

TEACHER'S NOTES

conlang

www.macmillandictionary.com

Overview: Suggestions for using the **Macmillan Dictionary BuzzWord** article on *conlang* and the associated worksheet.

Total time for worksheet activities: 45–60 minutes

Suggested level: Upper intermediate and above

- If you intend to use the worksheets in class, go to the *BuzzWord* article at the web address given at the beginning of the worksheet and print off a copy of the article. Make a copy of the worksheet and the *BuzzWord* article for each student. You might find it helpful not to print a copy of the Key for each student but to check the answers as a class.
- If the members of your class all have computer access, ask them to open the worksheet before they go to the *BuzzWord* article link. Make sure they do not scroll down to the Key until they have completed each exercise.
- Encourage students to read through the questions in Exercise 1 before they look at the *BuzzWord* article. Ask them to read through the whole article carefully and answer the questions. Tell them to compare their answers with a partner. Then check the answers as a class.
- Ask students to read the article again and then complete Exercise 2 independently. Check the answers as a class.
- Exercise 3 maps some higher level vocabulary in the text to some simpler near synonyms. Encourage students to start with any pairings they immediately recognize so that the others can be worked out by a process of elimination. Remind them that finding the words in the article and reading them in context might help. Less confident students could be permitted to look the words up in the Macmillan Dictionary.
- Exercise 4 highlights some vocabulary from the text on the theme of language, some of which may pop up in course materials. Ask students to complete the exercise in pairs and compete to see who can finish first. If felt necessary, point out that all the words can be found in the first two paragraphs of the article. Check the answers as a class. Further words in these paragraphs that could be explained are *case* (= a form of a noun, adjective or pronoun that shows its grammatical relationship to other words in a sentence), *inflection* (= changes in the basic form of a word to show something such as tense or number; n.b. *ending* is often used as a simpler synonym in course materials) and *syntax* (= rules about how words are arranged and connected to make phrases and sentences).
- Look again at the answer to question 2 in Exercise 1 – *conlang* is formed by truncating (abbreviating) the words *constructed* and *language*. There are a number of such abbreviations in English which are so established that using their full-form equivalents would sound stilted and unnatural, even in more formal contexts. Some examples are highlighted in Exercise 5, part a. Other such abbreviations are more informal, as for example those shown in part b. Complete the exercise as a class activity. Can students think of any other examples? (For example, *demo* (demonstration), *gas* (in US, gasoline), newer forms like *bro* (brother), *ridic* (ridiculous).)
- For fun, ask students to research the English translations of these Klingon words:

nuqneH = hello	jlyaj = I understand
maj = good	ghobe' = no
pagh = zero	

Go to the **Macmillan Dictionary BuzzWord** article at:

www.macmillandictionary.com/buzzword/entries/conlang.html

1 Find the information

Read the **BuzzWord** article on *conlang* and answer these questions.

1. What is a *conlanger*?
2. How was the word *conlang* formed?
3. What's the name of the *conlang* that featured in the film *Avatar*?
4. Who developed Klingon into a fully-fledged language?
5. What are 'auxiliary languages' used for?
6. What is the earliest example of a *conlang*? When did it appear?

2 Comprehension check

Read the article again and choose the correct ending, a. or b., for each sentence.

1. English is a language that ...
 - a. receives a lot of attention.
 - b. people enjoy learning.
2. The natural evolution of thousands of languages ...
 - a. has stopped people from inventing others.
 - b. hasn't stopped some people from inventing others.
3. For many years, people thought that *conlanging* was ...
 - a. a stupid activity.
 - b. only done by experts.
4. People are now more interested in *conlangs* because ...
 - a. movies and TV have made them more aware of them.
 - b. they have begun to sound more like English.
5. As featured in *Star Trek*, Klingon is ...
 - a. one of the most widely used *conlangs*.
 - b. the most authentic-sounding *conlang*.
6. Láadan is ...
 - a. an auxiliary language.
 - b. a politically-motivated *conlang*.

WORKSHEET

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3 Near synonyms

Match the words with a similar meaning.

- | | |
|------------------|----------------|
| 1. jaw-dropping | a. complete |
| 2. fully-fledged | b. make fun of |
| 3. overlook | c. imaginary |
| 4. ridicule | d. copy |
| 5. invent | e. real |
| 6. replicate | f. make up |
| 7. fictional | g. surprising |
| 8. authentic | h. miss |

4 Language about language

Unscramble the letters to make words which match the definitions.

1. n l i x o c e
all the words and phrases in a language
2. w e v o l
one of the letters 'a', 'e', 'i', 'o', or 'u', used for representing these sounds
3. t o c b e j
a noun, pronoun or phrase that is affected in a direct way by the action of a verb
4. t e n e s
a form of a verb used for showing when something happens
5. y p h n o l o g o
the pattern of speech sounds used in a particular language
6. c t o o n a n s n
a letter of the English alphabet except for 'a', 'e', 'i', 'o', and 'u'
7. r m a m r g a
the set of rules that control the way the sentences of a language are formed
8. t e b u j s c
the person, place or thing that does what the verb describes

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5 Short forms

a. Complete the sentences with the more commonly used short forms of the words in the box.

advertisement	gymnasium	memorandum	popular music	telephone
examination	laboratory	photograph	public house	veterinary surgeon

- We're going to the _____ for a drink after work. Would you like to come?
- No wonder Ian is so fit – he spends hours at the _____ .
- Didn't you know about the meeting? Anna mentioned it in her _____ .
- I took a lovely _____ of the sunset over the mountains.
- The cat seems unwell again – do you think we should take her to the _____ ?
- I'm not surprised she failed her _____; she never did any work!
- Dr Evans can't speak to you right now, I'm afraid; she's on the _____ .
- I've never really liked classical. I much prefer _____.
- We haven't got the test results back yet; they're still at the _____ .
- A: How did you find a good electrician?
 B: I saw an _____ in the local paper.

b. Write the full forms of these informal short forms.

- carb _____
- veg _____
- deli _____
- sci-fi _____

KEY

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KEY

1 Find the information

1. a person who invents a (constructed) language
2. by combining truncations (abbreviations) of the words *constructed* and *language*
3. Na'vi
4. (the linguist) Marc Okrand
5. international communication
6. Lingua Ignota, 12th century

2 Comprehension check

1. a
2. b
3. a
4. a
5. a
6. b

3 Near synonyms

1. g
2. a
3. h
4. b
5. f
6. d
7. c
8. e

4 Language about language

1. lexicon
2. vowel
3. object
4. tense
5. phonology
6. consonant
7. grammar
8. subject

5 Short forms

- a.**
1. pub
 2. gym
 3. memo
 4. photo
 5. vet
 6. exam
 7. phone
 8. pop/pop music
 9. lab
 10. ad/advert
- b.**
1. carbohydrate
 2. vegetables
 3. delicatessen
 4. science fiction