

Fat Frank: Teacher's notes and tips – elementary

1 Pre-reading tasks

- a Draw the following chart on the board and ask students to match a verb on the left with a noun:

to lose		a diet
to be on		weight
to go on		
to put on		

- b After feedback ask if any student wants to go on a diet and lose weight? Or do any of them want to put on weight? Does everyone know how much they weigh?

Tip: keep the subject light-hearted

Bear in mind some students may be sensitive about their weight so try to be jokey about this lead-in and the subject in general.

- c Give each student a worksheet; ask them to put the words in order from thin to fat. Provide dictionaries. *Answers: anorexic, skinny, thin, fat, overweight, obese.*
- d Explain that for the gap fill the information is about British men and women. Can they guess which statement is for men or women?
Answers: men, women, men, men, men / women, men
- e Ask students if the same differences appear in their culture too. Is it better for men to be fat than women? Do more women diet than men? Why?

Tip: use pre reading tasks to promote interest in the subject

Providing thought-provoking activities that the students can relate to makes them more interested in the text, but remember to give elementary students enough time for this.

- f Get students to work out for themselves how many of them are needed to make about 350kg.
- g Now tell them they are going to read about a man called Fat Frank who weighed about 350kg but who now weighs just a third of that. Can they guess how he lost the weight? (Question three on the worksheet.)

Tip: train students to make predictions

Reading is an active skill and a constant process of guessing. While reading the students should be thinking about the kind of man Banks is, would he go on a diet when he adores food so much?

2 First reading tasks

- a Hand out a copy of the reading to each student. As always tell them not to worry about vocabulary but to answer the question as quickly as possible.
Take away the dictionaries.
- b Ask students if they were surprised by the answer. Has any student been on a diet? How much weight did they lose?

Tip: react to the text as we would in real life

We often read things and then react if we are surprised or angered or disbelieving etc. Students should be encouraged to do the same. Avoid students feeling they are being tested.

3 Second reading tasks

- a Students read the text again quietly on their own, this time in order to fill in the chart with notes from the text.
- b When they have finished they should compare their answers with another student.

Tip: train students to understand comparisons made in a text

Filling in a comparison table is one way of getting students to notice and contrast the difference between the past and the present.

Tip: consider the stronger students

In most classes there are mixed abilities. Ask those who finish first to choose another category (job? social life?) to compare and then fill in the empty row at the bottom.

- c If there are still some words the students are having problems with, write them on the board. See if another student can help or if they can work out the meaning together.

4 Post-reading tasks

- a Perhaps get students to consider another person, maybe a woman this time, who was very fat and then dieted. Students consider in pairs:
 - Why she got fat
 - Why she decided to diet
 - How her life is different now
- b Ask students to listen to another pairs' story – whose is more interesting?
- c Students write up their stories for homework.

Tip: link the reading to other skills

Always try and provide opportunities for listening, speaking and writing and to vary these activities too.