

EVERYDAY LIFE

NIGHT AND DAY

Age: Teenager/Adult

Level: Intermediate (B1)

Time: 30 minutes +

Activity: In this lesson, students will:

1. do a questionnaire about sleeping;
2. read about sleep.

Language focus: sleep

Materials: one copy of the worksheet per student

PROCEDURE

Ask students to make a list of the things they do every day (study, watch TV, etc). They should then estimate how much time they spend doing each one. Make a list of all the activities the students have come up with on the board. What do students spend the most time doing? The answer should be sleeping!

Ask students if they sleep well, if they find it easy to get to sleep, if they remember their dreams, etc. Hand out copies of the first page of the worksheet and ask students to look at Exercise 1. Students complete the questionnaire individually and then compare their answers in small groups. NB. the Macmillan Dictionary definition of a siesta is *a short period of sleep in the middle of the day*. Groups report to the class any interesting details they found out about each other's sleeping habits.

Next, dictate the following statements:

- a. Animals die if they don't have sleep.
- b. A quarter of all Americans suffer from insomnia.
- c. Children need more sleep than adults.
- d. Sleeping in the middle of the day makes you less productive.
- e. Everybody needs at least six hours of sleep a night.
- f. The most popular place for a siesta at work is in the car.
- g. The position you sleep in reflects your personality.

Ask students to discuss in pairs if they think the statements are true or false.

Next, hand out copies of Exercise 2. Give the page called 'Night' to one person in a pair and the page called 'Day' to the other. Ask students to read and check whether the statements above are true or false and then tell their partner.

Ask students to read their page again and make notes on at least five other facts they didn't know before about sleep. Then they should exchange information with their partner.

Discuss which position students sleep in and if they agree with the analysis of their personality based on their sleeping position.

Key:

- a. true (from 'Night' – paragraph beginning 'Why do we sleep?')
- b. false – it's a third (from 'Day' – paragraph beginning 'A survey carried out')
- c. true (from 'Night' – paragraph beginning 'Young people always sleep more')
- d. false (from 'Day' – paragraph beginning 'Even in the USA')
- e. false – it's 4 to 5 hours (from 'Night' – paragraph beginning 'Young people always sleep more')
- f. false – it's the toilet (from 'Day' – paragraph beginning 'These studies')
- g. true (from 'Night' – paragraph beginning 'The sleeping position')

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WORKSHEET

EXERCISE 1: SLEEP QUESTIONNAIRE

How well do you sleep? Are you a deep sleeper? A light sleeper? A sleepwalker? And what did you dream about last night? Take our questionnaire, then share your answers in small groups.

1. How many hours a night do you normally sleep?

- Less than seven hours.
- Between seven and eight hours.
- More than eight hours.

2. How long does it take you to go to sleep?

- I fall asleep quickly.
- It takes me a while.
- I find it very difficult to get to sleep.

3. What do you do if you can't sleep?

- I count sheep.
- I listen to the radio.
- Other.

4. Do you read in bed at night?

- No.
- I read a book.
- I read a newspaper or magazine.

5. How well do you sleep?

- I sleep like a log.
- Fine.
- I'm a light sleeper.

6. Which of these have you ever done in your sleep?

- Talked.
- Walked.
- Made a cup of coffee.

7. Do you snore?

- I don't know – I'm asleep.
- Yes. I regularly get complaints from neighbours.
- No.

8. Have you ever gone 24 hours without sleeping?

- Never.
- Once.
- Several times.

9. Have you ever fallen asleep in the following situations?

- In my English class.
- Standing up.
- At the theatre or cinema.

10. What position do you normally sleep in?

- On my back.
- On my stomach.
- On my side.

11. Do you remember your dreams?

- I don't dream.
- Yes, vividly.
- Sometimes.

12. When was the last time you had a nightmare?

- Very recently.
- A long time ago.
- I never have bad dreams.

13. What's a siesta?

- A novel by Ernest Hemingway.
- A Ford car.
- A short sleep at midday.

14. Do you normally have a siesta?

- Yes.
- No.
- How can I answer this question if I don't know what a siesta is?

15. How long are your siestas?

- I don't take siestas.
- 10–20 minutes.
- At least 30 minutes.

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EXERCISE 2: NIGHT



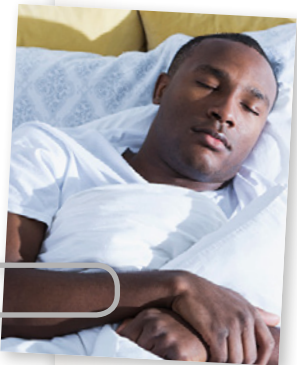
Why do we sleep? Amazingly, it's a question that has no definite answer. We all know that we fall asleep because we are tired and that we feel better after sleeping, but why can't we do without it? Research has shown that animals die if they don't have sleep, almost as quickly as they do if they don't have food. But why do we need it?

The time we are asleep is divided into different periods: D-sleep (desynchronized or dreaming) and S-sleep (synchronized). These periods are also known as REM (rapid-eye-movement) sleep and NREM (non-rapid-eye-movement) sleep. A typical night's sleep consists of four or five periods of D-sleep that last a total time of approximately 90 minutes (little more than 20 per cent of total sleep time). The first D-sleep period occurs about 70 to 120 minutes after falling asleep.



Young people always sleep more, and have much more D-sleep than adults. A young baby sleeps 16 to 18 hours per day, at least half of which is D-sleep. On average, a young adult spends 16 to 17 hours awake and 7 to 8 hours asleep each day. The amount of sleep we need varies greatly from person to person. Some people function well on five hours of sleep a night, whereas others require ten hours. There have even been stories of people functioning with no sleep at all. However, it is generally accepted that (almost) everyone needs at least four or five hours.

How long animals sleep is also variable. Bats sleep for up to 20 hours a day, and the giant anteater sleeps for 18 hours. Lions can sleep for days. In general, animals that are secure from predators sleep a lot, while those whose lives are at risk sleep little. Dolphins are clever and spend the night half asleep. First the right half of their brain goes to sleep, and then the left. While one hemisphere is in deep sleep, the other is always alert.



The sleeping position you most often lie in (the one you normally wake up in) can tell you what kind of person you are. If you lie on your back (the 'royal' position) you have a strong, self-confident personality, are generous and believe that nothing is impossible for you. If you lie on your stomach, (the 'prone' position) you are a careful and cautious person. You need to feel in control of your life and don't like surprises, but you are essentially a happy person with a balanced view of things. If you sleep on your side with your knees up near your chest, like a baby before it's born (the 'foetal' position), you are an anxious person with little self-confidence. You have a deep need to be loved and protected.

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EXERCISE 2: DAY



A survey carried out in the United States discovered that a third of all Americans suffer from insomnia. Over in England, it has been calculated that 20 million prescriptions for sleeping pills are written every day. So what can you do to avoid having problems getting to sleep? The most obvious advice is to avoid coffee and alcohol. Alcohol puts you to sleep, but it disturbs your sleep patterns and you may wake up later. Smoking doesn't help. Smokers take half an hour longer to get to sleep than non-smokers! In general, you shouldn't go to bed until you really feel tired, and if you can't sleep you should get up and do something until you feel sleepy again. And don't worry about not sleeping – most people get the amount of sleep they need in the end!



The rest of the world has finally discovered what people from hot climates have known all along: a short sleep after lunch leaves you feeling fresh, relaxed and ready for action again. And that's official. Experts now know that your body is programmed to have a nap at midday. It's a habit that improves concentration, helps reduce stress and can help protect you against heart problems. Coffee can't do this. It makes you feel awake, but your body still needs sleep. It's important to get the right amount of sleep. Between 10 and 20 minutes is the optimum length for a siesta. Any more and you go into deep sleep and will wake up in a bad mood.

Even in the USA, where Benjamin Franklin famously said 'time is money', people are waking up to the benefits of having a siesta. Sleeping during the day was seen as a sign of laziness. After all, if you're not awake, you're not being productive. But that attitude is changing. Recent studies have shown that a lack of sleep can make you 24 per cent less productive at work. You think slower, find it harder to solve problems and have more accidents. Calculations show, for example, that tired drivers cause 100,000 traffic accidents a year in the United States, resulting in 1,500 deaths.



These studies have prompted a growing number of companies in the United States to open up 'nap lounges' for their workers. These rooms are equipped with reclining armchairs, blankets, headphones with relaxing music, alarm clocks and ear plugs. Nap lounges have brought the need for a lunchtime nap out into the open. In an anonymous Internet survey, hundreds of workers confessed that they have a siesta at work, but that they do it in secret. Where? Well, a store room, the local park or their car were all seen as good places, but the most popular place of all was . . . the toilet!

So next time you feel tired after lunch, forget the coffee and lie down for a while. After all, if President Kennedy, Winston Churchill, Alfred Hitchcock, Salvador Dali and Albert Einstein all functioned better after a siesta, there's really no need for you to feel guilty. Time is money. And a midday snooze is time very well spent.