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Ready-to-use ESL / EFL Lessons

Graffiti and litter linked to obesity

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Today's contents

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

20 August, 2005

THE ARTICLE

Graffiti and litter linked to obesity

BNE: British researchers have found a link between graffiti and obesity in adults. People living in built-up city areas that have few parks and high levels of graffiti and litter are more likely to be obese than those living in richer areas that have lots of greenery. This is according to a study published on August 19 on the *British Medical Journal* website.

Report author Anne Ellaway said: "People who live in more pleasant and attractive environments...are much more likely to be physically active and not to be overweight or obese. Conversely, in less attractive areas, those with lots of graffiti, litter and dog mess, people are more likely to be overweight or obese and to take less exercise."

The team suggested that: "The likelihood of being more physically active is about 50 per cent less, and the likelihood of being overweight or obese is about 50 per cent higher" in poorer neighborhoods. They concluded that more trees and parks were needed to encourage city dwellers to take physical activity and reduce weight.

Report - *Graffiti, greenery, and obesity in adults: secondary analysis of European cross sectional survey*. Anne Ellaway, Sally Macintyre, Xavier Bonnefoy
<http://bmj.bmjournals.com/cgi/rapidpdf/bmj.38575.664549.F7v1>

WARM-UPS

1. MY NEIGHBORHOOD: Talk to your partner(s) about your neighborhood. Is it a healthy place to live? Use these words to help your conversation: green / healthy / well kept / safe / beautiful / rundown / polluted / dirty / built up / rich.

2. URBAN DECAY: In pairs / groups, talk about what you think when you see the following things on city streets. Do you see these things often? Think of reasons why these things are there and who's responsible.

- Graffiti
- Litter
- Dog (or other animal) mess
- Cars with no wheels
- Smashed store windows
- Used syringes
- Broken bottles
- Broken TV sets
- Calling cards offering sexual services
- Human urine

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

Researchers / graffiti / obesity / parks / rich areas / litter / dog mess / exercise / poor neighborhoods / reduce weight / trees

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

4. GRAFFITI: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word "graffiti". Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

5. OPINIONS: Talk to your partner(s) about these opinions on graffiti. Do you agree or disagree with them?

- a. Graffiti is a wonderful hobby.
- b. Graffiti makes a neighborhood look dangerous.
- c. Graffiti is vandalism and destruction of property.
- d. Graffiti happens because of bad community relations.
- e. A lot of graffiti is serious art and should be in museums.
- f. Areas of cities should be given to graffiti artists as a focus for their work.
- g. More graffiti would make the city look more beautiful.
- h. Graffiti is an excellent way of losing weight.
- i. Graffiti artists are criminals and should go to prison.
- j. Doing graffiti leads to more serious crimes.

6. QUICK DEBATE: Students A think there is a strong link between graffiti and obesity. Students B think there is no link at all. Change partners often.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

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

- | | |
|---|-------|
| a. Graffiti artists are more likely to become obese. | T / F |
| b. People living in built-up city areas are more likely to be obese. | T / F |
| c. People living in rich areas with lots of greenery are less obese. | T / F |
| d. Those living in cities are more physically active. | T / F |
| e. Dog mess on the streets discourages people from exercising. | T / F |
| f. You are four times less likely to exercise if you live in a poor area. | T / F |
| g. More trees and parks are needed in the city. | T / F |
| h. City dwellers don't need to lose weight. | T / F |

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

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| a. link | on the other hand |
| b. obesity | report |
| c. study | promote |
| d. author | surroundings |
| e. pleasant | connection |
| f. environments | feces |
| g. conversely | nice |
| h. mess | chance |
| i. likelihood | being overweight |
| j. encourage | writer |

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

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| a. researchers have found | published on August 19 |
| b. built-up | take physical activity |
| c. more likely to be obese than | a link between ... |
| d. according to a study | exercise |
| e. graffiti, litter and dog | weight |
| f. people are more likely | mess |
| g. take less | to be overweight |
| h. the likelihood of being overweight or | city areas |
| i. encourage city dwellers to | those living in richer areas |
| j. reduce | obese is about 50 per cent higher |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

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

Graffiti and litter linked to obesity

BNE: British researchers have found a _____ between graffiti and obesity in adults. People living in built-up _____ areas that have few parks and high levels of graffiti and _____ are more likely to be obese than those living in richer areas that have lots of _____. This is according to a _____ published on August 19 on the *British Medical Journal* website.

greenery
city
study
link
litter

Report _____ Anne Ellaway said: "People who live in more _____ and attractive environments...are much more likely to be physically _____ and not to be overweight or obese. Conversely, in less attractive areas, those with lots of graffiti, litter and dog _____, people are more likely to be overweight or obese and to take _____ exercise."

mess
active
author
less
pleasant

The team suggested that: "The _____ of being more physically active is about 50 per cent _____, and the likelihood of being overweight or obese is about 50 per cent higher" in _____ neighborhoods. They concluded that more _____ and parks were needed to encourage city dwellers to take physical activity and _____ weight.

reduce
less
trees
likelihood
poorer

AFTER READING / LISTENING

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

- 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 gap fill. 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 "GRAFFITI AND LITTER" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about the link between graffiti, litter and obesity.

- 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:

- | | |
|-------------|--------------|
| • link | • conversely |
| • levels | • mess |
| • richer | • likelihood |
| • published | • poorer |
| • author | • concluded |
| • pleasant | • reduce |

DISCUSSION

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

- a. What did you think when you read this headline?
- b. Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- c. What do you think about the link between graffiti and obesity?
- d. What do you think about graffiti?
- e. Does your neighborhood allow a healthy lifestyle?
- f. How do you feel when you see lots of graffiti and litter?
- g. Should cities create more parks and exercise areas?
- h. What penalties should be given to graffiti artists and litterbugs?
- i. Does your neighborhood have a policy towards dog mess?
- j. What do you think of studies such as the one in the article?

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 other things in our living environment create obesity?
- d. Would you rather live in the inner city or the suburbs?
- e. Why do you think people who live in areas with graffiti and litter are more likely to be overweight?
- f. Do you think it's possible that people who live in rundown areas are less likely to be obese than people who live in pleasant areas?
- g. What is the answer to ending graffiti, litter and dog mess?
- h. What kind of rundown areas are there in your town or city?
- i. What other problems do people living in rundown areas have?
- j. Did you like this discussion?

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

- a. What question would you like to ask about this topic?
- b. What was the most interesting thing you heard?
- c. Was there a question you didn't like?
- d. Was there something you totally disagreed with?
- e. What did you like talking about?
- f. Do you want to know how anyone else answered the questions?
- g. Which was the most difficult question?

SPEAKING

BEAUTIFUL CITY: You are head of your neighborhood council on making your poor, rundown area safer and more beautiful. In pairs / groups, you must think of ways to end the problems listed in the left column forever. You must also think of punishments for people who do the things in the left column.

	HOW TO END THE PROBLEMS	PUNISHMENTS
Graffiti		
Litter		
Dog mess		
Used syringes		
Broken bottles		
Calling cards offering sexual services		
Human urine		

Change partners and compare your methods to end the problems and your punishments. Give each other feedback.

With your original partner(s), take turns to role play a conversation between the neighborhood head and the city mayor (who wants to spend more money on the nicer areas of the city).

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Graffiti and litter linked to obesity

BNE: British researchers have found a _____ between graffiti and obesity in _____. People living in built-up city areas that have _____ parks and high levels of graffiti and litter are more likely to be _____ than those living in richer areas that have lots of greenery. This is according to a _____ published on August 19 on the *British Medical Journal* website.

Report _____ Anne Ellaway said: "People who live in more pleasant and attractive environments...are much more likely to be physically _____ and not to be overweight or obese. Conversely, in less attractive _____, those with lots of graffiti, litter and dog _____, people are more likely to be overweight or obese and to take less _____."

The team suggested that: "The likelihood of being more physically _____ is about 50 per cent _____, and the likelihood of being overweight or obese is about 50 per cent _____" in poorer neighborhoods. They concluded that more trees and parks were _____ to encourage city dwellers to take physical activity and reduce _____.

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 graffiti. Share your findings with your class in the next lesson.

3. MY ENVIRONMENT: Write an essay describing your neighborhood and how it promotes health (or otherwise). Read the main points of your essays to your classmates in your next lesson. Do you all live in a healthy environment?

4. CAMPAIGN: Make a poster outlining how to clean up poorer areas of cities. Explain how to reduce graffiti, litter and dog mess. Show your posters to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

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

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| a. link | connection |
| b. obesity | being overweight |
| c. study | report |
| d. author | writer |
| e. pleasant | nice |
| f. environments | surroundings |
| g. conversely | on the other hand |
| h. mess | feces |
| i. likelihood | chance |
| j. encourage | promote |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| a. researchers have found | a link between ... |
| b. built-up | city areas |
| c. more likely to be obese than | those living in richer areas |
| d. according to a study | published on August 19 |
| e. graffiti, litter and dog | mess |
| f. people are more likely | to be overweight |
| g. take less | exercise |
| h. the likelihood of being overweight or | obese is about 50 per cent higher |
| i. encourage city dwellers to | take physical activity |
| j. reduce | weight |

GAP FILL:

Graffiti and litter linked to obesity

BNE: British researchers have discovered a **link** between graffiti and obesity in adults in a Europe-wide study. City **dwellers** living in **rundown** areas with little vegetation and high levels of graffiti, litter and other signs of **urban** decay are more likely to be obese than those living in **affluent** areas with lots of greenery. This is according to a study published on August 19 on the British Medical Journal website.

Report **author** Anne Ellaway said: "People who live in more pleasant and attractive environments, which in our study was **assessed** by levels of **greenery**, are much more likely to be physically active and not to be overweight or obese. Conversely, in less attractive areas, those with lots of graffiti, **litter** and dog **mess**, people are more likely to be overweight or obese and to take less exercise."

The team **suggested** that: "The likelihood of being more physically active is about 50 per cent **less**, and the likelihood of being overweight or obese is about 50 per cent higher" in poorer neighborhoods. They concluded: "In efforts to **promote** physical activity and reduce weight...**attention** should be paid to environmental facilitators and barriers as well as **individual** factors."