

## Teacher's notes

### Understand meaning from context

#### Warm up

##### Prepare this in advance.

Write out four small pieces of paper containing instructions as follows:

- 1 *You've just heard that you've won a prize worth a lot of money. Respond with 'I'm OK!'*
- 2 *You've just had some bad news but don't want to talk about it. Respond with 'I'm OK!'*
- 3 *Someone has said something to annoy you and you're angry. Respond with 'I'm OK!'*
- 4 *Your friend thinks you're angry but you're not. Respond with 'I'm OK!'*

Put students in pairs. Ask a pair to volunteer. Make sure the rest of the class can see/hear them. Give Student A one of the pieces of paper, and give Student B a different one (they shouldn't read each other's pieces of paper). Tell Student A to ask how Student B is. Tell Student B to respond according to what's on the paper. Depending on which piece of paper they have, their response should be:

- 1 excited
- 2 flat; dismissive
- 3 angry
- 4 bright (with the emphasis on *I'm*)

Ask Student A to say if Student B is *really* OK. Then ask the rest of the class the same question.

Tell the pair to swap roles. Repeat the processes above, asking first the other student in the pair and then the rest of the class about the second speaker's reaction. Next, choose another pair and repeat with the other two pieces of paper, asking the first speaker, then the rest of the class, how the second speaker really feels.

Tell students to practise in their pairs. They shouldn't need the pieces of paper – they can just decide how they feel before their partner asks them. Their partner guesses whether or not they are really OK.

Finally, ask the class to tell you how we can understand so many different emotions from the same phrase (*I'm OK*). Students may suggest that tone of voice and body language play a part, but the truth is, we just understand something about the response that goes beyond words. Tell the class that this lesson contains information about how we use the context (and even things out of context, such as saying *I'm OK* when you're clearly not) to get a deeper understanding of meaning.

#### Using the Factsheet

**Make sure students have completed and understood the Theory to practice section before starting the Worksheet.**

**There are two possible ways to use the Factsheet:**

- 1 Give students the Factsheet before the lesson, so they can read it at home and come to the lesson prepared to do the Worksheet. If you use this approach, start the lesson by checking that all students have read and understood the Factsheet, and answer any questions.
- 2 Give students the Factsheet at the beginning of the lesson and start by working through it with the students.

**Note:** The Factsheet contains references to 'unknown' words (in quotation marks). The reason for this is that, although students may feel they are unknown, you should impress upon them throughout the exercises that they are not usually *wholly* unknown – we can usually understand something about a word (and often quite a lot) even if we have never seen it before.

#### Theory to practice

##### Answers

- 1
  - a argued; protested
  - b impossible to imagine
  - c difficult
  - d part of the bottom of a boat
  - e suited to

##### Possible answers

- 2
  - a The examples of each should make this clear, although if students do not recognize any of the examples (trumpet/ trombone/flute/clarinet), their understanding depends on whether they know (or can guess) the meanings of the words *brass* and *woodwind*. Most students should at least be able to work out that we are talking about sections of the orchestra.

- b The (hard) mouth (parts) of a bird. Also known as a *bill*.
- c Probably not, because of its size. Its markings mean you are more likely to mistake it for a small tiger or leopard.
- d A GP (who might refer you to a specialist).

## Using the worksheet

### Practice

**1**   **01-05** Listen to five extracts and match them to the situations (a–e). Discuss some of the words and phrases that helped you identify the context.

- This first task focuses on some everyday situations to help reinforce the fact that students use context all the time – often without even thinking about it.
- Put students in pairs and ask them to briefly discuss the kinds of conversations they might hear in the five situations listed. Remind them that predicting plays a big part in listening and, even if they are wrong, the fact that they have thought about the situations will make them more receptive to what they are going to hear.
- After a minute or two, play  **01-05**, then allow a further minute or so for students to discuss what they heard to help them make their choices. Only play the audio a second time if students really need to hear it again (see the Extra exercise below).
- Elicit answers from the class, encouraging students to tell you some of the words and phrases that helped them guess the situation in each case.

#### Answers

-  **01** c
-  **02** d
-  **03** b
-  **04** e
-  **05** a

#### Extra exercise

- If there is time, and if your students have found this first exercise easy, write the following words on the board:  
*back*  
*go*  
*light*  
*off*  
*out*  
*take*
- Tell the class that, in the listening exercise they have just done, all of these words appear in each situation. However, they don't all have the same meaning.
- Ask the class if they can remember any of the uses.
- Then, still in their pairs, tell students to listen again for these six words (they could listen for three each if they prefer).
- Elicit as many different uses of each word as you can, for example:  
*come back / bring back / look back*  
*I'm going to go / you know how it goes / off it goes*
- Prompt with any that they have missed (see the highlighting in the Transcripts).
- Finally, explain that students have just faced one of the biggest challenges with listening to words in context – they have heard familiar words with different, sometimes idiomatic meanings. Congratulate your class on succeeding in this difficult task!

## Transcript

## ▶ 01

They should take good care of you in here – and anyway, it’s where you need to be for the time being. It’s very clean, and very light – you’ll appreciate that. I’ve spoken to the staff and they were very kind. They told me to tell you not to hesitate to use the buzzer to call them if you need anything – they’re just out there. Here – I’ll leave it by your pillow so you can reach it. I’m going to go now and let you rest. I’ll take your coat – you won’t need it here. Can you think of anything else you want me to bring when I come back? OK. I’ll be off, then.

## Transcript

## ▶ 02

I’m afraid we have had to become quite strict about returns. You see, there were a lot of people bringing goods back – telling us they had bought them here – but in reality, they were taken from another shop. You know how it goes with shoplifters – they know all the tricks ... And, in light of that, we had to change our policy to put them off trying it. So it’s refund or exchange *only with a valid receipt*, I’m afraid. Anything else is out of the question.

## Transcript

## ▶ 03

The warmer temperature of the sea means that the clouds that form out at sea, from evaporating sea water, do so at a higher altitude – the heat takes the vapour higher. And when the cloud is blown over the land, it doesn’t release even a light rain over the mountains. Instead, off it goes on its way, leaving the land to suffer drought. Now, if you look back at your notes, you’ll see that ...

## Transcript

## ▶ 04

So, take a look at these plans. What it all means, basically, is that we would knock down these two walls. Both of them will have to go ... that will extend the kitchen out into the dining area, and, of course, the living room would be part of that one large space. I know it’s a lot of work, but it will pay off in the end. I think you’ll love it. There’ll be so much more light everywhere, and we’ll get back that open-plan feeling you loved in our old place.

## Transcript

## ▶ 05

I think the highlights worked well last time – I mean, it suits you when it’s light, doesn’t it? And we can afford to go a bit shorter – I think it will make you look younger if I take a bit more off. As far as the colour is concerned, I’m tempted not to dye it this time – let the last of the red grow out and go back to your natural colour. What do you think?

**2 ▶ 06 Listen to people speaking on different subjects and, for each one, tick the correct answer.**

- This exercise reinforces the first set of bullet points in the Key features from the Factsheet. It targets some low-frequency words so that students can try to use the techniques they have learnt to guess their meanings. If any of your students happen to know any of the words in italics, instruct them not to tell the others!
- Allow about a minute for students to read the questions. Then play ▶ 06. Play it a second time if necessary.
- When checking answers, make sure students realize what they have just practised (see information in brackets after the answers below).

## Answers

- a** a verb meaning *to give up* or *to give away*  
(The correct answer depends on recognizing the part of speech – only a verb fits here.)
- b** bad behaviour  
(The correct answer depends on identifying the negative prefix and cross-referencing it with the description of the behaviour.)
- c** remove  
(The correct answer depends on the logical conclusion that gardeners and homeowners would not like the effects of the plant.)
- d** a form of decorative jewellery for men  
(The correct answer depends on the surrounding words – we understand that a good impression is wanted.)
- e** be placed in control  
(The correct answer depends on our understanding that there is no literal sense of *take*, or *over*, so it must be idiomatic or a phrasal verb.)

## Transcript

### ▶ 06

- a** She was a young, struggling songwriter who was desperate for money, so she **relinquished** her rights to her own material in return for a modest amount of cash. The record company, as so often happens, went on to make a fortune from her music.
- b** Many people felt that the manager running onto the field to celebrate his team's goal in front of their opponents' supporters was an example of **unsportsmanlike** behaviour and should be punished by the authorities.
- c** Japanese knotweed can grow to over two metres tall and stop everything else in the garden from growing. In addition, its roots can damage buildings. It is notoriously difficult to **eradicate** it, but you can see why gardeners and homeowners would want to.
- d** It was clearly the most important meeting of his life. Sam was dressed smartly in a white cotton shirt with gold cufflinks and a silk tie. He felt he had done enough to impress them with his looks.
- e** In the event of an emergency where the president is physically unable to decide on policy – such as during a serious illness – the vice-president will **take over**.

## 3 ▶ 07 Listen to four extracts and answer the question about each one.

- This exercise reinforces the second set of bullet points in the Key features from the Factsheet.
- Allow about a minute for students to read the questions. Then play ▶ 07. Play it a second time if necessary.
- When checking answers, make sure students realize what they have just practised (see information in brackets after the suggested answers below).

## Suggested answers

- a** Lack of punctuality.  
(The correct answer forms part of an example.)
- b** Transmission devices (used as an early warning system for tsunamis in the Indian Ocean).  
(The correct answer forms part of a definition.)
- c** One shaped like a 'V'.  
(The correct answer forms part of a similarity.)
- d** His investigations prepared the way for the 'germ theory' of diseases / the introduction of clean water supplies / better sanitation in London and other cities.  
(The correct answer forms part of a contrast.)

**Transcript**
 07

- a These fundamental differences in attitude result in behaviour that can irritate others – for example, a person from a monochronic culture will be upset by a polychronic person’s lack of punctuality.
- b A company called EvoLogics studied dolphin communication for eight years and developed a way to detect underwater earthquakes and transmit the information as part of a tsunami warning system. Small transmission devices called modems are now being used as an early warning system for tsunamis in the Indian Ocean.
- c You need to find a group that is standing in a more open shape like a ‘V’. That’s a group that will be happy for other people to join it.
- d Although Snow’s research did not determine exactly what substance it was in the water that caused cholera, his investigations prepared the way for the ‘germ theory’ of diseases and for the introduction of clean water supplies and better sanitation in London and other cities.

**4**   **08 Listen to a longer extract and answer the questions. With a partner, discuss how you found the answers.**

- Refer students to the questions.
- Tell them to listen carefully for the relevant information. (This extract is from *C21 English for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Level 4, so students may not be familiar with it.)
- Play  **08**. Play it a second time if students want you to.
- In checking answers, allow for paraphrasing of those given below.
- Allow a further minute or two for pairs to discuss how they found the answers. Ask them to report back to the class.

**Possible answers**

- a Urbanization/migration.
- b The causes of urbanization/migration. / The two types of causes (push and pull factors).
- c A push factor. / Something that drives people away from rural areas.
- d Things that pull people towards towns and cities. / More jobs and higher wages. / Amenities in urban areas such as schools and hospitals. / A better quality of life.
- e In a lecture. / On a video/livestream.

**Transcript**
 08

So what causes urbanization? We can separate the causes of this migration into push factors and pull factors. That is, things that push people away from rural areas, like low wages or a lack of jobs, or natural disasters such as floods or droughts, which can cause starvation. People are forced out of rural areas by these factors. Then there are things that pull people towards towns and cities. Yes, I’m talking about more jobs and higher wages, but there are also the amenities in urban areas such as schools, hospitals and so on. In general, people are attracted to the cities by a better quality of life.

**Reflect**

**5**  **In this lesson, you have used a lot of subskills in order to understand meaning from context. Look at the checklist below and, with a partner, make sure you understand all the points. Then try to come up with examples.**

- First of all, make sure the students understand the points in the checklist (refer them back to the Factsheet and the examples there if that helps).

- Allow as long as necessary for pairs to discuss the checklist and think about their own examples. It is not essential for them to come up with a new example for every point, just so long as they understand what they have learnt.
- Finally, remind the class to use this checklist when they listen in future.