

## Forensic study finds Chilean poet Pablo Neruda was poisoned

### Level 1: Elementary – Teacher's notes

**Article summary:** Lab analysis of Neruda's exhumed remains reveals that he was poisoned days after Chile's military coup and did not die from cancer. The article also explores less savoury facts about his personal life.

**Time:** 90 minutes

**Skills:** Reading, Speaking, Writing

**Language focus:** Grammar (past simple and past continuous)

**Materials needed:** One copy of the worksheet per student

#### 1. Warmer

- a. The purpose of this activity is to introduce the topic of Neruda and the political backdrop at his time of death. Check answers with the whole class.

**Key:**

1. Pablo Neruda
2. Augusto Pinochet
3. Salvador Allende

#### 2. Key words

- a. Ask students to do the exercise individually and compare their answers in pairs or small groups.

**Key:**

- |                 |               |
|-----------------|---------------|
| 1. poison       | 6. inject     |
| 2. Malnutrition | 7. reputation |
| 3. coup         | 8. rape       |
| 4. Exhumation   | 9. dismiss    |
| 5. chauffeur    | 10. disgusted |

As an extension, you could ask students to identify the number of syllables in all the long words and clap them out as they say them. For example:

*mal-nu-tri-tion*

*chau-ffeur – sometimes chau-ffeur (Make sure students pronounce the first sound as 'sh'.)*

*ex-hu-ma-tion*

*in-ject*

*dis-gus-ted*

*re-pu-ta-tion*

- b. Ask students to work in pairs to complete this activity and compare their answers in small groups. Focus on pronunciation when you elicit responses.

**Key:**

- |              |                 |
|--------------|-----------------|
| 1. chauffeur | 4. reputation   |
| 2. injected  | 5. malnutrition |
| 3. disgusted | 6. coup         |

#### 3. Comprehension check

- a. Ask students to scan the text to find the paragraph containing the information, and then to read it carefully before deciding.

**Key:**

1. False. Neruda was poisoned.
2. True
3. False. Neruda told his chauffeur that someone injected him at the hospital.
4. True
5. False. Pinochet planned the coup to remove Neruda's friend, Allende.
6. True
7. False. Some think he was the greatest poet of the last century.
8. True
9. True

#### 4. Key language

- a. Students could be asked to do this exercise in pairs or small groups. You could first remind students how we use the past continuous and past simple to describe an action that happened when another action was already happening. For example:

They were watching TV when someone knocked.

(action that started first)      (action that interrupts)

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Have students try to complete the task independently before checking their answers in the text.

**Key:**

1. *killed, were attacking*
2. *were picking, called*
3. *worked, was living*

### 5. Discussion

- a. Allow students time to note their ideas about each statement and encourage them to give reasons for each one. Tell them that their notes will be used in the final writing task. Then ask students to work in pairs or small groups to discuss the statements. If there is time, regroup students so they can practice expressing their opinions with different classmates.

### 6. In your own words

The task could also be done as homework if you omit task b. If you are pressed for time, you can move directly to task c, the final writing task.

- a. Assign tasks a and b to half of the class each. Ask them to do their research and gather information.
- b. Regroup students to form new pairs consisting of a student who completed task a and another who completed task b. Have students share their information and ideas. Ask them to discuss the question and make notes.
- c. Ask students to imagine they are reposting the article and commenting on it. Encourage them to use some of the phrases provided and suggest a word count.