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The 4 page 60 minute ESL British English lesson – 05/06/13

What is couchsurfing?

Today, let's talk about couchsurfing. What's that I hear you ask? In a nutshell it's when you kip on a strangers couch when travelling. Risky? I think so. Yet many young people around the world think it is not. The webpage www.couchsurfing.org finds you a registered couch for the night!

Today's theme actually began on a train I took recently from Budapest in Hungary. I was travelling with a friend to Bratislava in Slovakia. On it we met several travellers; including a South Korean student who was travelling around Europe for two months alone! She was taking the night train to Prague in the Czech Republic. By travelling on the overnight train meant that as a student she saved money on overnight accommodation! Once she hit Prague she would hook up with this person who was offering their couch. I have no idea who this person was.

Apparently couchsurfing is a cool way to see the world cheaply. Certainly young people seem to think so. I am not so young and if I were looking for somewhere to stay I would stay with friends or family. If that option wasn't possible I would stay in a hotel, pension or bed and breakfast.

The webpage claims to have 6 million members, says it covers 100,000 cities worldwide and promotes 170,000 events. Super! Rather than share your homes with strangers they call it 'friends you haven't met yet'.

The couchsurfing idea began in 2004 when a guy called Casey Fenton sent an email to a group of students in Iceland. The rest they say is history...

Whilst it might make travelling 'a truly social experience' sleeping on a strangers couch is not for me! Is it your cup of tea?

SPEAKING

Think of three things you know about couchsurfing. What is it? Go round the room swapping details with others.

LISTENING – WRITING - DICTATION

The teacher will read some lines of the article slowly to the class.

READING

Students should now read the article aloud, swapping readers every paragraph.

SPEAKING - UNDERSTANDING

1) The article – Students check any unknown vocabulary or phrases with the teacher.

2) The article - Students should look through the article with the teacher.

- 1) What is the article about?
- 2) What do you think about the article?
- 3) Was this an easy or difficult article to understand?
- 4) Was this a boring or interesting article?
- 5) Discuss the article.

3) Article quiz - Students quiz each other in pairs. Score a point for each correct answer. Score half a point each time you have to look at the article for help. See who can get the highest score!

Student A questions

- 1) What year was couchsurfing invented?
- 2) Which country did the student on the train going to Prague come from?
- 3) Where was the author going?
- 4) Where was the student going?
- 5) Name the types of accommodation.

Student B questions

- 1) Who is Casey Fenton?
- 2) What does 'in a nutshell' mean?
- 3) What is couchsurfing?
- 4) Where did today's lesson theme start?
- 5) Name the cities.

Category: Travel / City to City / Couchsurfing
Level: Intermediate / Upper Intermediate

What is couchsurfing? – 5th June 2013

WRITING / SPEAKING

In pairs. On the board write as many words as you can to do with '**Couchsurfing**'. *One-two minutes.* Compare with other teams. Using your words compile a short dialogue together.

WRITING / SPEAKING

What is couchsurfing? - *In pairs* choose three things from the article.

Write them below.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

Add three similar ideas of your own about the subject. Discuss together.

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____

The teacher will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class.

WRITING / SPEAKING

You are a student with a tiny budget. You are about to go travelling for a month. Think about where you might go and where you might stay. Choose three to six cities you might visit. Write them down. Talk about what you might see with your partner. *Max 5 mins each!*

The teacher will choose some students to read out their work to the class.

DISCUSSION

Student A questions

- 1) Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- 2) Have you ever travelled overnight on a train? Explain!
- 3) Would you sleep on a strangers couch?
- 4) When did you first hear about couchsurfing?
- 5) Would you like to do a bit of couchsurfing?
- 6) How safe are you if couchsurfing?
- 7) Do you know anyone who has been couchsurfing?
- 8) Is couchsurfing a cool way to see the world?
- 9) Is couchsurfing risky?
- 10) Have you learnt anything in today's lesson?

SPEAKING – ROLEPLAY 1

In groups. One of you is the interviewer. The others are one of the following people. You are in the *Europe 2* studio in Amsterdam. Today's interview is: 'Couchsurfing'.

- 1) A budget traveller
- 2) A student from your country
- 3) A travel journalist
- 4) An older tourist

The teacher will choose some groups to roleplay their interview in front of the class.

SPEAKING - ROLEPLAY 2

In pairs. You are in a pub in Amsterdam. Start a conversation about: '*An overnight train journey you did followed by a spot of couchsurfing*'. 5 mins.

SPEAKING - GAME

Groups – 20 things you might see on a train. 5 mins.

The teacher will choose some groups to hear their findings in front of the class.

SPEAKING - DISCUSSION

Allow 10 minutes – As a class.

Discuss the following...

Couchsurfing – good idea or not?

The teacher can moderate the session.

DISCUSSION

Student B questions

- 1) What do you think about what you've read?
- 2) Is couchsurfing your cup of tea?
- 3) Is couchsurfing really 'a truly social experience'?
- 4) What do you think of the phrase in the article 'friends you haven't met yet'? Is it true?
- 5) Name two places you might couchsurf.
- 6) Have you ever been to Prague, Budapest or Bratislava?
- 7) Where do you prefer to sleep when travelling?
- 8) As a student how did you save money when travelling?
- 9) Has this been a difficult lesson?
- 10) Did you like this discussion?

GAP FILL: READING

What is couchsurfing?

Today, let's talk about (1)__. What's that I hear you ask? In a (2)__ it's when you (3)__ on a (4)__ couch when travelling. Risky? I think so. Yet many young people around the world think it is not. The webpage www.couchsurfing.org finds you a registered couch for the night!

Today's theme actually began on a train I took recently from Budapest in Hungary. I was travelling with a friend to Bratislava in Slovakia. On it we met several (6)__; including a South Korean student who was travelling around Europe for two months (7)! She was taking the night train to Prague in the Czech Republic. By travelling on the overnight train meant that as a (8)__ she saved money on overnight accommodation! Once she hit Prague she would hook up with this person who was offering their couch. I have no idea who this person was.

webpage / student / travellers / alone / strangers / couchsurfing / kip / nutshell /

Apparently couchsurfing is a cool way to see the world (1)__. Certainly young people seem to think so. I am not so young and if I were looking for somewhere to (2)__ I would stay with friends or family. If that (3)__ wasn't possible I would stay in a hotel, (4)__ or bed and breakfast.

The webpage (5)__ to have 6 million members, says it covers 100,000 cities worldwide and promotes 170,000 events. Super! Rather than share your homes with strangers they call it 'friends you haven't met yet'.

The couchsurfing (6)__ began in 2004 when a guy called Casey Fenton sent an email to a group of students in Iceland. The rest they say is history...

Whilst it might make travelling 'a truly (7)__ experience' sleeping on a strangers couch is not for me! Is it your cup of (8)__?

tea / pension / idea / claims / option / cheaply / social / stay

GAP FILL: GRAMMAR

What is couchsurfing?

Today, let's talk about couchsurfing. What's that I hear you ask? (1)__ a nutshell it's when you kip on a strangers couch when travelling. Risky? I think so. (2)__ many young people around the world think (3)__ is not. The webpage www.couchsurfing.org finds you a registered couch for the night!

Today's theme actually began on a train I took recently from Budapest in Hungary. I was travelling with a friend (4)__ Bratislava in Slovakia. On it we met several travellers; including a South Korean student who was travelling around Europe (5)__ two months alone! She was taking the night train to Prague in the Czech Republic. (6)__ travelling on the overnight train meant that as a student she saved money on overnight accommodation! Once (7)__ hit Prague she would hook up with this person (8)__ was offering their couch. I have no idea who this person was.

who / she / for / yet / in / by / to / it

Apparently couchsurfing is a cool way to see the world cheaply. Certainly young people seem to think so. I am not so young and if I were looking for somewhere to stay I would stay with friends or family. If (1)__ option wasn't possible I (2)__ stay in a hotel, pension or bed and breakfast.

The webpage claims to have 6 million members, says it covers 100,000 cities worldwide and promotes 170,000 events. Super! (3)__ than share your homes with strangers they call it 'friends you haven't met yet'.

The couchsurfing idea began in 2004 (4)__ a guy called Casey Fenton sent an email to a group of students in Iceland. The rest (5)__ say is history...

(6)__ it (7)__ make travelling 'a truly social experience' sleeping on a strangers couch is not for me! Is it (8)__ cup of tea?

your / might / they / would / rather / that / when / whilst

GAP FILL: LISTENING

What is couchsurfing?

Today, let's talk about couchsurfing. What's that I hear you ask? _____ when you kip on a strangers couch when travelling. Risky? I think so. Yet many young people around the world think it is not. The webpage www.couchsurfing.org finds you a registered couch for the night!

Today's theme actually began on a train I took recently from _____. I was travelling with a friend to Bratislava in Slovakia. On it we met several travellers; including a South Korean student who was travelling around Europe for two months alone! She was taking the _____ in the Czech Republic. By travelling on the overnight train meant that as a student she saved money on overnight accommodation! Once she hit Prague she would hook up with this person who was offering their couch. I have no idea _____.

Apparently couchsurfing is a cool way to see the world cheaply. Certainly young people seem to think so. I am not so young and if I were looking for somewhere to stay _____ friends or family. If that option wasn't possible I would stay in a hotel, pension _____.

The webpage claims to have 6 million members, says it covers 100,000 cities worldwide and promotes 170,000 events. Super! Rather than share your homes with strangers they call it 'friends _____'.

The couchsurfing idea began in 2004 when a guy called Casey Fenton sent an email to a group of students in Iceland. _____ history...

Whilst it might make travelling 'a truly social experience' sleeping on a strangers couch is not for me! _____?

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WRITING/SPELLING

WRITING / SPEAKING

1) On the board - *In pairs/small groups* – list five things you know about **Prague, Budapest and Bratislava**.

Talk about each of them. *5 mins*.

2) Sentence starters - Finish these sentence starters. Correct your mistakes. Compare what other people have written.

- 1) Couchsurfing _____
- 2) I like _____
- 3) Students _____

3) Homework - Write and send a 200 word email to your teacher about: **Couchsurfing**. Your email can be read out in class.

GAP FILL READING

- 1) couchsurfing
- 2) nutshell
- 3) kip
- 4) strangers
- 5) webpage
- 6) travellers
- 7) alone
- 8) student

ANSWERS

- 1) cheaply
- 2) stay
- 3) option
- 4) pension
- 5) claims
- 6) idea
- 7) social
- 8) tea

SPELLING

The teacher will ask the class individually to spell the following words that are in the article. Afterwards check your answers.

- 1) couchsurfing
- 2) nutshell
- 3) kip
- 4) risky
- 5) actually
- 6) theme
- 7) Hungary
- 8) Budapest
- 9) Bratislava
- 10) Prague

SPELLING

Use the following ratings:

Pass = 12
Good = 15
Very good = 18
Excellent = 20

- 11) several
- 12) overnight
- 13) accommodation
- 14) once
- 15) would
- 16) apparently
- 17) certainly
- 18) option
- 19) strangers
- 20) guy

What is couchsurfing? – *5th June 2013*