

BAD HABITS



www.manwrites.com

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Reading.....	4
Reading Comprehension Questions.....	6
Essential Vocabulary.....	7
That's a Terrible Habit!.....	8
Discussion Questions.....	9
Writing.....	10
Credits.....	11

Introduction

What is a bad habit?

Do you have any bad habits?

What makes something a bad habit?

Reading

“I have got to stop this terrible habit,” says Dean, shaking his head. “It’s pretty disgusting.”

What could Dean’s habit be? Smoking? Gambling? Netflix?

Dean looks up, shamefaced.

“I bite my fingernails,” he says.

Biting your fingernails? That’s not so bad, is it? After all, there are far worse habits than that.

“I just think it’s really dirty,” says Dean. “I’ve been doing it since I was a little kid. God knows how many nails I have chewed off in all the years.”

Dean is one of many people in the country who has a bad habit. He is also one of many people that would like to stop his bad habit — but finds it near impossible to give it up.

“I’ve used all kinds of things,” he says. “Special nail varnish that makes my nails taste like some terrible chemical. I’ve been to see a hypnotist. I’ve read books on it. I’ve even used sheer will power but nothing works.” He shakes his head and looks defeated. “I don’t know what else to do.”

Dean is not alone in his concern for his bad habit and how to

quit. Other people have far worse habits and are struggling with them every day.

This has turned into a lucrative business for some people. Every year thousands of books and articles are published promising a miracle cure for someone's bad habits. People are selling ideas on the internet or providing coaching services to help people stop their bad habit.

But some people suggest the best cure is to go cold turkey. This is where you just stop doing the bad habit and through the strength of determination stop doing the thing that causes you concern.

“This is what I did,” says Sophie. “I was drinking too much coffee. It was terrible. I was probably drinking ten cups a day. It was affecting how I sleep and I could not concentrate at work. I had to quit.”

Sophie set a date when to finally stop her coffee habit.

“I put a date on my calendar when I should stop drinking coffee altogether. And at midnight that was the end of it. The next day I would not allow myself any more coffee.”

Some people regard the cold-turkey approach as too harsh.

“I know that other people try to wean themselves off their bad

habit by reducing a little day-by-day. But I tried that, and it didn't work for me. It had to be all or nothing."

That was nearly a year ago and so far so good.

"The first week was hard," says Sophie. "I felt exhausted all the time and could barely keep my eyes open. But after that, it got easier and easier. After a while, I didn't miss it at all."

Many professionals argue that Sophie's method is one of the best ways to quit. By trying to scale the bad habit down or gradually do less and less of the habit they are just making conditions for themselves.

Ultimately, they are doomed to failure because they never wanted to quit in the first place.

As for poor Dean, he is still struggling with his fingernails every day.

Reading Comprehension Questions

What is Dean's bad habit?

Why does he dislike this habit so much?

How long has he been doing it?

What methods has Dean used to quit his bad habit?

Have any of them worked?

How do people make money from other people's bad habits?

What method do some people believe to be the best way to quit a bad habit?

What was Sophie's bad habit?

How did she quit?

What problems was Sophie having as a result of her bad habit?

How long has Sophie quit her habit?

How did she feel when she first quit her bad habit?

Essential Vocabulary

habit	to shake (one's) head
pretty disgusting	gambling
Netflix	shamefaced
bite (one's) fingernails	not so bad
to chew	near impossible
nail varnish	hypnotist
sheer	will power
defeated	concern
quit	struggling
lucrative	miracle cure
coaching	cold turkey
determination	concentrate
set a date	calendar
harsh	wean off
day-by-day	all or nothing
exhausted	scale down
doomed to failure	in the first place

Exercise

Write down all the words and phrases in your vocabulary notebook. Look in your dictionary and find the meaning of each word. Write the definition next to

each word.

Then make up your own sentences using each word or phrase.

For example:

Notebook—*a small book with pages of blank paper that students use to make notes when studying.*

“I left my notebook at home so I was unable to make any notes in my English class.”

That's a Terrible Habit!

Look at all the following extracts of people talking about their bad habits. Get into groups and give appropriate advice where necessary.

Steve

I stay up too late and it's really affecting my life in a bad way. I know it's wrong but when I get home I just want to relax. So after I have dinner I start looking at things online and before I know it, it's two am.

I just end up watching these stupid videos on YouTube. I'm not even learning anything. It's just mindless entertainment.

Cole

This is so embarrassing but I pick my nose. My wife has told me that I have started to do this in public. The thing is, I don't even know I'm doing it. It's like it's an automatic thing where I just reach up and start digging inside my nose.

I work in sales so I am very worried that I might do this in front of a client. I wish I could stop.

Maria

I am so overweight and I can't seem to control what I eat. I eat all the wrong kinds of food too. If I go to the supermarket, I think nothing of buying a big bag of chocolate cookies. Then I'll eat all of them in one evening. I eat a lot of fast food too. I go to McDonald's or KFC twice or three times a week easily. It's ruining my life.

Janine

I can't stop looking at my phone. My mum says she will take my phone off me if I don't stop staring at it all the time. It's like some kind of nervous reaction. The first thing I do in the morning is check my phone for any messages or updates. I know I could do more important things in my life but it just seems easier to stay on my phone all day.

Magnus

My wife wants me to stop smoking. I smoke about a pack a day although my wife seems to think I smoke more than that. I don't actually believe that it is that harmful to my health. All those news reports about smoking are just fear-mongering. I have no intention of stopping. I work hard and I think I deserve a little reward now and then. Live and let live — that's what I always say.

Discussion Questions

Do you have any bad habits? Can you tell the class about them?

What bad habits do you think people in your country have? Is this changing?

Do you think there is a difference between the bad habits that older people and younger people might have? What are they?

Tell the class about bad habits that are harmful to someone's health. What can be done to stop these bad habits?

Tell the class about bad habits that may not be harmful to someone's health but are not good for their life. What can be done to stop these bad habits?

Have you succeeded in quitting a bad habit? What was the habit and how did you stop?

What are the worst bad habits? Why do you think so?

In the article, Sophie talks about cold turkey. Do you think this is the best way to stop bad habits? Can it work for all bad habits? Explain your answers.

What are some good habits?

What good habits do you have?

In order to have a successful and healthy life, what good habits

should someone adopt? What bad habits should they avoid?

Tell the class about some good habits for studying English.

Writing

Write about a bad habit that you have. We all have at least one bad habit!

Then write about a system you could use to stop this bad habit.

Your system should have between three and five main points. Each point should describe a process to help you stop this bad habit and you should also say how each point can help you quit your bad habit.

Credits

This lesson plan is courtesy of ManWrites.

This content is copyright ManWrites 2023 — ManWrites©2023

For more information, go to www.manwrites.com

Or join my mailing list below and I will send you more ESL teaching ideas.

[ManWrites Mailing List](#)