

A moment that changed me: I had a heart attack at 37 – so I went to live in a cave

Level 2: Intermediate – Teacher's notes

Article summary: After a heart attack at 37, a Colorado wilderness guide decides to live on and off in a series of caves to heal and reflect.

Time: 60–90 minutes

Skills: Reading, Speaking, Writing

Language focus: Noun phrases / Compound nouns

Materials needed: One copy of the worksheet per student

1. Warmer

- a. Ask students to discuss the questions in small groups. Monitor and note down good examples of language related to the topic. Invite students to share some of their most memorable ideas or opinions with the rest of the class.

2. Key words

- a. Ask students to complete the task in pairs. Encourage students to share any synonyms or collocations they know.

Key:

1. *wilderness*
2. *cardiac*
3. *rehab*
4. *conventional*
5. *amenities*
6. *forage*
7. *hide, hide(s)*
8. *juvenile*
9. *embrace, embraced*
10. *fuel, fuelled*
11. *passion, passions*

3. Comprehension check

- a. Encourage students to skim the text first to get a general sense of the content. Then, ask them to scan the text again to find the information to complete the task. Have them compare their answers in small groups.

Key:

1. *False. He was active, had been in the Marine Corps and was a survival skills guide. He was training for a 245 km ultramarathon.*
2. *True*
3. *False. He was in a group of 85-year-olds.*
4. *False. It had a big pile of grass and leaves, which was his bed.*
5. *False. He carried a notebook and something to write with.*
6. *True*
7. *True*
8. *False. He was woken up one night by a young black bear licking his feet, and he screamed.*
9. *True*
10. *True*

4. Key language

- a. Ask students to guess the nouns first. Then, have them scan the text as quickly as possible for the noun phrases. Check answers with the whole class.

Key:

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|
| 1. <i>attack</i> | 6. <i>tools</i> |
| 2. <i>guide</i> | 7. <i>pots</i> |
| 3. <i>room</i> | 8. <i>channel</i> |
| 4. <i>rehab</i> | 9. <i>light</i> |
| 5. <i>wilderness</i> | |

- b. Ask students to complete the questions in small groups. Check with the whole class before inviting them to discuss the questions. Monitor and make a note of recurring errors and good language to share with the class at the end of the activity.

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Key:

1. *heart attack*
2. *operating room*
3. *skylight*
4. *YouTube channels*
5. *stone tools, clay pots*
6. *wilderness*
7. *survival skills guide*

5. Discussion

- a. Ask students to discuss the statements in small groups. Encourage them to use newly acquired vocabulary but focus mainly on having them engage with the topic and practise their fluency. If there is time, regroup students and have them share their opinions with different classmates.

6. In your own words

- a. First, give students a few minutes to think about their experience individually and make notes. If students struggle to develop ideas, tell them they can write about someone else's experience or any interaction with nature, like seeing a flower, bird, or mushroom or feeding birds at the park.

Then, put students in pairs and get them to tell each other about their experience and ask each other questions to help them brainstorm what they will write. Give them time to write about their experiences and work in pairs again to peer-review their texts before sharing them with the rest of the class. Ask students to share a photo of the experience and their text if possible.