

## Key events in recent history

by Adrian Tennant

**Section/Subject:** ESP bank – CLiL, History

**Topic:** Key events in recent history

**Level:** Intermediate +

**Target age:** Teenagers / adults

**Time (approx):** Activity 1: 15 – 20 minutes.  
Activity 2: 10 – 20 minutes  
Activity 3: 10 minutes

**Preparation:** Activity 1: One copy of the text for each student and one set of question cards for every three students. Cut the question cards as indicated.

Activity 2: One copy of activity two for each student.

Activity 3: One copy for each student / pair / group.

### Procedure

#### Activity 1

- 1 On the board write 'Where were you when ...?'
- 2 Ask students to think of recent events that have been in the news and ask them if they can remember where they were and what they were doing when they heard the news about the event.
- 3 Divide the class into three groups – A, B & C. Give each student a copy of the text and give group A set one questions, group B set two questions and group C set three questions.
- 4 Ask students to read the text and find the answers to their set of questions and write them down.
- 5 Monitor and help where necessary.
- 6 Next, do a reading race. Get group A to read out their first question and have the other two groups try and find the answer. Whichever group finds the correct answer first gets a point. Repeat the procedure with all the other questions, getting groups to take turns reading out their questions while the other two groups race to find the answers.
- 7 At the end, the group with the most points wins.

**Optional activity:** Between steps two and three above write the four events from the worksheet on the board (*moon landing, release of Nelson Mandela, fall of the Berlin Wall, and 9/11*) and ask students what they know about the different events.

Key

Set 1

1. Three; 2. Four; 3. The Berlin Wall was built / people woke up to find the wall; 4. 1964.

Set 2

1. No (only two); 2. 27 years; 3. Armstrong walking on the moon (students may argue that the Berlin wall being built was the first actual event); 4. To stop people fleeing from east to west.

Set 3

1. It split some families; 2. at 02:56 on July 16th, 1969; 3. 9/11; 4. Nelson Mandela

#### Activity 2

- 1 Put students in pairs or small groups.
- 2 Hand out the worksheet and ask students to read through the text and find the words that match the meanings.
- 3 Monitor and help where necessary. Encourage the students to work together.

**Note:** If your students are struggling, tell them that there are two words from each event.

Key

1. immortal; 2. leap; 3. notorious; 4. release;  
5. fleeing; 6. breached; 7. open-mouthed;  
8. reverberated.

#### Activity 3

- 1 Put students into pairs or small groups.
- 2 Hand out activity three and tell students to talk about the questions together.
- 3 Monitor.

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- 4 Finally, ask a few students to report back on their discussion.

### Useful websites

For all of these topics there are hundreds of websites. Typing the event into a search engine will bring up many hits. Here are a few that focus on the news element.

[www.bbc.co.uk/history/recent/sept\\_11/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/recent/sept_11/)

Focus on September 11th and the attacks on the World Trade Center

[www.bbc.co.uk/history/forkids/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/forkids/)

BBC site for recent history. Although the site is aimed at kids it's equally good for adults studying EFL.

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/july/21/newsid\\_2635000/2635845.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/july/21/newsid_2635000/2635845.stm)

Link to news article on the moon landing which includes video footage.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/1454208.stm>

[http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/february/11/newsid\\_2539000/2539947.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/february/11/newsid_2539000/2539947.stm)

Two very good links to pages on Nelson Mandela. The first is a general biography whereas the second focuses on the actual release from prison in 1990.

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### Text

There are certain events in recent history where people ask the question: *Where were you when ...?* Here are four such events.

July 16th, 1969 and Neil Armstrong enters history. At 02:56 Armstrong becomes the first man to walk on the moon. He was part of a three-man team that took off in Apollo Eleven and landed on the surface of the moon. A few hours earlier Armstrong had radioed Houston with the words "The Eagle has landed." When Armstrong's feet touched the moon he said the immortal words, "It's one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind."

At one o'clock on the afternoon of February 11th, 1990, the eyes of the world were focused on Victor Verster Prison just outside Cape Town, South Africa. After 27 years in prison, Nelson Mandela was at last being set free. Mandela had been sentenced to life in prison in 1964. For many years he had been held on Robben Island, notorious for its political prisoners and hard labour. His release saw thousands of people celebrating across the world.

After 28 years, a symbol of oppression was finally coming down. From the moment it was built, the Berlin Wall symbolized the fight for freedom for many people. On the morning of August 13th, 1961, Berliners woke to the site of a wall dividing their city.

It was built to stop people fleeing from the east to the west. The wall not only divided a city, but it split many families. Finally, on November 9th, 1989, the wall was breached by hundreds of demonstrators from both sides.

On the 11th September, 2001, many people around the world watched open-mouthed as two planes crashed into the two towers of the World Trade Center in New York City. Four planes had been hijacked with one crashing into the Pentagon in Washington, while the other had been forced down by the passengers. 2,973 people died in the World Trade Centre and the shock waves reverberated around the world.

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### Activity 1

Set one

1. How many astronauts were there in Apollo 11?
2. How many planes were hijacked on September 11th, 2001?
3. What happened on August 13th, 1961?
4. When was Nelson Mandela sentenced to life in prison?



Set two

1. Did all the planes crash into the World Trade Center in New York?
2. How long did Nelson Mandela spend in prison?
3. Which of the four events happened first?
4. Why was the Berlin Wall built?



Set three

1. What consequence did the Berlin Wall have on some families?
2. When did Armstrong first touch the moon?
3. Which of the events is the most recent?
4. Who was released from prison?



### Activity 2

Find words in the texts that mean:

- a) *very well-known and likely to be remembered for a long time*
- b) *a big jump*
- c) *famous for something bad*
- d) *letting someone leave a place*
- e) *escaping from a dangerous place quickly, running away*
- f) *to get through something designed to stop things*
- g) *surprised or shocked*
- h) *to have an effect that spreads over a large area or lasts for a long time*

**Key events in recent history**  
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Points for discussion:

1. Which of these events have you heard about?
2. What do you know about them?
3. Were you alive when any of these events happened? Can you remember where you were at the time?
4. Are there any other events that you think are '*Where were you when ...?*' events?
5. What are the most important events in the recent history of your country?