

# EVERYDAY LIFE

## STAR SIGNS

## TEACHER'S NOTES

**Age:** Adult

**Level:** Upper-intermediate (B2)

**Time:** 90 minutes

**Activity:** In this lesson, students will:

1. discuss personality traits in the context of star signs;
2. learn new vocabulary related to personality and understand the meaning of new phrases in context;
3. complete a matchmaking task based on information in a text.

**Language focus:** Vocabulary for personality; phrases in the context of star signs.

**Materials:** One copy of the worksheet per student; one reading text per student.

## PROCEDURE

### Pre-teaching

Before starting exercise 1, you may want to pre-teach or clarify understanding of zodiac signs. A few images of these may suffice, or a quick discussion with the teacher mentioning their own star sign and eliciting student star signs might help.

### Optional lead-in

You could introduce the topic of star signs and elicit the star signs students already know as a game, for example a board race or a game of answer tennis. This would work if you feel that star signs would already be known to the learners.

#### Board race:

Divide the board into two, and organise the students into two lines. The first person in each line is given a board pen. They run to the board and write a star sign that they know, then pass the pen to the next person in line. The next person must write another star sign. They cannot write anything that the opposing team has already written. After one to two minutes, stop the game and review answers.

#### Answer tennis:

Separate the class into two teams. Give each team three points. Announce the topic as 'star signs'. Team one must say a star sign. Team 2 must respond with another star sign within five seconds. If they don't then they lose a point. The first team to lose all three points are defeated. Again, this only works if you assume learners will have prior knowledge of the topic!

### Exercise 1

The introductory questions are designed to activate student's prior knowledge of star signs. They should discuss the questions in pairs.

### Exercise 2

Learners work together to discuss the meaning of different terms for personality traits. If they are unsure, they can search online, use a dictionary or ask the teacher to clarify or explain each term.

#### Alternative Setup: Brain, Buddy, Book or Boss

Learners work alone first. They tick each term that they understand.

They discuss the terms which they are unclear about with a partner (buddy) first.

If they are still unclear, they either use a dictionary (book) or ask the teacher (boss).

This technique is good for learner training, and may be useful if you are teaching a class towards the start of the year as you can incorporate this into your class routine.

Learners then decide if each term is positive, negative or neutral, placing each term in the corresponding column.

#### Key (suggested answers):

Positive	Neutral	Negative
passionate, trustworthy, patient, generous, committed, intelligent, warm, courageous, kind, organised, hard-working, caring, independent, trusting loving, optimistic	impulsive, competitive, unique, adventurous, sensitive, intense	stubborn, stressed, temperamental, jealous, dull, intimidating

Read each word to the students. They mark the stress patterns, and repeat.

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**Key:**

O	Oo	oO	Ooo
warm kind dull stressed	patient caring trusting loving stubborn jealous	unique intense	passionate trustworthy generous organised sensitive
oOo	oOoo	ooOo	oOooo
committed courageous impulsive	intelligent adventurous competitive	independent temperamental optimistic	intimidating
O Oo	hard-working		

**Exercise 3**

This activity is a preview and predict task. First, only review the article heading to the learners. Based on this, and possibly some clues from lead-in activities, they work in pairs to predict the information that will appear in the text. Then allow two minutes for learners to skim read the text and check whether their predictions were correct.

**Exercise 4**

This can be an optional task, depending on students' level. It aims to allow learners to share their personal response to context in the text. However, it can be omitted if time is limited. Learners read the text and answer the questions in pairs.

**Key:**

Students' own responses.

**Exercise 5**

Students look at the article in more detail and make inferences based on the information available. For some questions there may be more than one answer.

**Key (suggested answers):**

... might be easy to introduce to friends and family?

**(Gemini – great in social situations)**

... might be difficult to interact with at first? **(Cancerians – hate small talk)**

... might be good to date if you like being spoilt?

**(Leos – like showing off and buying expensive gifts)**

... might like to compete as much as an Aries?

**(Scorpio – like debates, but only if they win)**

... might chat about your relationship with them to others?

**(Gemini – like to gossip)**

... might be less interested than others in the photos on a dating app? **(Libra – value intelligence over looks)**

... might find it hard to accept the independence that an Aquarius needs? **(Libra – can be insecure and jealous)**

... might the writer have had a negative dating experience with? Why? **(Students' own answers. However, the writer is less complementary about Cancerians, seems snarky towards Virgos, and is a little cynical towards Geminis)**

... might the writer of the text be? Why? **(Students' own answers. However, the writer suggests that possible negative traits of Sagittarius could be 'good or bad', suggesting they might have some sympathy with this star sign).**

**Exercise 6**

This activity directs the learners to further useful language in the text. Along with exercise 7, it aims to highlight some further useful language appearing in the text, and to offer some controlled practice of this.

Students match the words in bold in the text to their correct definitions. Note: there are nine words in bold in the text but only eight definitions. The distractor is 'switch off' (in this context it means 'relax or stop thinking about something'). You could elicit the meaning of this phrase from students.

**Key:**

- |                |                    |
|----------------|--------------------|
| 1. go downhill | 5. be driven by    |
| 2. show off    | 6. sense of humour |
| 3. wander off  | 7. quirky          |
| 4. downside    | 8. tend to         |

**Pronunciation features**

The main pronunciation feature occurring in the example phrases is *catenation*. Catenation is when the final sound of one word, usually a consonant, links to the first sound of the next word, usually beginning in a vowel. This appears in linking between 'sense of (humour)'. For examples that learners at these levels will be familiar with using, you could refer to 'good at' or 'interested in' when explaining.

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Some of the phrases include intrusive sounds, such as /r/ and /w/. For example, in the phrases 'show off', the /w/ appears, which makes it easier to glide between two vowel sounds – /əʊ/ in 'show' and /ɒ/ in 'off'. Similarly, an intrusive /r/ appears in the phrase 'wander off'. Whether there is a final /r/ in the word 'wander' to begin with is dependent on accent.



### TEACHING TIP – CATENATION

Catenation is often marked using a linking line between consonant and vowel, like so:

#### Sense of humour

Note: in the example the final sound of 'sense' is an /s/, but the spelling confuses this!

A useful memory aid for your learners might be to talk about how these sounds come together and 'marry'. I use this visual in class to remind learners of the coming together of these sounds:

Sense of humour or Sense of humour

This is useful for your board work, but also to refer to catenation as a regular feature of connected speech. I often ask the learners whether they can find examples of sounds 'marrying' in example sentence, which encourages them to rehearse phrases using their inner voice and notice patterns. Marking 'marrying' sounds can also be a fast finisher activity if needed.

Further features of connected speech include assimilation (the /n/ in 'driven by' becomes an /m/) and elision (the final /d/ in 'tend' is omitted).

### Exercise 7

Learners use a phrase from exercise 6 to complete each phrase. Make sure they are aware that they may need to change the form of the phrase for some answers.

### Key:

1. sense of humour
2. driven by
3. wandered off
4. went downhill
5. quirky
6. show off
7. downside
8. tend to

When learners have completed the activity, encourage them to use each sentence in a creative roleplay – an example is given on the student worksheet. This may be difficult for some learners; if so, you can simplify by just asking Student B to respond in a natural way, rather than encouraging the conversation to continue further.

### Exercise 8

This is a follow-up task to consolidate what the learners have read about. First, encourage learners to make notes on two people they know from outside of class, describing their personality traits and general character. These could be family members, friends, or alternatively a celebrity or character from a novel if students feel uncomfortable discussing people they know. Then, students share their descriptions of each person with a partner. They work together, referring to the text they read, to decide which star sign might be a good match for the people they know. Some process language is provided on the worksheet.

Finally, students explain their views to another pair. They should be encouraged to feed back and suggest alternative ideas.

### Exercises 9 & 10

The closing questions aim to wrap up the topic and to provide some avenues for further research. The question about millennials refers to information in articles such as this from the Atlantic: [www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2018/01/the-new-age-of-astrology/550034/](http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2018/01/the-new-age-of-astrology/550034/). You may want to convert this into a QR code for learners to read and reflect on as homework.

The reflection questions encourage learners to follow up on work in class and think of ways to consolidate their learning.



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## WORKSHEET

### EXERCISE 1: DISCUSS



**Work with a partner. Discuss the questions.**

- What is your Zodiac sign? Are star signs important to you?
- What do you know, if anything, about the personality traits of people with different star signs?

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## WORKSHEET

### EXERCISE 2: PERSONALITY TRAITS

The words in the box are all personality traits. Check the meaning of each word with a partner. If you are both unsure, use a dictionary or ask the teacher to explain.

passionate    impulsive    competitive    trustworthy    patient    stubborn    generous  
 committed    intelligent    warm    courageous    adventurous    kind    organised  
 hard-working    caring    stressed    independent    unique    temperamental    jealous  
 sensitive    trusting    loving    dull    intense    intimidating    optimistic

Decide if each word is positive, negative or neutral and add them to the table below.

Compare your ideas with a partner. Are they the same? Discuss any differences.

Positive	Neutral	Negative

Now listen to your teacher read each word. Mark the word stress.

Example: **o** o o

*passionate*

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## WORKSHEET

### EXERCISE 3: PREVIEW AND PREDICT

Read the title of the article only. What information do you expect to read in the article? Discuss your ideas with a partner.

Now skim read the article. Were your ideas correct?

### EXERCISE 4: READ FOR GENERAL UNDERSTANDING

Skim read the text about each Zodiac sign again. Answer the questions.

- Do you think the information about your own star sign is accurate? Why / Why not?
- Which star sign do you think would be the best / worst match for you? Why?

### EXERCISE 5: READING FOR DETAIL

Read the text again. Answer the questions according to the text.

(People with) which star sign ...

- ... might be easy to introduce to friends and family? \_\_\_\_\_
- ... might be difficult to interact with at first? \_\_\_\_\_
- ... might be good to date if you like being spoilt? \_\_\_\_\_
- ... might like to compete as much as an Aries? \_\_\_\_\_
- ... might chat about your relationship with them to others? \_\_\_\_\_
- ... might be less interested than others in the photos on a dating app? \_\_\_\_\_
- ... might find it hard to accept the independence that an Aquarius needs? \_\_\_\_\_
- ... might the writer have had a negative dating experience with? Why? \_\_\_\_\_
- ... might the writer of the text be? Why? \_\_\_\_\_

### EXERCISE 6: VOCABULARY BUILDING

Match the phrase in bold from the text with the correct meaning.

Meaning	Word or phrase
1. get worse	
2. to behave in a way that is intended to attract people's attention and make them admire you	
3. to move away from a place where you are usually	
4. a disadvantage of something	
5. motivated or caused by something	
6. the ability to know when something is funny, and to laugh at funny situations	
7. slightly strange or unusual	
8. to usually (but not always) have a particular quality	

Listen to your teacher say these words or phrases. Mark any examples of linking or changes to sounds that you hear. Then repeat each phrase.

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### EXERCISE 7: VOCABULARY CHECK

Complete the sentences with a word or phrase from exercise 6. You may need to change the form or tense of the word or phrase.

1. Urgh, my date was so boring. He wouldn't laugh at any of my jokes; he just had no \_\_\_\_\_.
2. He didn't stop talking about how much he earns. He was clearly \_\_\_\_\_ money. He wasn't my type at all.
3. I thought the date was going well. Then all of a sudden she just \_\_\_\_\_ to talk to somebody else in the bar. Unbelievable!
4. The date started badly when I spilt red wine all over my new shirt. Then it \_\_\_\_\_ from there.
5. He turned up wearing a bright pink bowtie and yellow shoes. I mean, let's just say he was quite \_\_\_\_\_.
6. He wore the tightest shirt imaginable! He was clearly trying to \_\_\_\_\_ his muscles. Well, I wasn't impressed.
7. The date went well. She was really nice. But the big \_\_\_\_\_ is that she is moving abroad next month.
8. People \_\_\_\_\_ look a lot different in real life than they do in their profile pictures.

**Student A:** Read one of the completed sentences, 1–8.

**Student B:** Continue the conversation, imagining what a friend of Student A might say.

**Student A:** Continue the conversation.

Example:

A: *The date started badly when I spilt red wine all over my new shirt. Then it **went downhill** from there.*

B: *Oh no! What happened next?*

A: *[etc]*

### EXERCISE 8: CONNECTING THE TEXT TO REAL LIFE

Think of two people you know well, such as friends or family members. If you can, choose people who are single and looking for a relationship.

Make notes on their personality traits.

Person 1

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Person 2

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Describe each person to a partner. Work together with your partner to decide which star signs would be a good match for each person.

When you finish, share your ideas with another pair.

### Language to Help You:

I think \_\_\_\_\_ would be compatible with .... because...

I think \_\_\_\_\_ might clash with .... because ...

[star sign] might not be a good match for \_\_\_\_\_ , because ...

## EXERCISE 9: CLOSING QUESTIONS

- The article says that there is no scientific proof linking star signs to certain personality traits. Why do you think so many people believe in star signs?
- Some newspaper reports suggest that star signs have gained popularity in recent years among millennials. Why do you think they have become popular with this particular generation?

## EXERCISE 10: REFLECTION

- What can you do to help revise the vocabulary from this lesson?
- 
- 

- Summarise what you have learnt from this lesson in around 20 words
- 
- 

- What question do you still have, if any, about the vocabulary in this lesson?
- 
- 

- Is there anything else you would like to know about this topic?
- 
-



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## Can't find the perfect match? Maybe you should look to the stars...

So, you're about to match with someone on a dating app. You like their photos (and let's be honest, looks count). They're the right age, in the right location, and there are no signs from their bio that they are a complete lunatic. Wait! Scroll through that bio again. Do they mention their star sign?

Star signs can tell us a lot about someone's personality. Here's our quick guide to the positive and negative traits for each Zodiac sign, to help you decide whether that potential match might actually be compatible.

*Disclaimer: There is no scientific proof linking personality traits to certain star signs. Mind you, love isn't an exact science, is it?*



### Aries

March 21 – April 19

There's never a dull moment with an Aries. They are extremely competitive and like to turn everything in life into a game! Aries **tend to** be confident, passionate and independent, which all seem like great traits. However, they can also be impulsive, so don't let them **wander off** alone with your credit card ...



### Taurus

April 20 – May 20

Tauruses have some very loving traits. They are trustworthy and very patient. They are also very smart, which makes for good conversation. However, they can be stubborn, and their hard-working nature makes it hard for them to **switch off**.



### Gemini

May 21 – June 20

Geminis are great communicators. They are perfect in any social situation and can often be the life and soul of a party. They have a good **sense of humour** and can also be generous. They sound almost perfect, huh? There's just one problem. They love to gossip, especially about their own relationships.



### Cancer

June 21 – July 22

If you like a challenge, then Cancerians are for you. They often take a while to warm to someone, so conversation can be tough. They hate small talk, and they prefer being in smaller groups. However, once you gain their trust, they are committed and loving.



### Leo

July 23 – August 22

Feeling lazy? Find a Leo. They will put the effort into a relationship, so you don't have to. Leos are intelligent, warm and courageous. They enjoy social situations, although they tend to put themselves first sometimes. They are adventurous, and they also love to **show off**. Don't be surprised if Leos buy you lots of expensive gifts.

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## READING TEXT



### Virgo

August 23 – September 22

Virgos are kind, organised, and great at planning things. These are good traits, but I'm afraid it **goes downhill** from there. They like the feeling of being in control. Plus, they like things to be perfect and beautiful. Check out a Virgo's Instagram profile – it explains a lot.



### Libra

September 23 – October 22

Librans are kind and selfless – they are very good at compromising. They are also highly imaginative, so expect interesting dates and **quirky** gifts. They value intelligence over looks, which is a relief. There's one **downside** to Libras though – they can be insecure, which can make them jealous.



### Scorpio

October 23 – November 21

Scorpios are very passionate. They love debating, as long as they win. They hate it when people are false. They are loyal and give 100% in relationships. Scorpios can come across as intense and sometimes seem intimidating.



### Sagittarius

November 22 – December 21

Sagittarians are strong-willed, adventurous, and are natural leaders. Their strength of character means they usually get what they want, which could be both good and bad. Sagittarians are very generous and trustworthy. Above all, they are very optimistic, making them fun to be around.



### Capricorn

December 22 – January 19

Capricorns love rules and predictability. They are hard-working and they love to be in control. They are very caring and like to make sure everything is perfect. However, their attempts to achieve perfection mean that Capricorns are often stressed.



### Aquarius

January 20 – February 18

Aquarians are very independent – some might say unique. They like to treat others how they would like to be treated, so they are usually respectful. They can be temperamental though, especially if they are not allowed freedom. If you get jealous easily, it's probably best not to date an Aquarian.



### Pisces

February 19 – March 20

Pisces are really deep thinkers. They are sensitive and very intelligent. Their opinions are often considered, and they are great at giving advice. They **are driven** by their emotions and have a strong sense of right and wrong. They can be too trusting at times.