

The secret life of ...

by Elena Filimonova, Aislyu Ryukova & Dina Valieva

Activity type: Running dictation

Student grouping: Four equal sized teams

Time needed: 20 minutes approx.

Skills practiced: One-time listening training, identifying specific information, accuracy

Materials needed: One copy of the sentences worksheet, paper and pen for each team

Summary: This reading and speaking game helps students practise skim-reading texts and finding and paraphrasing the relevant information.

Preparation

Cut up the fifteen sentences and stick them on the classroom walls, mixing up all the facts.

Explain to students that the aim of the game is to correctly identify all the relevant facts about a certain famous person (e.g. Albert Einstein) in the quickest time. There are fifteen facts in the classroom, but only five are about Einstein, so will they need to be careful.

Divide the class into four equal-sized teams and ask each team to nominate a writer. Hand out pen and paper to the four writers.

How to play the game

When the students are ready to begin, write the name ALBERT EINSTEIN (or, if you're using the example sentence worksheet, you could begin with Stephen Hawking or Nikola Tesla) on the board.

Taking turns, each team member should get up and look at the facts on the walls until they find out they think is about Einstein. They should remember the fact and then return to their team, telling it to the writer. The next player in the team can only take their turn once the writer has written the fact down as a complete sentence.

The winning team is the team that is the first to not only identify the correct five sentences, but write the facts down accurately.

Teaching notes

- This game promotes team work and activates reading, listening and analytical skills at the same time.
- If you are unsure of your students' knowledge of one of the given people, divide them into groups the lesson before, give them names of the famous people and ask them to undertake some research. Alternately, you could produce your own sentences to cut up rather than using the ones provided.
- Remind students that they don't need to memorise the sentences exactly – they should focus on memorising the facts and producing grammatically correct sentences in their groups.
- Once a team has won the game, you could write the name of one of the other famous people on the board and ask them to play again, nominating a new writer; this round should be faster as there are fewer facts to eliminate.
- As a final round, you could ask students to collect the five facts about the remaining person, in the same way as before, and guess who it could be.

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Answer key

Albert Einstein

- Born in Germany, he was a theoretical physicist.
- He developed a scientific theory called relativity, which is an essential part of modern physics.
- In 1921 he received the Nobel prize for his work.
- When you picture an absent-minded professor or a mad scientist, you may think of him and his distinctive hairstyle!
- His most famous equation is $E=mc^2$.

Stephen Hawking

- He was a theoretical physicist, cosmologist and author from England.
- He passed away in 2018 and was buried in Westminster Abbey in London.
- He was diagnosed with motor neurone disease when he was 21 and doctors predicted he would only live for two more years.
- He was unable to speak, so he used a speech synthesizer controlled by facial movements.
- His nickname at school was 'Einstein', even though he didn't do very well at first.

Nikola Tesla

- American businessman Elon Musk named a company that manufactures electric cars after this inventor.
- He spoke eight languages, including Czech, Serbo-Croatian and Latin.
- He was a Serbian-American inventor, engineer and physicist.
- He obtained over 250 patents for his designs across the world, but he also invented many more things.
- He is best known for his work on the electricity supply system.

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