are parts of my job I’m not allowed to talk about at home. But my husband and I don’t mind that’.

She informed us _____.

But she added _____.

4. ‘We need to debunk some of these myths. It’s not all glamour and fast cars’ he insisted.

He insisted _____,

and added _____.

5. At his job interview the agent said that he wanted to join the service because he believed it was the best way he could help serve his country.

He said ‘ _____

_____ ,

_____ .

6. The retired agent told us that he had joined the service after the war. He said he’d loved every minute of it even though it had sometimes been very dangerous.

He said ‘ _____.

_____ .

_____ .

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ANSWER KEY

STUDENT WORKSHEET 1

1. **False** – Paragraph 1 says, ‘The tone is chatty, at times even facetious’.
2. **False** – Paragraph 2 says, ‘Agent Chet is the sole woman among them’.
3. **True** – Paragraph 2 says, ‘She says she went to the agency because it offered her a better ‘work-life balance’ than her previous job in the private sector’.
4. **False** – Paragraph 3 says, ‘Agent Aleph ...attempts to debunk a few myths’.
5. **True** – Paragraph 4 says, ‘The blogs are intended to draw members of the public into other areas of the Shin Bet website - in particular the recruitment section’.
6. **False** – Paragraph 4 says, ‘The official said that the agency had been cheered by the feedback from members of the Israeli public - keen to find out more about the jobs within Shin Bet, the pay....and even the food.’

STUDENT WORKSHEET 2

- | | | | | |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|--------------|
| 1. B | 2. G | 3. J | 4. F | 5. D |
| 6. I | 7. C | 8. E | 9. A | 10. H |

STUDENT WORKSHEET 3

1. ‘The idea is to inform the public,’ a Shin Bet official told the BBC.
2. ‘We have been cheered by the feedback from the members of the Israeli public,’ the official said.
3. She informed us that there were / are parts of her job that she wasn’t / isn’t allowed to talk about at home. But she added (that) she and her husband didn’t / don’t mind that.
4. He insisted (that) they needed / need to debunk some of those myths, and added (that) it wasn’t / isn’t all glamour and fast cars.
5. He said, ‘I want to join the service because I believe it’s the best way I can help serve my country.’
6. He said ‘I joined the service after the war. I loved every minute of it even though it was sometimes very dangerous.’

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The Israeli secret service has launched a new blog, written by four of its agents. The agents discuss how they were recruited, and what sort of work they perform; they also answer questions sent in by members of the public. This report from Tim Franks:

The tone is **chatty**, at times even **facetious**. The agents from Israel's internal security service, the Shin Bet, are shown **in silhouette**.

Agent Chet is the **sole** woman among them. She works in high-tech. She says she went to the agency because it offered her a better **work-life balance** than her previous job in **the private sector**. There are parts of her job, she says, which she can't discuss even with her husband, but there again, at home, they don't much like talking about work.

Agent Aleph, **dubbed** 'the expert' on the blog, attempts **to debunk a few myths**. 'We don't work in a basement,' he says. 'We don't spend the day wearing earpieces. And we don't get to have flashing blue lights for our cars. We have to sit in traffic jams like everyone else.'

The blogs are intended to draw members of the public into other areas of the Shin Bet website, in particular **the recruitment section**. A Shin Bet official told the BBC that the idea was to inform the public that the agency offers work **beyond just** stopping Palestinian paramilitary attacks. The official said that the agency had been cheered by the feedback from members of the Israeli public, **keen** to find out more about the jobs within Shin Bet, the pay, and even the food!

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