

Ready, set, go!

This month our activities will focus on the topic of sport. Our B2 First and C1 Advanced students will practise Reading with a text about lifestyle and exercise. Our B1 Preliminary students will practise Listening with a video about how sports benefit our bodies and minds. Finally, our young learners will practise their reading and speaking skills with conversations about sports. Happy teaching!

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1. Health and education

Level: B2 First / C1 Advanced

Skills: Reading and Speaking

Interaction: Individual, in groups and whole class activity

Time: 45 mins



Warm up (10') – whole class activity

- Do you enjoy playing sports? Which ones?
- Has our lifestyle changed over recent years? If so, how?
- Do you think people exercise more or less than in the past? Why (not)?
- Is it important for young people to play sports at school? Why (not)?

Reading (10') – individual activity

You are going to read an article about learning sports and exercise. Read the text and answer the questions below. Underline or highlight the parts of the text where you find the answers.

A healthy mind lives in a healthy body, but should physical education be a priority?

“You don't stop playing because you grow old; you grow old because you stop playing” G.B Shaw

It is interesting how modern life changes our relationship to our bodies. In the period up to the 1970s it was clearly important for young people to be physically fit, fast, strong and good at sports. Since the advent of the computer, the internet and mobile devices, young people often seem to be exercising their thumbs more than their legs, arms, hearts and lungs. Rather than playing with friends on the streets, most kids prefer attending to their virtual profiles, using online applications such as YouTube, Instagram and Facebook, or playing games.

The situation is not much better for the wider population. A recent study concluded that nearly half of Europeans never exercise or play sport, and this proportion has been gradually increasing in recent years.

Despite recognition of the positive impact of sport on children's education and health, physical education in school is being increasingly challenged. The expansion of the curricula into areas such as digital skills, entrepreneurship and citizenship has left less space for other subjects. The ever-increasing focus on testing core curricula skills such as language of instruction, mathematics and sciences also means that subjects that are not evaluated through tests are given lower priority when curricula time is allocated. Compared with core academic subjects, health and physical education represent a small share of the total curriculum both at primary and secondary level.

Yet the WHO recommends a minimum of 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity daily between the ages of 5 - 17 years. To achieve this, young people would have to complement the scheduled physical education at school with a substantial amount of physical activity outside school. But it is difficult for children and young people to find time for sport when there are so many competing after-school activities – including homework, clubs and virtual communication.

Physical education is not, however, just about health. It also teaches young people about the importance of key values such as honesty, teamwork, fair play, respect for themselves and others and adherence to rules. Sport can play a strong role in building social cohesion and social capital among young people and adults in communities. It has also been used as a practical tool to engage young people in their communities through volunteering, resulting in higher levels of leadership, community engagement and altruism among young people. And on top of this, research shows that being active makes students healthier and better learners in the classroom.

The arguments for strengthening the place of physical education in schools are difficult to ignore. Essentially this would amount to an investment in creating healthy habits in young people that bring long-term benefits for individuals and society.

Adapted from [Eurydice](#) 2018

Questions

1. How have advances in technology changed the way children spend their free time?
2. What impact have new subjects had on the curricula in schools?
3. Why is physical education given a lower priority in schools than mathematics or sciences?
4. Why might children have difficulties finding time for sport?
5. Which important principles can physical education teach young people?
6. What impact can sports have on students' learning?

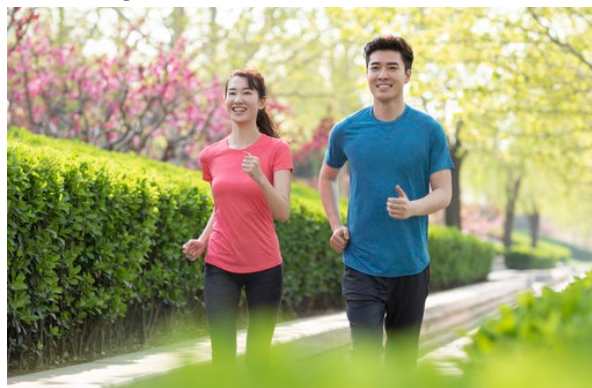
Follow-up (10') – whole class activity

1. What do you understand by the quote at the beginning of the text?
2. Did anything you read in the text surprise you. If so, why?
3. Do you think physical education should be given more priority over other subjects in schools? Why (not)?

Speaking (15') – in groups of 3 or 4

Two of you will be the candidates and answer the questions about the photos below. One of you will act as the interlocutor, conducting the test. The person in the role of the interlocutor will also give the two candidates some feedback. You can find the success criteria for B2 First and C1 Advanced below.

Interlocutor: I'm going to give each of you two photographs. I'd like you to talk about them on your own for about a minute. Student A, I'd like you to compare the pictures and say what activities the people are doing and how they might be feeling.



Interlocutor: Student B, I'd like you to compare the pictures and say which sports competitions the people might be participating in and what the experience might be like for them.



B2 First Speaking Success Criteria*

B2 First Speaking Success Criteria			
Grammar and Vocabulary	Yes	No	Comments / Examples
Did your classmates use simple grammar e.g. present simple, past simple, can?			
Did your classmates use some complex grammar e.g. modal verbs, future tenses, conditionals, perfect tenses, phrasal verbs?			
Did your classmates use synonyms?			
Did your classmates repeat the same words several times?			
Discourse Management	Yes	No	Comments / Examples
Did your classmates use longer sentences?			
Were there long pauses when your classmates spoke?			
Did your classmates speak about the task?			
Did your classmates repeat their ideas?			
Did your classmates use connectors such as and, but, so, because, although, however, moreover?			
Pronunciation	Yes	No	Comments / Examples
Could you understand your classmates?			
Were there any problems with pronunciation that made communication difficult?			
Was intonation appropriate e.g. in questions, showing interest?			
Interactive Communication	Yes	No	Comments / Examples
Did your classmates start the conversation sometimes and respond to each other's ideas?			
Did your classmates help each other reach a decision?			
Did your classmates need some help when talking?			
Global Achievement	Yes	No	Comments / Examples
Did your classmates handle communication on familiar topics despite some pauses?			
Did your classmates organise their ideas in general?			
Were there any examples of incoherent ideas, inaccuracies and inappropriate use of grammar and vocabulary?			

C1 Advanced Speaking Success Criteria*

C1 Advanced Speaking Success Criteria	Yes	No	Comments / Examples
Grammatical resource			
Did your classmates show a good degree of control of simple grammar e.g. present simple, past simple, can?			
Did your classmates use some complex grammar e.g. modal verbs, future tenses, conditionals, perfect tenses, phrasal verbs?			
Lexical resource			
Did your classmates use a variety of appropriate vocabulary to talk about familiar topics?			
Did your classmates use a variety of appropriate vocabulary to talk about unfamiliar topics?			
Discourse Management			
Did your classmates use longer sentences?			
Were there long pauses when your classmates were speaking? Were they frequent?			
Did your classmates speak about the task?			
Did your classmates organise their ideas clearly?			
Did your classmates use different cohesive devices and discourse markers (connectors, reference pronouns, substitution, etc.)?			
Pronunciation			
Could you understand your classmates without difficulty?			
Were there any problems with pronunciation that made communication difficult?			
Was intonation appropriate e.g. in questions, showing interest?			
Was sentence and word stress accurately placed?			
Were individual sounds clear?			
Interactive Communication			
Did your classmates start the conversation and respond to each other's ideas in a suitable way?			
Did your classmates follow up on each other's ideas?			
Did your classmates need some help when talking?			
Did your classmates develop the ideas discussed?			
Did your classmates help each other reach a decision?			
Global achievement			
Did your classmates handle communication on a variety of familiar topics without many pauses?			
Did your classmates handle communication on a variety of unfamiliar topics without many pauses?			
Did your classmates use suitable grammar and vocabulary with good control to express ideas?			
Did your classmates talk in a coherent and organised way?			

* Please note that your classmates' performance should be analysed independently, considering what each of them does in the different parts of the test.

Suggested answers**Reading**

1. How have advances in technology changed the way children spend their free time?
Advances in technology mean that young people exercise less. Instead of playing with friends outside, most children prefer using online applications like YouTube, Instagram and Facebook, attending to their online profiles or playing games.
2. What impact have new subjects had on the curricula in schools?
The inclusion of subjects such as digital skills, entrepreneurship and citizenship in the curricula has left less space for other subjects.
3. Why is physical education given a lower priority in schools than mathematics or sciences?
There is more and more focus on testing core skills like language of instruction, sciences and mathematics. Subjects that aren't assessed through exams are given lower priority when allocating curricula time.
4. Why might children have difficulties finding time for sport?
They may have a lot of after-school activities, such as clubs, homework and virtual communication.
5. Which important principles can physical education teach young people?
Teamwork, honesty, fair play, adherence to rules and respect for themselves and for others.
6. What impact can sports have on students' learning?
According to research, if students are active, they are healthier and are also better learners.

A healthy mind lives in a healthy body, but should physical education be a priority?

"You don't stop playing because you grow old; you grow old because you stop playing" G.B Shaw

It is interesting how modern life changes our relationship to our bodies. In the period up to the 1970s it was clearly important for young people to be physically fit, fast, strong and good at sports. 1. Since the advent of the computer, the internet and mobile devices, young people often seem to be exercising their thumbs more than their legs, arms, hearts and lungs. Rather than playing with friends on the streets, most kids prefer attending to their virtual profiles, using online applications such as YouTube, Instagram and Facebook, or playing games.

The situation is not much better for the wider population. A recent study concluded that nearly half of Europeans never exercise or play sport, and this proportion has been gradually increasing in recent years.

Despite recognition of the positive impact of sport on children's education and health, physical education in school is being increasingly challenged. 2. The expansion of the curricula into areas such as digital skills, entrepreneurship and citizenship has left less space for other subjects. 3. The ever-increasing focus on testing core curricula skills such as language of instruction, mathematics and sciences also means that subjects that are not evaluated through tests are given lower priority when curricula time is allocated. Compared with core academic subjects, health and physical education represent a small share of the total curriculum both at primary and secondary level.

Yet the WHO recommends a minimum of 60 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity daily between the ages of 5- 17 years. To achieve this, young people would have to complement the scheduled physical education at school with a substantial amount of physical activity outside school. 4. But it is difficult for children and young people to find time for sport when there are so many competing after-school activities – including homework, clubs and virtual communication.

Physical education is not, however, just about health. 5. It also teaches young people about the importance of key values such as honesty, teamwork, fair play, respect for themselves and others and adherence to rules. Sport can play a strong role in building social cohesion and social capital among young people and adults in communities. It has also been used as a practical tool to engage young people in their communities through volunteering, resulting in higher levels of leadership, community engagement and altruism among young people. 6. And on top of this, research shows that being active makes students healthier and better learners in the classroom.

The arguments for strengthening the place of physical education in schools are difficult to ignore. Essentially this would amount to an investment in creating healthy habits in young people that bring long-term benefits for individuals and society.

Adapted from [Eurydice](#) 2018

2. The benefits of sport

Level: B1 Preliminary

Skills: Speaking and Listening

Interaction: Individual, in pairs and whole class activity

Time: 35 minutes



Warm up (10') – whole class activity

- Do you play any sports? Which ones?
- Do you like watching sports? Which ones?
- Do you have a favourite sports team? Why do you like it?
- What do you think the benefits of exercise are?

Listening (15') – in pairs and individual activity

You are going to watch a [video](#) about the benefits of playing sport. Read the questions below and write an answer. You will watch the video twice.



1. What are some of the health benefits of exercise?

2. What can an increase in endorphins and regular exercise do?

3. What becomes easier when you are committed to a team and having fun?

4. According to the video, what is a growth mindset?

5. Which aspect of sport has a long-term, transformative benefit??

Useful vocabulary

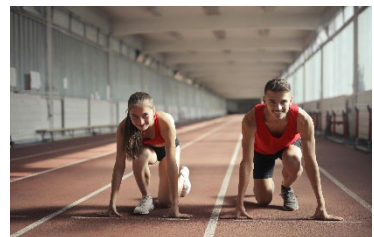
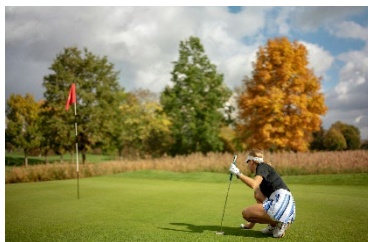
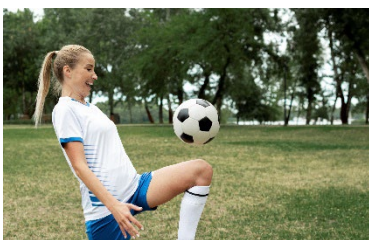
- **The underdog** – the person or team that is least likely to win
- **To cheer** – to shout encouragement
- **To sharpen** – to improve
- **Self-awareness** – good knowledge about yourself
- **A hurdle** – a problem to resolve before you can progress

Definitions adapted from Cambridge Dictionary (Cambridge University Press & Assessment, 2024)

Speaking (10') – in pairs

Read the situation below and then talk to your partner for about two minutes.

A young woman works a lot and is very busy, but she is looking to practise a new sport. She wants to have fun and improve her fitness without spending a lot of money. Here are some sports that she could try. Talk together about the different activities she could do and say which would be the best option for her.



Now discuss these questions with your partner:

- How did you feel about the activity?
- What did you find easy? Why?
- What was challenging about the task? Why?

Key

Listening

1. What are some of the health benefits of exercise?

It reduces cholesterol, strengthens bones and lowers the risk of high blood pressure, stroke and diabetes.

2. What can an increase in endorphins and regular exercise do?

Improve mood and memory and sharpen focus.

3. What becomes easier when you are committed to a team and having fun?

It is easier to get into the habit of exercising regularly.

4. According to the video, what is a growth mindset?

The idea that if you can't do something today, you can improve with practice and eventually you will achieve it.

5. Which aspect of sport has a long-term, transformative benefit?

Learning through failure.

3. My favourite sport

Level: A1 Movers & A2 Flyers

Skills: Speaking and Reading

Interaction: individual, in pairs and whole class activity

Time: 30 minutes



Warm up (10') – whole class activity

- Do you like sports? Which ones?
- Who do you play sports with?
- Which sports can you play with friends?
- Which sports can you do alone?
- Which sports can you play with a ball?

Reading (10') – individual activity

Jane and Peter are talking outside their school. They are talking about playing basketball together. What does Jane say?

Read the conversation and choose the best answer. Write A-H for each answer.

You do not need to use all the letters. There is one example.


Example





Peter: Hi Jane! What are you doing tomorrow afternoon?


Jane: C


Questions


1.  **Peter:** Would you like to play basketball with me after school?

 **Jane:** _____


2.  **Peter:** It's mine too! Where can we play?


 **Jane:** _____


3.  **Peter:** What time do you want to meet?

 **Jane:** _____

4.  **Peter:** Yes, that's perfect. Who else can we invite?

 **Jane:** _____

5.  **Peter:** Do they like basketball too?

 **Jane:** _____



- A We can play on the basketball court in the park.
- B Yes, they love it! They play in the school team.
- C Hi Peter! I don't have any plans. **(example)**
- D No, I don't think they did.
- E Yes, that sounds fun! Basketball is my favourite sport.
- F I'll ask Paul and Clare if they want to come too.
- G I invited them to the park.
- H Can you meet at five o' clock?

Speaking (10') – in pairs

Work with a partner. One person is Student A and the other person is Student B. Ask your partner questions to complete the information you don't have. Answer your partner's questions.

Student A

Alice's favourite sport

Favourite sport	Tennis
Who with	Classmates
Day	Every Friday
Time	3 o'clock
Where	At school


Ben's favourite sport

Favourite sport	?
Who with	?
Day	?
Time	?
Where	?

Student B**Alice's favourite sport**

Favourite sport	?
Who with	?
Day	?
Time	?
Where	?

**Ben's favourite sport**

Favourite sport	Swimming
Who with	Sister
Day	Every Thursday
Time	5 o'clock
Where	Sports centre



Key

Reading

1. E
2. A
3. H
4. F
5. B

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