

SUNBATHING

A woman is seen from behind, sitting on a sandy beach. She is wearing a light-colored straw hat, a black bikini top, and blue patterned bikini bottoms. Her right arm is raised, with her hand open, reaching towards the ocean. The ocean is in the background, with waves breaking. The entire scene is framed by a light pink border.

A TALKING POINTS ENGLISH LESSON
FOR READING, SPEAKING, WRITING
AND VOCABULARY

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Introduction

What is sunbathing?

Do people in your country like to go sunbathing? Why/why not?

Do you like sunbathing? Why/why not?

In The Sun

Read Ray's account of his love of sunbathing below.

What can I tell you — I love the sun.

Ever since I've retired and moved to Spain I have been out in the sun every single day.

I don't get any more tanned than I do now. I think I've reached my limit. I am as tanned as I will ever be.

But that doesn't stop me lying in it.

I usually do all the things I need to do in the morning then after lunch I go and lie out by the swimming pool. I put some sun lotion on and just lie there.

It feels great.

A couple of years ago I had a little blister appear on my shoulder. I didn't think anything of it so I ignored it. Then it got a bit bigger and changed colour.

My wife said I should go and see a doctor, so I did. I wasn't really worried — I just went there for my wife's benefit, not mine.

But the doctor took one look and said that it was skin cancer.

I was shocked.

He told me to go and see a specialist.

I went to see one and they said I needed an operation to remove it. They took this little piece of skin off and said that was it. No more skin cancer.

It just seemed so easy. I went home and I didn't go back out by the pool for about a month. I was a little bit cautious and my wife was very concerned about me getting another spot on my skin somewhere.

But then I talked to my friend Harry and he said that skin cancer is not like real cancer. He said that any time you get a bit of skin cancer, you just go to the doctor and they cut it off.

That's it. No fuss, no bother.

So the next day I went back out to the pool again.

The wife went ballistic.

She said I was mad.

But I haven't had any other spots appear on my skin since then. Maybe I've built up an immunity to it.

I think that because I've been going out in the sun for so long that my body has become more tolerant.

That's what I tell myself anyway.

But recently I keep scratching at this little part of my stomach. It feels really itchy and it flares up at night when I'm in bed.

I haven't told the wife because I think she'll just worry and start telling me to go to the doctor. But I might start using stronger sun lotion. I think that should help me protect my skin a little.

These doctors don't know everything. And half the time I think they just like scaring people. That's what my friend Harry says. And he should know. He worked in a hospital when he was younger.

Reading Comprehension Questions

How long has Ray been sunbathing regularly?

Does he have a deep tan?

What time of day does he go out to sunbathe?

Does he use any oil?

Where did the first blister appear?

When did Ray discover it?

How did the blister change over time?

Who convinced Ray to go to see a doctor?

Was Ray worried?

What did the doctor say about the blister on Ray's skin?

What did Ray have to do next?

Did he have an operation? What happened?

How long did Ray not go out sunbathing?

Who is Ray's friend?

What did Ray's friend say about the blister?

After Ray spoke to his friend, what did he do the very next day?

How did his wife react?

Has Ray had any problems with his skin since then?

Does he tell his wife about his skin now?

What is Ray's opinion of doctors?

Essential Vocabulary

retired	tanned	reached my limit
sun lotion	blister	shoulder
I ignored it	my wife's benefit	skin cancer
shocked	specialist	operation
cautious	concerned	spot
no fuss, no bother	ballistic	immunity
tolerant	scratching	stomach
itchy	flares up	protect

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

What do you think of Ray's story?

Is Ray foolish to go out sunbathing all the time?

What do you know about Spain's climate? Is it hot there?

Why do you think Ray likes sunbathing so much?

Do you think he is being unfair to his wife? Explain your reasons.

If you were Ray, after the first operation, what actions would you take?

What do you think of Ray's attitude to his wife?

What about his attitude to his friend Harry?

Do you like to go sunbathing? Why/why not?

Is sunbathing popular in your country or culture? Why/why not?

What are the dangers of sunbathing?

What are the benefits?

Can suntan lotion and sun oil help prevent skin cancer do you think?

Sunbathing – Cultural Differences

This is an exercise for small groups. You should work in a small group of around three or four students.

Does a suntan look good on certain people?

For example, in most western countries, people like the look of tanned skin. In the west, it is considered healthy and makes a person look healthy and alive.

Pale skin – or white skin – in the west is seen as ‘sickly’ and unhealthy.

But in most Asian countries, people try to avoid the sun. Women especially want to ensure that their skin is not tanned. They want to have pale skin at all times.

In small groups, look at the difference between your country’s culture and attitude to sunbathing compared to another country’s culture that has the opposite feeling.

Go through all the reasons why your country's culture likes or dislikes tanned skin compared with another country.

When you are ready, present all your views to the class.

Debate: For and Against Sunbathing

This is a debate activity.

Divide the class into two teams. You will also need a chairperson. You can choose a student in your class or ask for a volunteer. This person is responsible for chairing the debate and ensuring everyone has the opportunity to speak.

Team A

You believe that sunbathing is harmless. Yes, you need to be careful when in the sun, but for the most part, it is healthy.

These are some of the benefits of sunbathing:

- reduced depression
- more vitamin D which builds your immune system
- better sleep
- stronger bones

Point all of these benefits out in your debate.

Team B

You think that sunbathing is not good for people's health. The sun is very powerful and people should not lie under the sun for long periods of time.

These are some of the dangers of sunbathing:

- skin cancer
- cataracts
- dehydration
- sunstroke

Point all of these out in your debate.

In your group, take time to build up your lines of argument that you can present in the debate.

When you are ready, begin the debate.

Role Play

This is a role play exercise.

There are two characters in this role play:

1. Ray

You are Ray in the story at the beginning of the lesson. You are trying to convince your wife that sunbathing is harmless. You have just come out of the hospital and had a blister removed from your shoulder. You tell your wife that if you ever have another skin blister from sunbathing too long, you can have it removed.

Tell her that Harry knows all about skin cancer and has assured you there is nothing to worry about.

2. Ray's Wife

You are Ray's wife. You have heard enough nonsense from Ray and you want him to stop sunbathing all the time. You need to point out to him how dangerous it is.

And tell Ray that Harry is not a doctor, so he doesn't know anything about skin cancer!

The Situation

Ray had to go to the hospital and have a blister removed from his shoulder. This was found to be skin cancer from sunbathing.

Now he wants to go sunbathing again.

His wife is furious about this and thinks Ray is being very stupid.

An argument takes place where Ray tries to encourage his wife to let him go sunbathing but his wife refuses to allow him outside by the pool.

Get into pairs and choose a character. Then prepare your role play.

When you are ready, show the class.

Writing

Write an essay on the advantages and disadvantages of sunbathing.

Try to include all the points that were covered in the entire lesson plan.

When you have finished your article, submit it to your teacher. Or read out in class.

Credits

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