

The simple pleasures of piecing a summer holiday together at home

Level 3: Advanced

1 Warmer

a. Discuss the following questions in pairs.

1. What was the best holiday you have ever had? What made it so good?
2. How about the worst? Why was it such a negative experience?
3. What do you think makes a great summer holiday?

2 Key words

a. Match each word to the correct definition.

- | | |
|---|----------------|
| 1. a game in which a picture is cut into pieces and scrambled to be put together correctly and form the picture again | |
| 2. a decorative edge of hanging thread | a. bingeing |
| 3. a sweet drink made from fruit juice and water | b. brawling |
| 4. a long, flexible tube, usually made of plastic or rubber, that is used to move water | c. cordial |
| 5. wet or smooth so it is difficult to stand on without sliding | d. enforced |
| 6. something that you have the right to do or own | e. entitlement |
| 7. forced to do or to experience even if you do not want to | f. flee |
| 8. short intervals | g. fringing |
| 9. noisy and potentially aggressive | h. hose |
| 10. moving or rolling somewhere slowly and noisily | i. jigsaw |
| 11. watching many episodes non-stop | j. lap |
| 12. back away from a fight or a dangerous situation | k. retreat |
| 13. escape because you are scared of being hurt or in danger | l. slippery |
| 14. the top surface of the legs of someone sitting down | m. snatches |
| 15. turn something upside down | n. trundling |
| | o. upend |

b. Use some of the key words above to complete these sentences. You may need to change the form of the word.

1. The boys were always _____ in the streets.
2. Tom _____ from the crime scene but was found and arrested five minutes later.

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3. Whenever my mother yells at my brother, he usually _____ to his bedroom in tears.
4. Last weekend, my husband and I were _____ *Game of Thrones*. We watched two seasons in one day!
5. There was a piece missing, so we couldn't finish putting together the _____.
6. People shouldn't use a _____ to wash their cars. They waste so much water
7. He told us the story in _____, and I missed the last one – I don't know what happened in the end.
8. The roads here can become perilously _____ with during the winter because of the snow and ice.
9. Can you help me calculate this year's holiday _____ for the staff?
10. Rules are generally _____ by designated authorities.

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You can keep your beach houses and fancy holidays. The most relaxing summer is one spent at home with family and friends – and a jigsaw puzzle.

Nova Weetman

1 25 December, 2023

As a kid, our long summer holidays were mostly spent at the pool, with plastic containers of white-bread sandwiches, wedges of watermelon and afternoon ice-lolly from the canteen. The concrete was already hot by the time we arrived in the middle of the day, and Mum would lay out striped towels with white fringing for us to dump our stuff on. Then we were straight into the water where we would stay until we grew hungry.

- 2 We always holidayed at home in January, enjoying the stretch of dreamy days. My parents preferred to go away in September, driving up north where it was warm, chasing the sun like reptiles. But for those long days after Christmas and before school started, there were the visits to the pool. Sometimes we'd go to the cinema or the drive-in, visit the library in town, make biscuits or freeze homemade cordial ice-lollies. Friends might come over and we'd attach the hose to the trampoline in the back garden and bounce for hours on the slippery material, careful to avoid a leg disappearing down into the springs.
- 3 Except for the trampoline, my summer holidays haven't actually changed much since that time. I work freelance, so I don't have paid entitlements, and January is usually the leanest month of my year, which means that even if I do have weeks off, I don't have the money to do very much at all. It's always hard booking holidays as a freelancer due to the worry that work will come in the moment I pay for a holiday house or airfare somewhere, and I'll spend the entire trip feeling guilty that I should have accepted the job. It means that holidays are often enforced rather than chosen, taken in snatches when there is simply no work.
- 4 Some years, we go camping in January with other families, which is an inexpensive way to swim in the sea and wake up surrounded by trees and brawling koalas. But some years,

I leave it too late to organise anything and find myself in mid-December without a single plan. I used to be panicked by this, but now I have learned to enjoy my city in the weeks when most of its occupants leave. The streets are empty, making it easy to cross from north to south, businesses shut down, and there is an entire lane at the swimming pool just for me.

- 5 When my kids were little, holidaying at home was often easier than navigating nap times and car trips. And so, I would spend hours playing endless games of hide and seek and making potions in the garden, using up every spice in the house. As the kids grew, they were happy to spend days by the pool, arriving late afternoon and eating a picnic dinner of boiled eggs and raw carrots before trundling home to bed. Now, as teenagers, they enjoy spending their long summer break at home, lying in bed watching television or hanging out with friends for endless sleepovers that move from one house to the next.
- 6 Without the structure of school or work, January is a month of lost time. Days fill with the reading of a book, bingeing a new TV series or perhaps the cleaning of those cupboards I never usually get around to. While friends retreat to holiday homes and spend weeks at the beach, posting photos that sometimes make me jealous, we stay up late, sleep in, eat mangos off the pip, and catch up with friends who are also in town.
- 7 After the lockdowns of the pandemic, we were all desperate to leave, to flee our houses, our towns, our countries. But that feeling has settled a little now for me, and I'm enjoying the thought of pottering again. I can start work on a project that may never make money, catch up with a friend who I never have time to see, and pickle vegetables to eat when I'm busy again. But my favourite thing to do if I'm holidaying at home is to buy a jigsaw puzzle of a farm or a field or a far-off land from a local charity shop. At home, I'll clear the dining table, accept that our meals will be eaten on laps on the sofa for the next few weeks, and upend the box of pieces, making a start on the edge. There I'll sit for hours, refilling my cup of tea, the cat circling my feet, as I work my way through the scene and forget time.

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3 Comprehension check

a. Answer the questions using information from the article.

1. The writer used to travel north in September because
_____.
2. They would stay home every year between
_____.
3. The author explains she usually has very little money in
_____.
4. When the writer gets some free time, she often doesn't
_____.
5. Since the writer cannot choose when to take them, holidays tend to be
_____.
6. The writer chooses to go camping because
_____.
7. The author's children still enjoy their holidays at home, although
_____.
8. The writer says an advantage of holidaying at home is
_____.
9. Sometimes, the author feels a bit jealous of
_____.
10. What the author enjoys most when staying home is
_____.

4 Key language

a. Complete these sentences from the article with the correct phrasal verbs.

catch up come over get around to go away
hang out lay out sleep in work (one's) way through

1. My parents preferred to _____ in September, driving up north where it was warm, chasing the sun like reptiles.
2. Mum would _____ striped towels with white fringing for us to dump our stuff on.
3. Friends might _____, and we'd attach the hose to the trampoline in the back garden and bounce for hours on the slippery material.

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- Days fill with the reading of a book, bingeing a new TV series or perhaps the cleaning of those cupboards I never usually _____.
- While friends retreat to holiday homes and spend weeks at the beach, posting photos that sometimes make me jealous, we stay up late, _____, eat mangos off the pip, and _____ friends who are also in town.
- Now, as teenagers, they enjoy spending their long summer break at home, lying in bed watching television, or _____ with friends for endless sleepovers that move from one house to the next.
- There I'll sit for hours, refilling my cup of tea, the cat circling my feet, as I _____ my _____ the scene and forget time.

b. Complete the sentences below using some of the phrasal verbs from task A. You may have to change the form of the verb.

- They _____ every summer. That's why they've got so many friends from other countries.
- Is Rich _____ from Rome for your birthday?
- What I enjoy most is _____ with my friends after school.
- I've been meaning to visit Susan for a couple of weeks now, but I haven't _____ it.
- We should definitely get together and _____ with all the latest news around here.
- Many actors and singers had to _____ their _____ many obstacles to become famous.

c. Choose three phrasal verbs from task A and write personalised sentences.

5 Discussion

a. Discuss these statements.

- "I have learned to enjoy my city in the weeks where most of its occupants leave."
- "After the lockdowns of the pandemic, we were all desperate to leave, to flee our houses, towns, or our countries."
- "My favourite thing to do if I'm holidaying at home is binge-watching TV shows on my computer while cuddling in my bed or sofa."

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6 In your own words

a. **What is your ideal holiday? Work in pairs or small groups to plan and budget your ideal holiday. Consider the following:**

- destination: at home or travelling
- budget
- transport
- accommodations
- tours / attractions / activities
- food/restaurants
- shopping / souvenirs / extra expenses