

Chocolate: Teachers' notes and tips – upper intermediate

1 Pre-reading tasks

- a Put students in pairs and ask them to make a list of all the different chocolate brands they know. This can be bars (e.g. Kit kat) or boxes (e.g. Quality Street) etc, of course brands from their own country too.
- b The pair with the most reads out their list and other students can call out any missing brands. Students then tell each other which ones they like the best and how often they eat them.

Tip: relate the topic to the students' lives

People are always more interested in something that affects them. Of course if some students aren't that fussed, or even dislike chocolate (does anyone ever dislike it?!) they can say why.

- c Ask open class: why is chocolate so nice to eat? Which brands are more for children and which are for adults? See what response you get. (If appropriate for your class you could ask why so much chocolate is eaten at Easter.)

Tip: use pictures / video

If you can get your hands on some adverts for chocolate from magazines that would help to stimulate the conversation. How are the different chocolates being advertised, and to which gender or age group? Or have a look at some adverts from YouTube – just type in Mars bar commercial etc. You'll get some very dated ones too which are fun to watch – would the 1986 one www.youtube.com/watch?v=GxxR9cfB9_s be shown today?

2 First reading tasks

- a Tell the students they are going to read about Cheryl, a woman who is addicted to chocolate. Give each student a copy and tell them to read it fairly quickly and do two things: *a* to fill in the gap at the end with a suitable phrase, and *b* to explain what Cheryl was going to do at the end.
- b Students compare their ideas. There can be different answers of course.

Tip: the first reading is to understand the gist of the text

An appropriate answer shows students have understood Cheryl's overall difficulty. She can't just stop because then she feels ill.

- c Feedback: *a* suggestions may include *talk to family / your husband / a doctor / a friend... get help... cut down... eat a little less every day...* Students may well have some better ideas. *b* Cheryl was going to buy a bar of chocolate from a vending machine.

Tip: consider the tone in a text

The friend called out Cheryl's name, what was the reason for this? *I can see what you're doing and it's bad!* What tone did she use? Why not see if students can say the name using the same tone of voice.

3 Second reading tasks

- a There are signs of Cheryl's addiction in the text. Students read through again more slowly and underline all the signs - there are about eight.

Tip: do an example first

Ask students to read just the first paragraph again. What sign is there of her addiction? *She had put on a lot of weight.*

- b As always students compare their answers before getting feedback.
- c Feedback: her trolley full of chocolate, cravings (they should get the meaning of this through context), feeling happier after eating it, hidden box of chocolate, headaches when she didn't have any, erratic behaviour (driving out late at night to buy some), dreaming about chocolate.

Tip: help students to recognize the information given in a text

Students should be helped to see the supporting evidence that Cheryl is addicted to chocolate.

- d Can the students think of any other signs that are not in the text?

4 Post-reading tasks – speaking and writing

- a Write on the board the following: bananas (or a fruit that's grown where you teach) / crossword puzzles / emailing / facebook / YouTube / dancing / a sport / clothes shopping / television
- b Put students into pairs and tell them that they are addicted to one of these and they can choose which one.

Tip: let students make the list?

You can of course brainstorm ideas but you may end up with an inappropriate list. Give students these ideas but if they come up with something different that will work for the following task, that's fine.

- c Students then discuss together how the addiction affects their lives. What are the signs that they are addicted? If possible students should have about 5 / 6 ideas. They can be funny of course – it doesn't have to be serious.
- d They then write a letter /email asking for advice. The letter needs to explain what the addiction is, how it started and the problems they are now having as a result.
- e Students can work together in their pairs to make a first draft and then continue working individually, perhaps at home, for the final draft.
- f In a follow-up class students can read each others' problems and give some advice about what to do.

Tip: link the reading to other skills

Reading in real life is rarely an isolated event. Using the information to motivate students to do other tasks is more interesting and worthwhile than just using a text to teach English. Students are also going to be keener to read more in the future.