

Why I quit complaining about cyclists, scrapped my car and chose public transport

Level 1: Elementary/Pre-intermediate – Teacher's notes

Article summary: The article explains how the author changed her views regarding cyclists in cities.

Time: 60 minutes

Skills: Reading, Speaking

Language focus: Grammar – past simple

Materials needed: One copy of the worksheet per student

1. Warmer

- a. Start by showing students some pictures of different means of transport. Elicit what they are and the verbs we use to talk about them (ride a bike, drive a car, take a train). Ask them to discuss the questions in the worksheet with a partner. Then, share ideas with the whole class.

2. Key words

- a. Tell students all the words in the two boxes are used in an article they will read. Give students some minutes to complete the sentences using the words in the boxes. Once they have completed the sentences individually, ask them to check answers in pairs. Then, check with the whole group.

Key:

- | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. <i>controversial</i> | 6. <i>risk</i> |
| 2. <i>furious</i> | 7. <i>lifestyle</i> |
| 3. <i>anger</i> | 8. <i>socialise</i> |
| 4. <i>seriously</i> | 9. <i>careless</i> |
| 5. <i>slightly</i> | 10. <i>pedestrians</i> |

- b. Ask students to discuss the questions on the worksheet with a partner. Tell them to go back to the sentences in task A if they are unsure about the meaning of any of the words in bold, and encourage them to expand and justify their views, providing examples when appropriate.

3. Comprehension check

- a. Ask students to read the article and put the ideas in the order they appear in the text. Encourage them to underline the evidence so it's easier to check answers. Allow some minutes for students to check in pairs before correcting with the whole class.

Key:

- | | |
|-------------|-------------|
| 1. <i>f</i> | 5. <i>d</i> |
| 2. <i>a</i> | 6. <i>b</i> |
| 3. <i>h</i> | 7. <i>c</i> |
| 4. <i>g</i> | 8. <i>e</i> |

4. Key language

- a. Tell students all the verbs in the table appear in the article in their past form. Ask them to complete the table with the corresponding past forms individually. Then, give students some time to check answers in pairs before they look for the verbs in the text.

Key:

- | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. <i>thought</i> | 6. <i>had</i> |
| 2. <i>wrote</i> | 7. <i>worked</i> |
| 3. <i>changed</i> | 8. <i>learnt/learned</i> |
| 4. <i>heard</i> | 9. <i>took</i> |
| 5. <i>started</i> | 10. <i>stopped</i> |

- b. Ask students to choose three verbs from the table in task A and write them on a piece of paper. Ask them to exchange lists with a partner and write three sentences using the verbs they got. Once finished, encourage students to check each other's sentences. An alternative would be to ask students to write two true sentences and one false sentence using the verbs they got. Their partner has to guess which sentence is false.

5. Discussion

- a. Students work in pairs again and discuss whether they agree with the ideas provided, explaining why and trying to provide examples and anecdotes when possible.

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6. In your own words

- a. Ask students to work in pairs or small groups and prepare a short presentation about cycling / driving / using public transport. While groups present, ask the rest of the class to 'hunt' verbs in the past (i.e., spot and jot down the ones their classmates use). The student with the longest list of verbs wins.