

Lesson: Know Yourself – Phobias

Level: Pre-intermediate

Age: Teenagers / Adult

Time: 90 minutes

Language objectives: dependent prepositions, understanding vocabulary in context, topic words

Key life skills: self-knowledge, communication, respecting diversity

Materials: one copy of the worksheet per student



Teacher's notes

Procedure

Lead-in

1. Put students in pairs. Ask them to look at the pictures and discuss the questions. Monitor and help where necessary. Ask students if they know what these phobias are called.

Key:

A. a fear of buttons (*koumpounophobia*); B. a fear of heights (*acrophobia*); C. a fear of spiders (*arachnophobia*); D. a fear of confined spaces (*claustrophobia*); E. a fear of needles or injections (*trypanophobia*)

Reading: Letters

2. Write the words *agony aunt* on the board and ask students if they know what it is.

Explain that it is usually someone in a magazine or newspaper (but also sometimes on the radio or television) who tries to help people with their problems. People write letters to the agony aunt who then writes back giving advice. All the letters and responses are published in a newspaper / magazine.

Ask students to read through the four letters and fill in the gaps with one of the fears shown in the pictures. If they don't know the correct word, ask them to write down the letter of the corresponding picture. Put students in pairs and get them to check their answers together. Then check as a class.

Key a:

1. needles; 2. buttons; 3. spiders; 4. heights

3. Next, ask students to read the four questions and answer each one. Again, get pairs to check their answers together before checking as a class.

Key b:

1. b; 2. c; 3. a; 4. b

4. Ask students to read through Betty's replies and match each one to the correct letter. Put students in pairs and get them to check their answers together. Then check as a class.

Key c:

1. Mrs Jane Stewart; 2. Inga; 3. Jonas

Extension activity

At this stage you could suggest that your students pretend to be Betty, the agony aunt, and write a response to the letter from Liam. Or, if they disagree with any of Betty's advice, they could rewrite one of the replies.

Working with the language

5. Ask students to read the information about dependent prepositions and look at the examples in the box. Then ask them to do the exercise but without looking back at the letters and replies. Once they have finished, get them to check their answers in pairs and look back at the letters and replies before checking as a class.

Key:

1. of; 2. about; 3. to; 4. for

Working with vocabulary

Focus 1: Meaning

6. Ask students to look back at the letters and replies and find words that match the definitions. Encourage them to work in pairs and discuss their ideas. Monitor and help where necessary. If students are struggling, write the words on the board (but not in the correct order). Finally, check the answers as a class.

Key:

1. cancel; 2. injection; 3. crowd; 4. uniform;
5. get rid of; 6. upset; 7. lift; 8. calm; 9. common;
10. destination

Lesson: Know Yourself – Phobias

Focus 2: Topic-related words

7. Ask students to complete the four sentences with the words in the box. Let students use dictionaries if they want to. Check the answers as a class.

Key:

1. *frightened*; 2. *phobic*; 3. *fear*; 4. *phobia*

Listening

8. Ask students to listen to a short extract from a radio show and decide which of the four letters from the Reading: Letters exercise it is most closely related to.

Transcript:

Host: On today's programme we're talking about fears and phobias. Let's go to our first caller. Who do we have on Line 1?

Liam: Hello, my name's Liam.

Host: Hi Liam, and what are you frightened of?

Liam: Well, it's not me. It's my girlfriend, Mary.

Host: Aha!

Liam: She's absolutely terrified of spiders. I have to get rid of them while she hides in another room.

Host: That does sound bad, but then it's not very unusual. In the UK, around 60% of women and 20% of men suffer from arachnophobia.

Key:

letter 3

9. Now ask students to read letter 3 and circle any differences between that and the radio show. Put students in pairs and ask them to discuss their answers together. Play the recording again, if necessary. Check the answers as a class.

Key:

There are three main differences: Liam / Liam's girlfriend is frightened of spiders; his girlfriend / he has to get rid of the spiders; he stands on a chair / she hides in another room

Speaking

10. Put students in small groups and ask them to discuss the questions together. Monitor and help where necessary. Afterwards, ask a few groups to report back on their discussion. You might want to open this out to the whole class.

Project

Ask students to think about their phobias. What are they? Do they know why they have this phobia? How easy is it to explain how that phobia makes them feel?

Ask students to carry out the project for homework and present their results in the next lesson.

Lesson: Know Yourself – Phobias

Lead-in

Look at the photos. What can you see? Which of these are you frightened of?



Lesson: Know Yourself – Phobias

Reading: Letters

- A** Read the letters sent to an agony aunt and fill in the gaps with four of the fears shown in the pictures.



Dear Betty

- Dear Betty,**
Next month I'm going on holiday with my girlfriend, but I think we might have to cancel it. The problem is that she is scared of _____. We're going to India so she needs some injections, but she's saying she can't get them because she's frightened. What can I do?
Jonas
- Dear Betty,**
I'm very worried about my daughter, Becky. She's five years old and she is going to start school in September. The problem is she is frightened of people, crowds, open spaces and almost anything new. She's even frightened of _____ and there are lots of those on her school uniform. Can you help us?
Mrs Jane Stewart
- Dear Betty,**
My name's Liam and I'm frightened of _____. My fear is so bad that when I see one my girlfriend has to get rid of it while I stand on a chair. I started to be frightened of them after I saw the film *Arachnophobia*. Can you help me?
Liam (aged 28)
- Dear Betty,**
I recently lost my job and I'm very upset. The problem was that they wanted to move my office to the tenth floor. It's not that I'm scared of _____. I don't really mind that, but I am claustrophobic so I can't get into the lift. I also use a wheelchair so if there was a fire I wouldn't be able to use the stairs. What can I do?
Inga

- B** Read the letters again and answer these questions. Circle the correct answer.

- Inga can't work on the tenth floor because she's scared of ...
a. heights b. confined spaces c. open spaces
- Whose girlfriend has a phobia?
a. Liam's b. Inga's c. Jonas's
- Who is frightened of lots of things?
a. Becky b. Liam c. Inga
- Whose fear started after watching a film?
a. Becky 's b. Liam's c. Jonas's

- C** Here are three replies from Betty that offer advice. Match the replies to the correct letters.

a.

Yes, that is a bit of a problem. Why don't you take her to the doctors? Maybe he can help. Doctors often know a lot about phobias and they can give you advice of how to keep her calm.

b.

That's terrible. I think you've been treated very badly and I'm sure you can get some money from your company. Do you want your job back? It doesn't sound as though the people you worked for are very nice. I'm sure you can find a better job.

c.

It's quite a common fear and so doctors are usually good and can often help. I would also suggest changing your destination. There are lots of nice places you can go on holiday where you don't need injections.

Lesson: Know Yourself – Phobias

Working with the language

In English, some verbs and adjectives can only be used if they are followed by a preposition. We call these *dependent prepositions*. Look at the examples from the agony aunt letters:

- The problem is she's very frightened of people, ...
- Doctors often know (a lot) about phobias ...

Circle the correct prepositions **WITHOUT** looking back at the letters and replies.

1. The problem is that she is scared *about / of* needles.
2. I'm very worried *about / of* my daughter, Becky.
3. The problem was that they wanted *for / to* move my office ...
4. It doesn't sound as though the people you worked *for / to* are very nice.

Working with vocabulary

Focus 1: Meaning

Find words in the letters and replies that match the definitions below.

1. to say that something that was arranged will not happen now (letter 1)
2. the process of putting a drug into your body through the skin using a needle (letter 1)
3. a large number of people in the same place (letter 2)
4. a set of clothes you wear to show that you go to, or work at, a particular place (letter 2)
5. to remove or throw something away because it is not nice (three words; letter 3)
6. sad, worried or angry about something (letter 4)
7. a machine that carries people up or down in a tall building (British English; letter 4)
8. relaxed and not frightened (reply A)
9. frequent, typical or usual (reply C)
10. the place where someone is going (reply C)

Focus 2: Topic-related words

Complete the sentences with the correct word from the box.

fear frightened phobia phobic

1. Everyone is _____ of something.
2. It's quite common to be claustro_____.
3. Hippopotomonstrosesquipedaliophobia is the _____ of long words!
4. If you suffer from acro_____ then you are frightened of heights.

Listening

Listen to the radio show and answer the questions below.

1. Which letter is it about?
2. How many differences between the letter and the radio show did you hear?
3. What were they?

Speaking

Discuss these questions in small groups.

1. Do you have any phobias?
2. What are they?
3. Can you explain your phobias?
4. Do you know anyone who is frightened of something strange? What is it?
5. Rank these from 1-5. 1 = most frightening; 5 = least frightening.

- spiders
- heights
- needles
- confined spaces
- crowds

Project

Carry out a survey. Ask at least thirty people what phobias they have and find out which are the most common. Present your findings to the class in the next lesson.