

## Video lesson for a global EFL classroom

### Japan puffer fish

by David Allen

#### Teachers' notes

**Age:** Teenagers and adults

**Level:** Upper-intermediate and above

**Time needed:** 60 minutes

**Number of students:** 1+

**Main aim:** To develop listening skills: listening for gist and for specific information

**Sub aims:** To improve vocabulary knowledge of key phrases and lexis used in video.  
To practise speaking through negotiation of meaning.  
To practise writing a magazine article.

**Materials:** One worksheet per student and access to National Geographic video shorts, Japan: Puffer Fish, available at:

[http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/player/places/countries-places/japan/japan\\_pufferfish.html](http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/player/places/countries-places/japan/japan_pufferfish.html).

Alternatively, type *National Geographic video shorts Japan: Puffer Fish* into a search engine and you'll get YouTube entries. You could also download the video for free using iTunes software, or search on the <http://video.nationalgeographic.com/video/> website using *puffer fish*.

#### Procedure:

The activities are largely self-explanatory and as such can also be used for self-study purposes (in which case students will need access to a computer and the Internet).

- **Lead-in:** This can be done as a pair discussion activity followed by a quick group feedback.
- **Vocabulary 1:** Students should check the words they don't know with one another and using their dictionaries. All of these words are important for understanding the main details of the text. Refer students to a good dictionary if necessary.
- **Predicting content:** Ask students if they can guess what the video will be about, based on the words studied in the vocabulary section. They can do this in pairs. Tell students to watch the video and see if they were correct. Get feedback and see if the students were correct. Was there anything which they didn't guess or something which surprised them in the video?
- **Comprehension questions:** Ask students to read through the questions and check they understand the meaning of each question. Tell students to watch the video and answer the questions as they watch. All of the questions are in the same order as they appear in the video. After students have watched the video, ask them to check their answers with a partner. If students failed to guess most of the answers you may wish to replay the video; otherwise check the answers after with the group. The answers are:
  1. Which is the most expensive fish at Tsukiji market? (no fish has a price than the one that's most taboo – fugu)
  2. Why is Matsumoto restaurant famous? (famous for it's careful preparation)
  3. What effect did the war have on the number of fatalities caused by eating fugu? (people salvaged scraps from the trash and ate poisonous fugu)

4. What did General Macarthur do about fugu? (imposed a license system)
  5. How many people died between 1945 and 1985, as a result of eating fugu? (2,500 – twenty-five hundred).
  6. What should you do if someone eats the poison in fugu? (attach them to a respirator – because the lungs fail)
  7. Why is the chrysanthemum a special flower in Japan (two reasons)? (National flower and the flower used at funerals).
- **Additional questions:** Ask students to work in pairs and answer the questions. These are additional questions which provide extra speaking practice for the students; you may wish to monitor and get the best answers to be repeated for the whole class. The answers are:
    1. He says he hasn't been concerned with the fact that people have died from eating fugu.
    2. Regulation and education (fugu chefs must get licenses)
    3. Causes paralysis so people cannot move or breathe; not being able to breathe, people then die. However, they are fully conscious (until their lungs fail).
  - **Vocabulary 2:** Ask students to match the phrases to the definitions. Then ask them to complete the gapped sentences with the appropriate phrase, taking care to check that the sentences are grammatically correct. This exercise practises manipulation of new lexical items – at this level students should be able to cope with this. Students can watch the video again to listen for these items – this will practise monitoring for key words; alternatively, you may just get students to check together and then move on. The answers are:
    1. The number of deaths due to fugu poisoning sky-rocketed after the end of the war.
    2. Japan is simply crazy for fish.
    3. Tom has triumphed over the puffer fish.
    4. About half of the meat is tainted by the toxin.
    5. Chef Hayashi has Tom's life in his hands.
  - **Explain the meaning:** This is an additional vocabulary activity which gets students to practise paraphrasing skills. You may wish to mention that most of these phrases are used in journalism as a way of holding the listeners' attention. These are mainly metaphorical in meaning. I included *despite* as many students mess up the form, which you may wish to elicit and practise:  
*despite* + n / gerund + , + full clause
  - **Discussion:** Put students in small groups and ask them to discuss the two questions. Get some feedback by asking students to report back on others' comments.
  - **Follow-up:** Ask students to write a short magazine article. The language should be informal, paragraphs are required. An introductory paragraph should talk about the variety of world food and cultural delicacies. Ask students to briefly summarize the case of fugu and make use of their new vocabulary. A final paragraph may want to include whether the student believes it is worth the risk to eat such foods.

## Student worksheet

### Lead-in

Is fish a popular food in your country?

What kinds of fish do people eat? Are there any types of fish people don't eat? Why?

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### Vocabulary 1

Fill the gaps in the sentences using the following words from the video. Check you understand the meaning of these words.

poisonous  
taboo  
respirator

anti-toxin  
gills  
fatality

scraps (of food)  
chrysanthemum  
cyanide

1. Fish use \_\_\_\_\_ to breathe under water.
2. The \_\_\_\_\_ is a type of flower.
3. If you eat something \_\_\_\_\_, you will become sick or possibly die.
4. Something avoided for religious or social reasons is \_\_\_\_\_.
5. An \_\_\_\_\_ is like a medicine; it will neutralize the effects of a toxin.
6. \_\_\_\_\_ means somebody died.
7. \_\_\_\_\_ is a poisonous chemical.
8. A \_\_\_\_\_ is a machine that helps people to breathe.
9. Small pieces of something, which are often unwanted, are called \_\_\_\_\_.

### Predicting content

What do you think the video will be about? Watch the video and see if you were correct.

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### Listen again and try to answer these questions.

1. Which is the most expensive fish at Tsukiji market?
2. Why is Matsumoto restaurant famous?
3. What effect did the war have on the number of fatalities caused by eating fugu?
4. What did General MacArthur do about the situation?

5. How many people died between 1945 and 1985 as a result of eating fugu?
  6. What should you do if someone eats the poison in fugu?
  7. Why is the chrysanthemum a special flower in Japan? (two reasons)
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**Now discuss the answers to these questions with your teacher or a partner.**

1. How does Tom feel about eating fugu?
  2. What are the main reasons for the reduction in fatalities from fugu?
  3. What happens to the body when fugu poison enters the bloodstream?
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## Vocabulary 2

**Match the phrases on the left with the definitions on the right.**

(sth) to sky rocket	to beat (sth/sb)
to be crazy for (sth)	to spoil (sth), especially food or blood, by adding a harmful substance
to triumph over (sth)	to like (sth) very much
to taint (sth)	to be able to kill someone or keep them safe
to have (somebody's) life in (your) hands	to increase dramatically

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**Now use these phrases in the sentences below.**

1. The number of deaths due to fugu poisoning \_\_\_\_\_ after the end of the war.
2. Japan is simply \_\_\_\_\_ fish.
3. Having a dinner which could kill you is probably the ultimate food taboo, but this time Tom has \_\_\_\_\_ the puffer fish.
4. About half of the meat is \_\_\_\_\_ by the toxin.
5. Chef Hayashi \_\_\_\_\_ Tom's \_\_\_\_\_.

**You can check your answers by watching the video again.**

**Explain the meaning of the following phrases.**

Fugu is so ugly that it's cute.

The chef slices the fugu meat paper thin.

Despite the danger, millions of people still eat fugu.

Fugu is the food version of Russian roulette.

A fugu palace.

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**Discussion**

What other 'controversial' or dangerous world delicacies do you know?

Should dangerous foods be banned?

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**Follow up**

Write a short article (150-250 words) for a general interest magazine about cultural delicacies and the risks involved in eating poisonous foods. Use the puffer fish as an example.