

A blurred ambulance with flashing lights driving at night. The ambulance is white with red and blue stripes. The background is a dark blue night sky with light trails from other vehicles and buildings.

# FACE OF DEATH

A TALKING POINTS ENGLISH  
LESSON PLAN FOR  
READING, SPEAKING,  
VOCABULARY & WRITING

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## Introduction

Have you ever seen an accident? What happened?

Do you have paramedics in your country? What do you think of these people?

Could you be a paramedic?

## Face of Death

*Read the following account by James.*

I see death every week. I am a paramedic and I am at the face of death every day.

Sometimes people do stupid things — they might be drunk or have an argument with their family. And because of that, they might do something in the heat of the moment.

They may not wish to kill themselves but because they are not thinking properly they end up doing just that.

One time we were called out to the centre of town. It was a Saturday night and the whole of the town centre was filled with people — everyone enjoying their weekend. But there was this one guy who decided to take things a little too far.

He was drunk and he had climbed to the roof of a building. It was really high too — about six floors up.

The police arrived and they were angry. He was a danger to himself but he was also a danger to others too. If he fell he could land on people and really hurt them — or worse.

We were called in case he fell.

Well, that is exactly what happened. He fell and he died. It was instant. But there were a lot of people around and no one wants to see that.

Then we had to pick his body up from the ground. There was a lot of blood. We took him to the hospital and then he went straight to the morgue.

And I just think — how would his family feel about it?

Here was a young man, his whole life ahead of him, and then his life is over. And why? Because of some foolish dare while drunk.

I've seen this kind of thing happen many times.

Another thing I see a lot of is car accidents. Often they can be because people are in a hurry and want to get home. But the worse ones are because of drunken driving.

A couple of weeks ago we were called to an accident on this busy road just outside of town. By the time we got there, it was in total chaos. The police were trying to deal with the situation but there was this huge line of traffic that had built up.

And it was all because this young guy and his mates decided to get drunk and then get in a car.

The driver was killed outright. And the front passenger.

But the two in the back were alive — badly injured, but still alive.

I used to get really quite emotional about it when I first started this job. But now I just look at it and think little of it. I just put it down to stupidity.

One good thing about it is that I am very careful with how much I drink. And I never drink and drive.

It's a completely selfish and very stupid thing to do.

But I guarantee, in the next two weeks or so, we will get called out to another traffic accident or some incident in town on a Friday or Saturday night and see it all over again.

People never learn, do they?

## Reading Comprehension Questions

What is James' job?

What day did James' first story take place?

Where was he called to?

What did the man do in James' story?

What did the police do?

Why was James concerned about the man climbing the building?

Did James rescue the man?

What happened to the man?

When did James' second story take place?

What happened in the story?

Why did the driver have an accident?

Did the driver live or die?

What is James' feeling about the accidents he sees in his job?

What is James' attitude to alcohol?

Why does he think this?



## Essential Vocabulary

paramedic	the face of death	drunk
argument	heat of the moment	take things too far
instant	morgue	whole life ahead of him
foolish dare	car accident	drunken driving
total chaos	deal with the situation	line of traffic
built up	killed outright	front passenger
badly injured	emotional	put it down to
completely selfish	guarantee	incident

### 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.”***

## Discussion Questions

Can you describe the details of James' job as a paramedic? What kind of things do you think he has to do every day?

What is the reason for most of the accidents that James sees every day? Why do you think this is so?

What do you think of the young guy who climbed the building? Why did he do this do you think?

How do you think people felt that witnessed the young man falling to his death? How would you feel if you saw this?

Does James like his job? Give reasons for your answers.

Does James have any emotional connection to the people he has to rescue? Why/why not?

Could you do James' job? Why/why not?

What kind of things do you think James might see in an average night?

Would his work be very different on the weekend? Why/why not?

Are there paramedics in your country? What do they have to do?

What do people think of paramedics in your country? Do they regard them as heroes? Or just ordinary people? Explain your answers.

What could prevent most accidents that paramedics see in your country?

Have you ever witnessed a bad accident? What happened? How did it make you feel?

Have you ever had to call a paramedic? What happened?

Are traffic accidents common in your country? Why/why not?

## Accidents in The Classroom 1.1

In the class, brainstorm as many different accidents that could happen in the classroom.

Examples could be:

- Fire
- Collision
- Slipping, falling or tripping

Try to think of as many as you can. One or two students should write all the examples on the board.

## Accidents in The Classroom 1.2

This is a group exercise.

Get into groups of four students. Your teacher should hand out all the accidents you thought of in the previous exercise to each group.

In your group, you need to create a system to avoid the accidents.

For example, collisions in the classroom.

**To avoid collisions in the classroom, students should follow the following rules.**

- No running in class.
- Always pay attention to others.
- When entering the classroom, the students should enter slowly. Girls first, then boys. A classroom monitor should manage students entering the classroom.
- When leaving the classroom, the students should leave aisle by aisle, or row by row. A classroom monitor should manage students leaving the classroom.

Make sure you have a full list of rules for students to follow in the case of any accidents in the classroom.

***You could write these rules up and display on your noticeboard!***

## Role Play

There are two or three characters in this role play.

**Character 1** – a paramedic called to the scene of an accident

**Character 2** – a member of the public who witnessed the accident

**Character 3** – a second member of the public who witnessed the accident but has a different story from the first witness

There has been an accident. Your group can decide what kind of accident and what happened.

The paramedic now has to file a report and he has to talk to the two key witnesses that saw what happened.

In your role play, create a conversation between the paramedic and the two witnesses.

***Take some time to prepare then show your classmates and teacher.***

## Interview a Paramedic

This is a class activity.

All the class are news journalists and reporters. You are in a big press conference where you are allowed to interview and ask a group of paramedics any questions you like.

The paramedics are there to answer questions about a terrible fire in a building. Some people died and many others were injured.

The police are still trying to figure out the source of the fire.

You can ask the paramedics any questions you want. You have to write a story about the working lives of these people and find out how they feel about the work they do.

In your class, choose three to six paramedics, depending on how big your class is.

The paramedics should sit at the front of the class and the journalists are facing them.



## Writing

Write a news story about a paramedic's life.

You can use what you learned from the exercise above.

Write a short news story. Try to get into the heart of the paramedic you are writing about. Tell the story of how they feel about doing their job and what they think of the people whose lives they save or try to save.

When you have finished your news story, you can read it out loud in front of the other students. Or you can give it to your teacher for assessment.

## Credits

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