BUSINESS NEWS LESSONS

Memes motivate people to engage and act

onestopenglish

Level: Advanced (C1-C2)

Time: Approximately 90 minutes

Business topic: Finance and investment; communication and technology; popular culture; social media

Business language: Compound nouns; words for news and story-telling

Activities: Key words, understanding the text, business language, group reading, discussion, scenario

Groups: One-to-one, pairs, small groups, whole class

Overview: This lesson is based on an article from a business news source. The article discusses how memes have been influencing different markets and how they have had a particular impact on the financial industry, encouraging investors to use social media as a tool to inform on which shares to buy.

1. Warmer

a. Put the students in pairs and ask them to discuss the questions. Prompt if necessary: are moving or static images more likely to gain someone's attention and why? Could one type of content be more popular than another? How are comments and calls to action used to engage with the audience? When students have finished the discussion, ask each pair to feed back to the class.

2. Key words

a. Students match the words with the definitions.

Key:
1. memes
2. bullying
3. narratives
4. distort
5. self-deprecation
6. ludicrous
7. horde
8. buzz
9. engenders
10. confines
11. durable
12. harnessed

b. Students complete the text with the key words from the previous activity.

Key:
1. confines
2. horde
3. self-deprecation
4. buzz
5. memes
6. narratives
7. ludicrous
8. durable

Not needed: bullying, distorts, engenders, harnessed

3. Understanding the article

a. Students decide if the sentences are true or false.

Key:
1. False
2. True
3. False
4. True
5. False
6. False
7. True
8. True
9. True
10. False

4. Business Language

a. Remind the students that compound nouns are nouns that are made up of two or more words. They can appear hyphenated, merged to form one word or be separated into two words.

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

b. cryptocurrencies

5. Business Language

a. Students complete the words by adding the missing letters.

Key:
1. memes
2. commentary
3. narratives
4. easily-digestible
5. captions
6. social media
7. pseudonymous

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b. Provide students with the answers in the key and tell them you are going to read the article as a group. Ask four students to read, giving each a paragraph of the text. Provide further discussion, asking them if they have ever seen an author or another type of artist change the direction of their career in this way. Were they successful or not? Were the public pleased or disappointed with this change of direction?

Key:
1. pseudonymous
2. easily-digestible
3. narratives
4. social media
5 memes
6. captions

6. Discussion Questions

a. Put the students in pairs and ask them to discuss the questions. Ask the pairs to provide feedback to the class. Provide further discussion: ask the students if they have ever seen a very successful meme and why they think it connected with the audience. Did it comment on popular culture or current topics? What would be the benefits and disadvantages of controlling memes and other types of online content? Should people be free to share any content they please?

7. Wider business theme – influential media

a. Put the students in small groups. Tell them they are going to read a scenario involving a communications team working at a university who need to recruit students for a new postgraduate course. They will need to consider the market demographic and explore different types of media that could be used to successfully promote the course to them. Prompt if necessary: which types of media are most likely to appeal to these age groups? How might younger students compare to and differ from the mature students and how could both these markets be influenced? How can all the different communications channels work together to form an effective campaign? Once the students have finished the discussion, ask each group to describe their communications plans to the rest of the class. Consider providing further discussion: have they been contacted by companies via email and social media? Which do they prefer and why? Do they think one is more appealing and convenient than they other?

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