

www.**Breaking News English**.com

Ready-to-use ESL / EFL Lessons

The Breaking News English.com Resource Book

“1,000 Ideas & Activities For Language Teachers”

<http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/book.html>

US teen visits Baghdad to do his homework

URL: <http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/0512/051231-baghdad-e.html>

Contents

The Article	2
Warm-ups	3
Before Reading / Listening	4
While Reading / Listening	5
Listening Gap Fill	6
After Reading	7
Discussion	8
Speaking	9
Homework	10
Answers	11

31 December, 2005

THE ARTICLE

US teen visits Baghdad to do his homework

A 16-year-old American schoolboy is lucky to be alive today after going on a solo trip to Baghdad. Farris Hassan's dangerous journey was part of a homework assignment to write a report on an international topic. He said his interest in journalism and Iraqi background made him want to research his story. He arrived in Baghdad on December 18 and soon became the center of attention at food stalls as he tried to order a snack using his phrase book. He cannot speak Arabic. He eventually gave in to a fear of his unfamiliar surroundings. He asked shocked reporters for help in the war zone office of the Associated Press.

Farris told journalists he wanted to "go the extra mile" to make sure his homework was accurate. He wrote an essay before he left America. In it, he said: "I know I can't stop all the [killing] and save the innocent. But I also know I can't just sit here." He added: "Going to Iraq will broaden my mind. We...live such sheltered lives." He concluded: "I want to live my days so that my nights are not full of regrets." His mother is very relieved that her son is safe. She said Farris "is very driven" but "showed a lack of judgment" in going to Baghdad. She will also keep his passport under lock and key from now on.

WARM-UPS

1. HI FROM BAGHDAD: Sit with your back to your partner. Have an imaginary telephone conversation. You are both Baghdad. Tell each other why you went, what you are doing and how you are surviving. Is it dangerous?

2. DANGEROUS PLACES: In pairs / groups, talk about dangerous places. Where are the most dangerous places in the areas below? What makes them dangerous?

- a. The world?
- b. Your part of the world?
- c. Your country?
- d. Your city / town?
- e. Your neighborhood?
- f. Your house?

3. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words are most interesting and which are most boring.

Sixteen-year-olds / schoolboys / luck / solo trips / homework / journalism / phrase books / broadening your mind / sheltered lives / regrets / passports / locks / keys

Have a chat about the topics you liked. For more conversation, change topics and partners frequently.

4. I'M A JOURNALIST: You are now a journalist. Your editor has asked you to choose from the assignments below. Rank them in order of the ones you most want to do. Compare your lists with your partner's list.

- a. A report on Baghdad children playing soccer.
- b. An in-depth interview with Mongolia's leader.
- c. To join soldiers in Zimbabwe who are chasing elephant hunters.
- d. A top-secret interview with Osama Bin Laden in his mountain cave.
- e. Chase a story about a high-profile drug trafficker in the Colombian jungle.
- f. Investigate the mysterious disappearance of 1,237 teddy bears in your town.

Your editor has decided you must go with your partner(s). Agree on a new, joint order of preference.

5. SHELTERED LIVES: Do you live a sheltered life? Are there any dangers in your life? Answer these questions with your partner(s). Compare the safety / dangers of your life with the lives of people in other countries.

6. JOURNALISM: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with journalism. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

1. TRUE / FALSE: Look at the article's headline and guess whether these sentences are true (T) or false (F):

- a. A U.S. schoolboy went to Baghdad alone to research his homework. T / F
- b. He went to Iraq because of his interest in Iraqi archaeology. T / F
- c. The schoolboy spoke fluent Arabic and passed for a Baghdad resident. T / F
- d. He went for help to the war zone office of a famous news agency. T / F
- e. The boy said he wanted to go the extra 100 meters to do his report. T / F
- f. He went to Iraq so he could broaden his mind. T / F
- g. The boy has many regrets about going to Iraq. T / F
- h. The boy's mother will not let him have access to his passport. T / F

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article:

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------|
| a. lucky | ancestry |
| b. assignment | sense |
| c. background | strange |
| d. unfamiliar | precise |
| e. help | fortunate |
| f. go the extra mile | determined |
| g. accurate | try harder |
| h. sheltered | assistance |
| i. driven | report |
| j. judgment | comfortable |

3. PHRASE MATCH: Match the following phrases from the article (sometimes more than one combination is possible):

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| a. lucky to | his homework was accurate |
| b. write a report | his unfamiliar surroundings |
| c. soon became the center | my nights are not full of regrets |
| d. He eventually gave in to a fear of | just sit here |
| e. the war zone office | on an international topic |
| f. "go the extra mile" to make sure | be alive |
| g. I also know I can't | under lock and key |
| h. Going to Iraq | of attention |
| i. I want to live my days so that | of the Associated Press |
| j. She will also keep his passport | will broaden my mind |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

GAP FILL: Put the words in the column on the right into the gaps in the text.

US teen visits Baghdad to do his homework

A 16-year-old American schoolboy is _____ to be alive today after going on a _____ trip to Baghdad. Farris Hassan's dangerous journey was part of a homework assignment to write a report on an international _____. He said his interest in journalism and Iraqi _____ made him want to research his story. He arrived in Baghdad on December 18 and soon became the _____ of attention at food _____ as he tried to order a snack using his phrase book. He cannot speak Arabic. He eventually gave in to a fear of his _____ surroundings. He asked shocked reporters for help in the war _____ office of the Associated Press.

stalls
topic
center
lucky
background
zone
solo
unfamiliar

Farris told journalists he wanted to "go the _____ mile" to make sure his homework was _____. He wrote an essay before he left America. In it, he said: "I know I can't stop all the [killing] and _____ the innocent. But I also know I can't just _____ here." He added: "Going to Iraq will broaden my mind. We...live such sheltered lives." He _____: "I want to live my days so that my nights are not full of regrets." His mother is very _____ that her son is safe. She said Farris "is very _____" but "showed a _____ of judgment" in going to Baghdad. She will also keep his passport under lock and key from now on.

driven
concluded
accurate
lack
extra
relieved
save
sit

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

US teen visits Baghdad to do his homework

A 16-year-old American schoolboy is _____ to be alive today after going on a _____ trip to Baghdad. Farris Hassan's dangerous journey was part of a homework assignment to write a report on an international _____. He said his _____ in journalism and Iraqi background made him want to research his story. He arrived in Baghdad on December 18 and soon became the center of _____ at food stalls as he tried to order a snack using his phrase book. He cannot speak Arabic. He eventually _____ to a fear of his unfamiliar surroundings. He asked shocked reporters for help in the war _____ office of the Associated Press.

Farris told journalists he wanted to "go the _____ mile" to make sure his homework was accurate. He wrote an _____ before he left America. In it, he said: "I know I can't stop all the [killing] and save the _____. But I also know I can't just sit here." He added: "Going to Iraq will _____ my mind. We...live such sheltered lives." He concluded: "I want to live my days so that my nights are not full of _____." His mother is very relieved that her son is safe. She said Farris "is very driven" but "showed a _____ of judgment" in going to Baghdad. She will also keep his passport under _____ and key from now on.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionaries / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'school' and 'project'.

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. STUDENT "SHELTERED LIVES" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about our sheltered lives and whether we would benefit from having more risks in our lives.

- Ask other classmates your questions and note down their answers.
- Go back to your original partner / group and compare your findings.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

6. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall exactly how these were used in the text:

- | | |
|--------------|------------|
| • lucky | • mile |
| • assignment | • innocent |
| • background | • broaden |
| • center | • regrets |
| • phrase | • driven |
| • zone | • passport |

DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- b. Have you ever "gone the extra mile" to complete your homework?
- c. Do you ever "go the extra mile" in your daily life?
- d. Do you think Farris Hassan has a death wish?
- e. Do you admire him for his bravery?
- f. Do you think you could have done what he did when you were sixteen?
- g. What do you think his schoolmates and teachers will say?
- h. Do you think Farris will become a journalist?
- i. Does he sound like an average 16-year-old to you?
- j. Do you think we can learn lessons from Farris' actions and words?

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a. Did you like reading this article?
- b. What do you think about what you read?
- c. What crazy things did you do when you were sixteen?
- d. Do you think you are lucky to be alive?
- e. Do you think your life is too safe and sheltered?
- f. Where would you like to go or what would you like to do to broaden your mind?
- g. Do you want to "live your days" so that your "nights are not full of regrets"?
- h. What questions would you like to ask Farris?
- i. What do you think his answers would be?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

AFTER DISCUSSION: Join another partner / group and tell them what you talked about.

- a. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- b. Was there a question you didn't like?
- c. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- d. What did you like talking about?
- e. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

SHELTERED LIVES: Do we really live such sheltered lives? Are there more dangers and risks in our lives than we think? In pairs / groups, write down all the possible dangers and risks involved in the following activities:

	RISKS AND DANGERS
Showering	
Eating breakfast	
Going to work / school	
Sitting at your desk	
Doing your hobby	
Going shopping	
Studying English	

Discuss how real these risks and dangers actually are and whether you will now worry about them. Talk about any stories you have heard about these things happening in real life.

Change partners and tell your new partner(s) what you discussed with your old partner(s). Will you do anything differently now to avoid these risks and dangers?

HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find more information on this story. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson. Did you all find out similar things?

3. MY PROJECT OF A LIFETIME: Write an essay about a major lifetime project you would like to do. Show what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Who had the most mind-broadening project?

4. LETTER: Write a letter to Farris Hassan. Tell him what you think of his adventure. Ask him some questions about his trip. Show your letters to your classmates in the next lesson. Did everyone write about similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

- a. T b. F c. F d. T e. F f. T g. F h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|----------------------|-------------|
| a. lucky | fortunate |
| b. assignment | report |
| c. background | ancestry |
| d. unfamiliar | strange |
| e. help | assistance |
| f. go the extra mile | try harder |
| g. accurate | precise |
| h. sheltered | comfortable |
| i. driven | determined |
| j. judgment | sense |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| a. lucky to | be alive |
| b. write a report | on an international topic |
| c. soon became the center | of attention |
| d. He eventually gave in to a fear of | his unfamiliar surroundings |
| e. the war zone office | of the Associated Press |
| f. "go the extra mile" to make sure | his homework was accurate |
| g. I also know I can't | just sit here |
| h. Going to Iraq | will broaden my mind |
| i. I want to live my days so that | my nights are not full of regrets |
| j. She will also keep his passport | under lock and key |

GAP FILL:

US teen visits Baghdad to do his homework

A 16-year-old American schoolboy is **lucky** to be alive today after going on a **solo** trip to Baghdad. Farris Hassan's dangerous journey was part of a homework assignment to write a report on an international **topic**. He said his interest in journalism and Iraqi **background** made him want to research his story. He arrived in Baghdad on December 18 and soon became the **center** of attention at food **stalls** as he tried to order a snack using his phrase book. He cannot speak Arabic. He eventually gave in to a fear of his **unfamiliar** surroundings. He asked shocked reporters for help in the war **zone** office of the Associated Press.

Farris told journalists he wanted to "go the **extra** mile" to make sure his homework was **accurate**. He wrote an essay before he left America. In it, he said: "I know I can't stop all the [killing] and **save** the innocent. But I also know I can't just **sit** here." He added: "Going to Iraq will broaden my mind. We...live such sheltered lives." He **concluded**: "I want to live my days so that my nights are not full of regrets." His mother is very **relieved** that her son is safe. She said Farris "is very **driven**" but "showed a **lack** of judgment" in going to Baghdad. She will also keep his passport under lock and key from now on.