

Here's why we should stop weeding. Learn to love our dandelions and brambles

Level 2: Intermediate – Teacher's notes

Article summary: The article discusses how weeds have found a place in the Chelsea Flower Show and how they benefit the soil, invertebrates, and pollinators. It argues that we should learn to love weeds and allow them to grow in gardens.

Time: 60–90 minutes (depending on availability of 'garden time')

Skills: Reading, Speaking, Writing

Language focus: Vocabulary (phrasal verbs)

Materials needed: One copy of the worksheet per student

2. Key words

- a. Ask students to do the exercise individually and compare their answers in pairs or small groups. As an extension, you can focus on formal and informal language. The words in this activity are all neutral or formal. You could ask students to think about their less formal/more informal equivalents. Some have been provided in parentheses below.

Key:

1. *declare* (say)
2. *resilient* (strong)
3. *subversive* (radical)
4. *pollen*
5. *nectar* (juice)
6. *perennial* (long-living)
7. *mine* (take out)
8. *deposit*
9. *aesthetics* (looks/beauty)
10. *vital* (important)
11. *tend* (take care of / look after)
12. *mow* (cut)

- b. Ask students to discuss the questions in small groups. Pay particular attention to their use of the target language.

1. Warmer

- a. This activity aims to introduce the weeds mentioned in the article and engage students in the topic. Encourage them to use a physical or online dictionary in English before using a translator or a bilingual dictionary.

Key:

v	d	c	i	c	d	k	c	h	o
x	f	a	z	w	o	c	a	b	x
t	b	o	n	j	c	z	z	n	n
h	c	i	u	d	k	p	z	x	z
i	p	e	n	n	e	d	t	z	n
s	c	x	f	d	l	l	r	e	d
t	a	k	o	m	w	h	i	f	l
l	l	g	z	y	s	e	n	o	q
e	y	t	d	t	v	f	e	b	n
b	r	a	m	b	l	e	u	d	g

1. *thistle*
2. *dock*
3. *dandelion*
4. *bindweed*
5. *bramble*

3. Comprehension check

- a. Students say whether the statements are true or false and then correct the false statements.

Key:

1. *False. We only know who won the 2002 show.*
2. *True*
3. *True*
4. *False. They usually lose those beneficial characteristics.*
5. *True*
6. *False. They were only appreciated for their role in the food web before.*
7. *True*
8. *False. We should let weeds grow, but we should tend them.*

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4. Key language

- a. Ask students to do this exercise individually and then compare their answers in pairs. Encourage them to check their answers by looking for context and meaning clues in the text.

Key:

- | | |
|------|------|
| 1. c | 4. a |
| 2. f | 5. d |
| 3. e | 6. b |

- b. Ask students to work in pairs, complete the questions and then discuss their answers. You can then regroup students so two pairs work together and discuss their answers again.

Key:

1. *creeping into*
2. *keen on*
3. *take up*
4. *ease up on*

5. Discussion

- a. Allow students time to note their ideas about each statement and encourage them to say why they agree or disagree with each. This can be done in pairs or in small groups.

6. In your own words

- a. If students cannot wander outside, set this for homework. Alternatively, ask students to complete this weed-identification activity and the field log in pairs.
- b. Regroup students so that pairs are split into new couples or groups of four. Ask students to share their findings using their field guides as a visual aid.