



ENGSKYPE Lessons

Reading + Speaking lesson

Topic: *News*

*Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's need,
but not every man's greed.*

~Mohandas K. Gandhi

1) Warm-up

What was the last good news and bad news you heard (read)?
Retell it, and share emotions and thoughts you have had after reading it.



Pre-reading tasks

2) Read and discuss the following questions:

- 1) How important is keeping up to date with the news to you?
- 2) Do you prefer to watch, listen to or read about news?
- 3) Do you trust everything you read, see or hear on the news?
- 4) What is news, actually? What makes something news?
- 5) Is reading news a good habit?

3) Key words: fill the gaps in the sentences using the words from the article

Hazard, irrelevant, overrated, to inhibit

- a) If something is _____, it has no connection with the subject
- b) _____ is a source of danger
- c) To _____ is to limit the extent of something
- d) If something is _____, it is too highly evaluated

Reading

4) Read the article

News is bad for you – and giving up reading it will make you happier

by Rolf Dobelli

theguardian



In the past few decades, the fortunate among us have realized the hazard of living with too much food (obesity, diabetes) and have started to change our diets. But most of us do not yet understand that news is to the mind what sugar is to the body. News is easy to digest. The media feeds us small bites of matter that don't really concern our lives and don't require thinking. Unlike reading books and long magazine articles (which require thinking), we can swallow quantities of news flashes, which are bright-colored candies for the mind. We are beginning to understand how toxic news can be.

News misleads. Take the following event. A car drives over a bridge, and the bridge collapses. What does the news media focus on? The car. The person in the car. Where he came from. Where he planned to go. How he experienced the crash (if he survived).

But that is all irrelevant. What's relevant? The stability of the bridge. News leads us to walk around with the completely wrong picture in our heads. So terrorism is overrated. Chronic stress is under-rated. We are not rational enough to be exposed to the press.

News is irrelevant. Out of the approximately 10,000 news stories you have read in the last 12 months, name one that allowed you to make a better decision about a serious matter affecting your life, your career or your business. The point is: the consumption of news is irrelevant to you. We get anxious when we're cut off from the flow of news. The less news you consume, the bigger the advantage you have.

News has no explanatory power. News items are bubbles on the surface of a deeper world. The more facts you digest, the less of the big picture you will understand.

News is toxic to your body. It constantly triggers the limbic system. In other words, your body finds itself in a state of chronic stress. The other potential side-effects include fear and aggression.

News inhibits thinking. Thinking requires concentration. Concentration requires uninterrupted time. News pieces are specifically engineered to interrupt you. They are like viruses that steal attention for their own purposes. News makes us shallow thinkers. But it's worse than that. News affects memory. News is an intentional interruption system.

News works like a drug. As stories develop, we want to know how they continue. Most news consumers – even if they used to be book readers – have lost the ability to deal with lengthy articles or books. After four, five pages they get tired, their concentration decreases, they become inattentive. It's because the physical structure of their brains has changed.

News wastes time. If you read the newspaper for 15 minutes each morning, then check the news for 15 minutes during lunch and 15 minutes before you go to bed, then add five minutes here and there when you're at work, then you will lose at least half a day every week. Information is no longer a scarce commodity. But attention is.

News makes us passive. News stories are overwhelmingly about things you cannot influence. The daily repetition of news about things we can't act upon makes us passive. The scientific term is "learned helplessness". It's a bit of a stretch, but I would not be surprised if news consumption contributes to the widespread disease of depression.

News kills creativity. Finally, things we already know limit our creativity. I don't know a single truly creative mind who is a news consumer – not a writer, not a composer, mathematician, physician, scientist, musician, designer, architect or painter. If you want to come up with old solutions, read news. If you are looking for new solutions, don't. Society needs journalism – but in a different way. Important findings don't have to arrive in the form of news. Long journal articles and in-depth books are good, too.

I have now gone without news for four years, so I can see, feel and report the effects of this freedom first-hand: less disruption, less anxiety, deeper thinking, more time, more insights. It's not easy, but it's worth it.

5) Comprehension check: find the answer according to the text

- a) Why does the author compare news with food?
- b) In what way does news inhibit thinking?
- c) How much time does reading news consume every week?
- d) What are the effects of being without news for a couple of years?

6) Find in the article and explain the meaning of the following words and expressions:

Here and there

A scarce commodity

A bit of a stretch

To come up with

First-hand

Post reading activities

7) Discuss the following sayings

It's amazing that the amount of news that happens in the world every day always just exactly fits the newspaper. - Jerry Seinfeld

“The best fiction is far more true than any journalism.” — William Faulkner

“The news isn't there to tell you what happened. It's there to tell you what it wants you to hear or what it thinks you want to hear.” — Joss Whedon

“One reason that cats are happier than people is that they have no newspapers.” — Gwendolyn Brooks

Keys:

- 3)
a) irrelevant
b) hazard
c) to inhibit
d) overrated
- 5)
a) News is to the mind what sugar is to the body
b) News are specifically engineered to interrupt you
c) At least half a day every week
d) Less disruption, less anxiety, deeper thinking, more time, more insights
- 6)
Here and there – in various places
A scarce commodity – something rare, which is difficult to find
A bit of a stretch - exaggeration
To come up with – to find or produce something
First-hand – from the first or original source



Другие материалы для **Skype** уроков по английскому вы можете найти на сайте <http://engskype.info/>