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Australians happiest people in the world

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6 October, 2005

THE ARTICLE

Australians happiest people in the world

BNE: Australians are the happiest people in the world. This is according to a new survey from the market research company GfK NOP. Interviewers asked 30,000 people in 30 different countries about their levels of happiness. Forty-six percent of Australians said they were “very happy”. Following them was the USA (40 percent), Egypt (36 percent), India (34 percent) and the UK and Canada (32 percent). Hungary finished top of the “miserable” list. Thirty-five percent of its citizens said they were “very unhappy”. Second most miserable were Russians, at 30 percent.

The research showed that money and age affected how happy people are. The study did not show that money can buy happiness, but it did reveal a link between a lack of money and unhappiness. Unhappier people were in lower income groups or unemployed. The study also suggested the older we become, the less happy we are. Globally, teenagers are the happiest people. The least happy age group is 50-59 – only 16 percent of those in their fifties said they were very happy. The things that make us happy include good health, financial security and a happy marriage, not cars and clothes.

WARM-UPS

1. HAPPY ME: Are you happy today? Have you been happy recently? Walk around the classroom and talk with other students about how happy they are. When you have finished, sit with your partner(s) and talk about who was happy and who was not so happy.

2. HAPPINESS: What makes you happy? What affects your quality of life? Look at the items below and rank them in order of what makes you most happy.

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| ___ Hiking | ___ Things (cars, clothes, gadgets, etc.) |
| ___ Good health | ___ A happy marriage / relationship |
| ___ Money | ___ Children |
| ___ Owning your own home | ___ Watching television |
| ___ Sunshine | ___ Exercise |

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

Australians / happy people / market research / being miserable / Hungary / Russians / money / teenagers / financial security / happy marriages / cars

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

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

5. HAPPY PEOPLE: In pairs / groups, talk about the happiest and most miserable people you know from the following:

baby child teenager adult student co-worker old person

6. HAPPY OPINIONS: Do you agree with these opinions on happiness? Talk about them with your partner(s).

- Money makes you happy.
- The older you become, the happier you are.
- You can take lessons on how to be happy.
- Men are happier than women.
- Married people are happier than single people.
- People in warmer climates are happier than people in colder climates.
- It's hard to be happy in today's world.
- Every country should have a Minister of Happiness.

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 new study says Australians are the world's happiest people. | T / F |
| b. Interviewers carried out 30,000 telephone interviews. | T / F |
| c. Egyptians and Indians were among the top five happiest populations. | T / F |
| d. Hungary was bottom of the happiness list. | T / F |
| e. The survey showed that money can buy happiness. | T / F |
| f. Unemployed people were shown to be very happy. | T / F |
| g. The survey found that the older we become, the happier we are. | T / F |
| h. Cars and clothes do not make us so happy. | T / F |

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

- | | |
|---------------------------|-----------------|
| a. survey | revealed |
| b. interviewers | unhappy |
| c. following | 50-59-year-olds |
| d. miserable | after |
| e. citizens | show |
| f. showed | study |
| g. reveal | connection |
| h. link | economic |
| i. those in their fifties | residents |
| j. financial | researchers |

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

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| a. the happiest people | money and unhappiness |
| b. according to | research company |
| c. market | those in their fifties |
| d. levels | a new survey |
| e. Hungary finished top | happy people are |
| f. that money and age affected how | groups |
| g. reveal a link between a lack of | of the "miserable" list |
| h. lower income | in the world |
| i. only 16 percent of | security |
| j. financial | of happiness |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

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

Australians happiest people in the world

BNE: Australians are the happiest people in the _____. This is according to a new _____ from the market research company GfK NOP. Interviewers _____ 30,000 people in 30 different countries about their _____ of happiness. Forty-six percent of Australians said they were “very happy”. _____ them was the USA (40 percent), Egypt (36 percent), India (34 percent) and the UK and Canada (32 percent). Hungary finished _____ of the “miserable” list. Thirty-five percent of its _____ said they were “very unhappy”. Second most _____ were Russians, at 30 percent.

The research _____ that money and age affected how happy people are. The study did not _____ that money can buy happiness, but it did reveal a _____ between a lack of money and unhappiness. Unhappier people were in lower income _____ or unemployed. The study also suggested the older we become, the _____ happy we are. Globally, teenagers are the happiest people. The least happy _____ group is 50-59 – only 16 percent of those in their _____ said they were very happy. The things that make us happy include good health, financial _____ and a happy marriage, not cars and clothes.

miserable
following
world
levels
top
survey
citizens
asked

less
security
show
groups
fifties
showed
age
link

AFTER READING / LISTENING

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

- 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 "HAPPINESS" SURVEY: In pairs / groups, write down questions about happiness and how we get it.

- 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:

- | | |
|----------------|-------------|
| • Australians | • age |
| • survey | • link |
| • interviewers | • lower |
| • following | • older |
| • Hungary | • fifties |
| • second | • financial |

DISCUSSION

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

- a. What did you think when you first read this headline?
- b. Do you agree with the headline?
- c. Are the people in your country generally very happy?
- d. Are you very happy most of the time?
- e. What makes you unhappy?
- f. What's the most miserable you've been?
- g. How happy are you compared with your friends?
- h. Do you wake up happy every morning?
- i. Do you agree with the survey that older people are less happy?
- j. What is there to be happy about in the world today?

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 affects your levels of happiness?
- d. Does your happiness change during different times of the day, week, month or year?
- e. What is or was the happiest time of your life?
- f. Do you need money to be happy?
- g. What do you think of the idea of a government Happiness Minister who is responsible for the happiness of the population?
- h. Do you think some nations are happier than others?
- i. What is missing in your life that would make you very happy?
- 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

HAPPY DAYS: In pairs / groups, talk about your level of happiness throughout the day. What kinds of things make you happy or unhappy during the times written in the left hand column? What increases or decreases your happiness?

TIME	% OF TIME HAPPY	THINGS THAT INCREASE HAPPINESS	THINGS THAT DECREASE HAPPINESS
Waking up			
Breakfast			
Going to work / school			
Morning			
Lunchtime			
Afternoon			
Going home			
Evening			
Bedtime			

- Change partners and tell each other about what you talked about earlier.
- Are there any things affecting happiness that people have in common?
- Repeat the activity by focusing on different times of the week, month or year.

LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

Australians happiest people in the world

BNE: Australians are the _____ people in the world. This is according to a new _____ from the market research company GfK NOP. Interviewers asked 30,000 people in 30 different countries about their _____ of happiness. Forty-six percent of Australians said they were “very happy”. _____ them was the USA (40 percent), Egypt (36 percent), India (34 percent) and the UK and Canada (32 percent). Hungary _____ top of the “_____” list. Thirty-five percent of its citizens said they were “very unhappy”. Second most miserable were Russians, at 30 percent.

The research _____ that money and age affected how happy people are. The study did not show that money can _____ happiness, but it did _____ a link between a lack of money and unhappiness. Unhappier people were in _____ income groups or unemployed. The study also suggested the older we become, the less happy we are. _____, teenagers are the happiest people. The least happy age group is 50-59 – only 16 percent of those in their _____ said they were very happy. The things that make us happy include good health, financial _____ and a happy marriage, not cars and clothes.

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

3. SECRETARY FOR HAPPINESS: You are the new Happiness Secretary for your country. It is your job to improve the level of happiness for the people in your country. You have one year to do this. Write a plan showing how you will achieve this. Show your plans to your classmates in your next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

4. HAPPIEST MOMENT: Write an essay on the happiest moment in your life. Read your essay to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all write about similar things?

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

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

SYNONYM MATCH:

a. survey	study
b. interviewers	researchers
c. following	after
d. miserable	unhappy
e. citizens	residents
f. showed	revealed
g. reveal	show
h. link	connection
i. those in their fifties	50-59-year-olds
j. financial	economic

PHRASE MATCH:

a. the happiest people	in the world
b. according to	a new survey
c. market	research company
d. levels	of happiness
e. Hungary finished top	of the "miserable" list
f. that money and age affected how	happy people are
g. reveal a link between a lack of	money and unhappiness
h. lower income	groups
i. only 16 percent of	those in their fifties
j. financial	security

GAP FILL:

Australians happiest people in the world

Australians are the happiest people in the **world**. This is according to a new **survey** from the market research company GfK NOP. Interviewers **asked** 30,000 people in 30 different countries about their **levels** of happiness. Forty-six percent of Australians said they were "very happy". **Following** them was the USA (40 percent), Egypt (36 percent), India (34 percent) and the UK and Canada (32 percent). Hungary finished **top** of the "miserable" list. Thirty-five percent of its **citizens** said they were "very unhappy". Second most **miserable** were Russians, at 30 percent.

The research **showed** that money and age affected how happy people are. The study did not **show** that money can buy happiness, but it did reveal a **link** between a lack of money and unhappiness. Unhappier people were in lower income **groups** or unemployed. The study also suggested the older we become, the **less** happy we are. Globally, teenagers are the happiest people. The least happy **age** group is 50-59 – only 16 percent of those in their **fifties** said they were very happy. The things that make us happy include good health, financial **security** and a happy marriage, not cars and clothes.