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Londoners offered BLT for SAD

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15 January, 2006

THE ARTICLE

Londoners offered BLT for SAD

Short and dark days can cause a medical condition known as Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). Doctors are increasingly telling their patients about this problem in countries that have depressing weather. One of the most famous places for gray skies that rain cats and dogs is London. A new cafe has opened there that offers visitors 20-minute breaks from the wintertime blues. People who want to lift their spirits can visit the newly opened Dana Cafe at the Science Museum for some Bright Light Therapy (BLT). The cafe has a Light Lounge, where the light is five times brighter than regular house lights.

Over five million people suffer from SAD during winter in the UK. It is common knowledge that people in colder countries feel more miserable. This is because of a chemical imbalance in the part of the brain that controls our moods. A lack of the chemical serotonin, which the body receives from sunlight, can lead to many different symptoms. Low serotonin levels can trigger depression, anxiety, lethargy, sleep problems, overeating and a loss of sex drive. Eighty percent of SAD cases can be treated with a BLT session. Dana Cafe's Light Lounge is fully booked until March.

WARM-UPS

1. SUNSHINE: Talk to your partners about sunshine. Write down five reasons why sunshine is important. Change partners and share and compare the reasons you wrote down. What is the most common reason for sunshine being important?

2. THERAPY: What kind of therapy would you suggest for people suffering from the following problems? Discuss this with your partner(s).

- Lack of sunshine
- Insomnia (sleep disorder)
- Hydrophobia (fear of water)
- Lack of confidence making speeches
- Xenophobia (fear of foreigners)
- Anorexia (eating disorder)
- Alcoholism
- Dislike of studying English

3. SAD: S.A.D. means Seasonal Affective Disorder – a medical condition caused by a lack of sunshine. In pairs / groups, rate the following suggestions to treat SAD.

- a. Sit in front of very bright lights.
- b. Move to Hawaii.
- c. Move your desk and sofa nearer the window.
- d. Spend more time walking outside.
- e. Look at photographs of the sun, deserts and beaches.
- f. Take vitamin C.

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

Darkness / medical conditions / seasons / disorders / depressing weather / cats and dogs / cafes / the blues / bright lights / therapy / depression / lethargy / anxiety

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

5. GLOOMY PLACES: With your partner(s), brainstorm a list of gloomy places. What do you know about them? Here are a few you can talk about to get you started:

- London in winter
- The dark side of the moon
- A dentist's waiting room
- A three-dollar hotel room
- The losing team's bus
- The land of broken hearts
- Siberia
- A beach hotel during a typhoon

6. WINTER: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with winter. 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. Depressed people should eat bacon, lettuce and tomato sandwiches. T / F
- b. London is famous for gray skies and raining cats and dogs. T / F
- c. A new London cafe offers customers Bright Light Therapy. T / F
- d. The cafe's special lights are five times brighter than the sun. T / F
- e. Less than five million people suffer from SAD in the UK. T / F
- f. People in the southern hemisphere feel miserable in December. T / F
- g. A lack of sunshine can lead to overeating and cause lethargy. T / F
- h. Eighty percent of SAD cases can be treated with Bright Light Therapy. T / F

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

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| a. disorder | shortfall |
| b. increasingly | normal |
| c. depressing | tenseness |
| d. spirits | everyday |
| e. regular | (be) affected by |
| f. suffer | reserved |
| g. common | sickness |
| h. lack | mood |
| i. anxiety | gloomy |
| j. booked | more and more |

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

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| a. a medical condition | their spirits |
| b. Doctors are increasingly telling | breaks from the wintertime blues |
| c. gray skies | the part of the brain... |
| d. offers visitors 20-minute | from SAD during winter |
| e. People who want to lift | can be treated with a BLT session |
| f. five million people suffer | their patients about this problem |
| g. common | many different symptoms |
| h. a chemical imbalance in | known as Seasonal Affective Disorder |
| i. can lead to | knowledge |
| j. Eighty percent of SAD cases | that rain cats and dogs |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

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

Londoners offered BLT for SAD

Short and dark days can cause a medical _____ known as Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). Doctors are _____ telling their patients about this problem in countries that have depressing weather. One of the most famous places for gray _____ that rain cats and dogs is London. A new cafe has opened there that _____ visitors 20-minute _____ from the wintertime blues. People who want to _____ their spirits can visit the newly opened Dana Cafe at the Science Museum for some Bright Light _____ (BLT). The cafe has a Light Lounge, where the light is five times _____ than regular house lights.

lift
increasingly
offers
condition
brighter
breaks
skies
Therapy

Over five million people _____ from SAD during winter in the UK. It is _____ knowledge that people in colder countries feel more miserable. This is because of a chemical _____ in the part of the brain that controls our _____. A lack of the chemical serotonin, which the body receives from sunlight, can _____ to many different symptoms. Low serotonin _____ can trigger depression, anxiety, lethargy, sleep problems, overeating and a _____ of sex drive. Eighty percent of SAD cases can be treated with a BLT session. Dana Cafe's Light Lounge is _____ booked until March.

lead
fully
imbalance
loss
suffer
levels
common
moods

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

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Short and dark days can _____ a medical condition known as Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). Doctors are increasingly telling their _____ about this problem in countries that have depressing weather. One of the most famous places for gray skies that rain cats and dogs is London. A new cafe has opened there that _____ visitors 20-minute breaks from the wintertime blues. People who want to lift their _____ can visit the newly opened Dana Cafe at the Science Museum for some Bright Light Therapy (BLT). The cafe has a Light Lounge, where the light is five times brighter than _____ house lights.

Over five million people _____ from SAD during winter in the UK. It is common knowledge that people in colder countries feel more _____. This is because of a chemical imbalance in the part of the brain that controls our _____. A lack of the chemical serotonin, which the body _____ from sunlight, can lead to many different symptoms. Low serotonin levels can _____ depression, anxiety, lethargy, sleep problems, overeating and a loss of sex drive. Eighty percent of SAD cases can be _____ with a BLT session. Dana Cafe's Light Lounge is fully _____ until March.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

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

- 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 "SUNSHINE" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about sunshine.

- 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:

- | | |
|-------------|--------------|
| • condition | • UK |
| • patients | • colder |
| • famous | • lack |
| • spirits | • trigger |
| • therapy | • 80 percent |
| • regular | • fully |

DISCUSSION

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

- a. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- b. What did you first think when you read the headline?
- c. What do you know about SAD?
- d. Do you think or know that you suffer from SAD?
- e. What kinds of things give you the blues?
- f. What is your image of London and its weather?
- g. What do you do to lift your spirits?
- h. How do you feel when the weather is depressing?
- i. Would you like to visit Dana Cafe's Light Lounge?
- j. Do you think people who live in colder countries are a little less happy than those who live in warmer climates?

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. How do the weather and seasons affect your moods?
- d. What would you suggest to someone who feels depressed because of the weather?
- e. Do you like bacon lettuce and tomato (BLT) sandwiches?
- f. Do you think the BLT works?
- g. Do you think SAD is similar to end-of-the-weekend blues?
- h. Do you ever suffer from depression, anxiety, lethargy or sleep problems?
- i. How does sunshine make you feel?
- 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

THE FOUR SADS: You are a researcher who has just discovered four different Seasonal Affective Disorders – related to spring, summer, fall (autumn) and winter. Complete the following table with your researcher partners.

SAD	SYMPTOMS	TREATMENTS
Spring SAD		
Summer SAD		
Fall (Autumn) SAD		
Winter SAD		
Other seasonal SAD		

Change partners and talk about your “research”. Share your findings regarding symptoms and treatments. Make mental notes to take back to and share with your original partners.

Return to your original partners and discuss what you found out from the other “researchers”.

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 SAD. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson. Did you all find out similar things?

3. SUNSHINE: Write an essay about the importance of sunshine. Read your essay to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all write similar things?

4. DIARY: Write the diary / journal entry of someone with a very bad case of SAD. Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Did everyone have similar thoughts?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

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

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|-----------------|------------------|
| a. disorder | sickness |
| b. increasingly | more and more |
| c. depressing | gloomy |
| d. spirits | mood |
| e. regular | normal |
| f. suffer | (be) affected by |
| g. common | everyday |
| h. lack | shortfall |
| i. anxiety | tenseness |
| j. booked | reserved |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| a. a medical condition | known as Seasonal Affective Disorder |
| b. Doctors are increasingly telling | their patients about this problem |
| c. gray skies | that rain cats and dogs |
| d. offers visitors 20-minute | breaks from the wintertime blues |
| e. People who want to lift | their spirits |
| f. five million people suffer | from SAD during winter |
| g. common | knowledge |
| h. a chemical imbalance in | the part of the brain... |
| i. can lead to | many different symptoms |
| j. Eighty percent of SAD cases | can be treated with a BLT session |

GAP FILL:

Londoners offered BLT for SAD

Short and dark days can cause a medical **condition** known as Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). Doctors are **increasingly** telling their patients about this problem in countries that have depressing weather. One of the most famous places for gray **skies** that rain cats and dogs is London. A new cafe has opened there that **offers** visitors 20-minute **breaks** from the wintertime blues. People who want to **lift** their spirits can visit the newly opened Dana Cafe at the Science Museum for some Bright Light **Therapy** (BLT). The cafe has a Light Lounge, where the light is five times **brighter** than regular house lights.

Over five million people **suffer** from SAD during winter in the UK. It is **common** knowledge that people in colder countries feel more miserable. This is because of a chemical **imbalance** in the part of the brain that controls our **moods**. A lack of the chemical serotonin, which the body receives from sunlight, can **lead** to many different symptoms. Low serotonin **levels** can trigger depression, anxiety, lethargy, sleep problems, overeating and a **loss** of sex drive. Eighty percent of SAD cases can be treated with a BLT session. Dana Cafe's Light Lounge is **fully** booked until March.