



CRYING



A speaking lesson for intermediate + students
by Lindsay Clandfield

Aim: Students discuss what makes them cry and attitudes towards crying. They then “tell” each other a short article about crying. The emphasis is on fluency. Reading skills aim: deducing the meaning of difficult words in a text from the context.

Note: In some cultures, people (especially men) may feel very uncomfortable talking about when they cry. Teachers are advised to use this material only with classes that they believe would feel comfortable with it.

Stage One – Pre speaking task/Warmer

Write the following song lyrics on the board (or put them on an overhead projector).

But the touch of your hand can start me _____. (Roy Orbison)
I try to laugh about it, hiding the _____ in my eyes. (The Cure)
And I know there'll be no more _____ in heaven. (Eric Clapton)
Your bridges were burned and now it's your turn to _____ me a river. (Justin Timberlake)
People killin, people dyin, children hurt and women _____ (Black Eyed Peas)

Ask students what they think the missing words could be. Write these words on the board and ask students to put them in the lyrics.

CRY CRYING (x2) TEARS (x2)

Answers:

But the touch of your hand can start me crying (Roy Orbison)
I try to laugh about it, hiding the tears in my eyes. (The Cure)
And I know there'll be no more tears in heaven. (Eric Clapton)
Your bridges were burned and now it's your turn to cry me a river. (Justin Timberlake)
People killing, people dying, children hurt and women crying (Black Eyed Peas)

Stage Two – Speaking Task 1 Pyramid Discussion

Ask students to work with a partner. Distribute the questions for discussion. Ask them to go over the questions individually first before talking about them with their partner. Let the discussion go on for a while, circulate and help students with language where needed. Then ask pairs to work with another pair (so as to form groups of four) and to compare their answers.

Stage Three – Reading and Vocabulary Clarification

Put students back into their original pairs. Explain that each student will get a different article about crying. At this stage they mustn't speak with each other or show each other their article. Tell students to read the article. If there are any difficult words, ask them to underline them – they will be clarified later.

Stage Four – Speaking Task 2 – Recounting the article

When the students have finished, tell them that they are going to “tell” each other about their article but in their own words. They have two minutes to prepare this mini talk. They can't read their article out loud. While students tell each other their article, circulate and take notes of any common errors. After they have finished, ask them to go back to the difficult words they had underlined. They should discuss them together quickly with their partner (the point is that the students should have been able to summarise the article without having to understand every word). If by the end of this there are still problems, take up the difficult words with the whole class, or instruct them to use their dictionaries. You could also correct or highlight the errors you heard in the speaking task.

Stage Five – Feedback

Ask students “What do you think of these two articles?” Get some feedback from the class as a whole. This could lead into a whole class discussion about crying and tears.



TALKING ABOUT CRYING

Discuss these questions with a partner.

Why do people cry?

Do you think women cry more than men?

If you feel like crying, do you let yourself cry or do you try to contain the tears?

When was the last time you cried?

Which of the following things would make you cry?

- Your child is born.
- You are in pain.
- Your relationship breaks up.
- A wedding.
- Your wedding.
- Your boss (or teacher) shouts at you.
- Before an exam.
- After an exam.
- Winning a sports event or important game.
- A sad song.
- A sad film or TV show.
- A moving speech.
- The death of a family member or friend.
- Your favourite sports team wins an important competition.
- You have to pay a lot of money for something.
- You are stuck somewhere for a long time (in traffic, or on a bus for example)
- You are laughing very hard.

Can you think of other times that you've cried?



Text A



What is crying?

Humans are the only animals that cry emotional tears. Other animals will cry when they're in pain or when they have something in their eye but only humans weep.

When we are babies, we usually cry to be picked up, fed or changed. It is a way of signalling for help. But as we get older, individual and cultural experiences lead us to cry for emotional reasons, such as happiness, sadness or anger.

There are three kinds of tears: basal, reflex and emotional tears. Basal tears are made up of mucus, water and fat. They are always in our eyes to help keep our vision clear. They protect the eye's surface.

Reflex tears are composed mostly of water and come from the eye's main gland, the lacrimal gland. They are released as a reflex to something, for example irritation from peeling onions or heavy smoke.

Emotional tears also flow from the lacrimal gland and are involuntary, just like basal and reflex tears. Most people think emotional tears occur to release tension, but current physiological research suggests that crying occurs after an emotional crisis, and after the body is already returning to its normal state. Crying is not a response to crisis; it is post-crisis. It is part of the restoration.

Text B



Men's crying and women's crying

A study by the British Psychological Society in 2000 examined the differences in the way men and women cry. Men are more likely to cry as a result of positive feelings, while women are more likely to cry after conflict with other people, or as a result of feeling inadequate.

The study showed that women experience more complex emotions while crying, including fear, anger, powerlessness and frustration. In response to these feelings, men preferred repressed panic or choked rage to crying.

The study revealed that men are five times more likely than women to cry with happiness - usually a direct result of their love of football. One in ten men said the last time they wept it was with joy - nine out of ten of them prompted by football matches.

The biggest single cause of tears was grief or relationship breakdown. Men are also more likely to cry because they feel touched. The study also found that women cried, or admitted to crying, more frequently than men.

Another recent study looked at how people view crying. A man who is crying is often seen as a sensitive and overwhelmed, whereas a woman who is crying is often seen as unstable and emotional.