



Free Talk

High-Intermediate to Advance Level
General Topics



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UNIT I : Family



What is Everything in life?

My husband is probably one of the men people admire. We have moved six times for 10 years, always for a better paying, prestigious job. I dream of staying in one place long enough for my children to develop ongoing relationships, but I know this will never happen.

We drive a BMW, which some people admire as a status symbol. Actually, we have two of them. My husband seems satisfied with his job, his salary, and the city we live in, and is lucky that I am committed to keeping our family life strong and loving. But some days I feel like throwing up in the towel. I wonder what is everything in life.

Talking Points:

- What is the wife's issue?
- Do you think that money can guarantee happiness in life?
- What is everything in life?

Vocabulary / Expressions

- Prestigious – having a high reputation; honoured, esteemed.
- Status Symbol – a possession which is regarded as proof of the owner's social position, wealth, prestige, etc.
- *"I feel like throwing up in the towel"*

UNIT I: Family



Out-of-wedlock

In the 1950s, family life reflected the reality that a man and woman would marry, have children, and the man would support them for the rest of his days. In this era, family life is under siege: women had children but didn't marry the fathers, and the result was an explosion of out-of-wedlock births. This case is sometimes a mutual decision between a man and woman. They intend to keep their children without being committed with a piece of paper.

Sadly, in some cases women got pregnant and the men in their lives fled from them. Contrary to the past, when shotgun weddings sometimes resulted in marriage is an assurance for women that their child will have a father.

Talking Points:

- State some reasons why men and women nowadays opt not get married despite of having children.
- What would you feel if you were a child born out of wedlock?
- For women: Would you agree to have a shotgun wedding for your child's sake?
For men: Would you agree to have a shotgun wedding for the sake of responsibility?

Vocabulary / Expressions

- Siege – a period of trouble or annoyance
- Shotgun wedding – a wedding occasioned or precipitated by pregnancy
- *“explosion of out-of-wedlock births”*
- *“being committed with a piece of paper”*

UNIT I : Family



What's your family name?

Have you imagined yourself being part of these families? Have you wished you were born with a silver spoon in your mouth?

- The Walton Family – owns the biggest retailer “Wal-Mart“ , \$83.2 Billion worth.
- The Ambani Family – owns most businesses in India, \$78. 6 Billion worth.
- The Ingvar Kamprad Family – owns IKEA home furnishing in Sweden, \$33 Billion worth.
- The Mars Family – owns the confectionary company Mars Inc. , \$ 31.5 Billion worth.
- The Cox Family – owns the media empire Cox Inc. , \$25.2 Billion worth.

And don't forget the **Rothschild**, known to be the most wealthiest family on earth. Rothschild Family has a wealth of \$5 trillion dollars. Rothschild invented "Central Banking" in 1800 and today OWN **most of world's central banks** including US Federal Reserve & European Central Bank. Rothschild motto is "divide & conquer".

Talking Points:

- What is your motto in success?
- Give your own interpretation of the Rothchild's motto : "divide & conquer".
- Tell something about some of the wealthiest people in your country. Where did they get their wealth?

Vocabulary / Expressions

- Divide – to separate into parts, groups, sections, etc.
- Conquer – to be victorious; make conquests
- *"born with the silver spoon in one's mouth"*

UNIT I: Family



A family "affair"

Fifteen years ago my wife and I separated after 25 happy years of marriage. She found out that I was having an illicit affair with a young employee. My wife and I have five terrific children. Everyone was hoping we would reconcile but because of pure selfishness I refused to end my affair with the other woman. Eventually, that poor decision led to a painful divorce.

Now I'm 64, too ancient and alone. My affair ended 5 years ago, it didn't work out maybe because a part of me still longs to have my old family back. But, I've been so rotten that I don't believe that I have the right to ask for forgiveness.

Talking Points:

- Is it really too late for him to ask for forgiveness?
- If you were the wife would you forgive him?
- Talk about the divorce rate issue in your country, give your opinion about some causes of divorce.

Vocabulary / Expressions

- Illicit – not legally permitted ; unlawful.
- Reconcile - to settle a quarrel or indifferences.
- *"too ancient"*
- *"a part of me"*
- *"I've been so rotten"*

UNIT II: World Issues



Poverty leads to death

Faces of Poverty

It is poverty to decide that a child must die so that you may live as you wish ~Mother Teresa

The incidence of poverty is higher in rural areas (about 35%) than in urban areas, 26%.

* Households with 3 or more members are 8 times more likely to be poor than households with 2 or less members.

Schooling of household head is closely associated with the probability of poverty. Households whose heads have at least 10 years of schooling are 0.24 times less likely to be poor.

According to UNICEF, 25,000 children die each day due to poverty. And they *“die quietly in some of the poorest villages on earth, far removed from the scrutiny and the conscience of the world”*.

Being meek and weak in life make these dying multitudes even more invisible in death. The silent killers are poverty, hunger, easily preventable diseases, illnesses, and other related causes. In spite of the scale of this daily/ongoing catastrophe, it rarely manages to achieve, much less sustain, prime-time, headline coverage. Unfortunately, it seems that the world still does not notice. It might be reasonable to expect that death and tragedy on this scale should be prime time headline news.

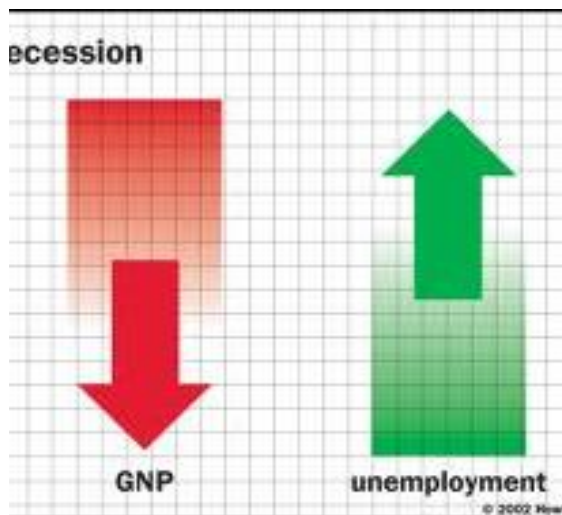
Talking Points:

- Is it true that these issues only surface when there are global meetings and summit?
- Is there really any solution with poverty? Or will this remain until the world diminishes?

Vocabulary / Expressions

- Scrutiny - a close and searching look.
- Multitudes – a great number of people gathered together.
- *“silent killers”*
- *“die quietly in some of the poorest villages on earth ”*

UNIT II: World Issues



Recession

Recently, the world experienced a global crisis. It affected almost all the countries. In this scenario, it made an alarming recession in the different sectors in the society especially the business sector. It is described as a significant decline in the economic activity spread across the economy, lasting more than a few months which is visible in real income, employment, industrial production, and wholesale-retail sales. When this occur for quite a long time or worst if it sustained it may become *depression*. That is why in the recent news there are lots of people who are being affected by this incident since it is really hard to earn a living. In some countries, workers need to stop for working because of cost cutting. That is why it is really important to work real hard at these times.

Talking Points:

- How should we personally respond to this recession?
- How does the 2009 global recession affect the economy of Korea?
- There's a high unemployment everywhere, do you think that the job offers are limited or applicants are just too incompetent with the job requirements?

Vocabulary/Expressions:

- Recession – a temporary depression in economic activity or prosperity.
- Depression - a period during which business, employment, and stock-market values decline severely or remain at a very low level of activity.

UNIT II: WORLD ISSUES



How much water and energy do you need?



In many industrialized countries, the issue about water and energy consumption is becoming out of hand. In addition, water and energy shortages go hand in hand with the over population. Clean water and energy are becoming increasingly difficult to obtain for many people, increasingly expensive, and will likely be the source of much conflict in this century if that fact is not dealt with.

“Water is life” is a truism. Without water life as we know it would not exist, and the hard reality is that there are no substitutes for water.

It is often said that “Energy is the lifeblood of modern societies”, but energy in various forms has been critical to human activities over the centuries.

Talking Points:

- How does too much consumption of energy and water affect our lives?
- What’s your idea about:
 - “ Water is life” ...
 - “Energy is the lifeblood of modern society” ...

Vocabulary/Expression:

- Out of hand – out of control
- Hand in hand – in cooperation; jointly
- Truism – self evident ; obvious truth
- Critical - of or forming a crisis ; crucial
- *“be the source of much conflict”*

UNIT II: World Issues



A chaos called terrorism

I think that many people still remain clueless when you ask them about what's behind the reason of terrorism. Is it a crime or a holy duty?

For some, its a justified reaction to oppression. The strategy of terrorists is to commit acts of violence that draws the attention of the local populace, the government, and the world to their cause. The terrorists plan their attack to obtain the greatest publicity so they can be heard.

For those who are against it, its an unlawful use of force and violence. The UN has been strengthening it's counter-terrorism agenda. On 8 September 2010, the General Assembly conducted the second biennial review of the United Nations Global Counter Terrorism Strategy.

Talking points:

- Do you remember any terrorist act that happened in your country?
- Are you aware of the 9 / 11 attack that happened in NY's World Trade Centre?
- Why does terrorism happen in your country?

Vocabulary / Expression

- Oppression – the exercise of authority or power in a cruel or unjust manner.
- Populace – inhabitants of a place; population.
- *"People still remain clueless"*

UNIT III: TECHNOLOGY



Are we the masters or slaves of technology?

"It has become appallingly obvious that our technology has exceeded our humanity."

- Albert Einstein (Scientist)

"The production of too many useful things results in too many useless people."

- Karl Marx (Philosopher)

"Never trust anything that can think for itself if you can't see where it keeps its brain."

- J.K Rowling (Book Author)

"We are becoming the servants in thought, as in action, of the machine we have created to serve us. "

-J.F. Kennedy (Former President)



Talking Points:

What are your thoughts:

- Are we the masters or slaves of the modern technology?
- For you, what was the greatest technology man has ever made?
- Would consider travelling back in time where everything is in primitive?

Vocabulary / Expressions

- Master – a person who has the ability to use, control, or dispose of something.
- Slave – entirely under the domination of someone or a person
- Exceed – to go beyond the bonds or limits.
- Primitive – being the first or earliest kind of existence.

UNIT III: TECHNOLOGY



Let's fly high

Eager to demonstrate their affluence and technological mastery, countries like South Korea and China have led the world in the construction of gargantuan new facilities that are unparalleled in their architectural style and engineering. An engineer said, *"Airports are a national symbol, therefore no expense is spared to make sure mine is better than yours."*

Asia has dominated the world's most beautiful airport as *Incheon Airport* won the 2009 Sky Trax Best Airport Award . Along with the world's top 7 most beautiful airport , 4 of them can be found in Asia these are from Beijing, Incheon, Hongkong and Osaka Japan.

Talking points:

- Are you a well travelled person?
- Do you think that Asian Countries are now ready to compete with countries from the west when it comes to structural designs?
- Can you give other national symbol of your country?

Vocabulary / Expressions

- Affluence – abundance of money, property, and other material goods; wealth.
- Gargantuan – huge; gigantic.
- *"National Symbol"* - symbol of any entity considering itself and manifesting itself to the world as a national community.

UNIT III: TECHNOLOGY



One click away

An old woman who has just moved in to a new place in Mississippi asked her granddaughter : “Do you happen to know where the nearest shopping mall is here?”; “Yes, grandma. It’s just one click away!” she answered.

Online shopping is very popular among most internet users. Almost 85 percent of web users in the United States shop online. Korea, with 99 percent, is one of the most popular countries where Internet users shop online. Internet shopping is easy, fast and convenient because users can shop from the privacy of their homes and computers. While online shopping is easy, there are also some precautions you should take as well.



Talking Points:

- How often do you go shopping? Do you prefer shopping online?
- Do you think that in the next decade there will be no more shopping malls around?
- Talk about some necessary precautions that you should consider when shopping online.

Vocabulary / Expressions

- Privacy – the state of being free from intrusion or disturbance in one’s private life.
- Precautions – to secure good results.
- “one click away”

UNIT III: TECHNOLOGY



Cars of the future



Since the inception of cars in the market till today, car technology is advancing day-by-day.

Like any other technology invention, the technologies used in cars has changed tremendously over time. Car technology is updated constantly, in an effort to enhance the comfort levels of the car owners. That is why, every year, we find new car model arriving in the market. There is no doubt that the costs of cars with the most sophisticated technologies are also high. Top car companies continuously innovate automobiles that are more sustainable, safer, more energy efficient, or less polluting in fact Chevrolet Volt a plug-in hybrid electric car is set to go on sale this 2010.

Talking Points:

- Do you own a car?
- What do you do to save money on gas?
- In the present condition of congested traffic on the road, do you think it's still convenient to use car?

Vocabulary / Expressions

- Tremendous – extraordinarily great in size, amount or intensity.
- Innovate – to introduce something new.
- Sustainable - capable of being sustained
- "Day by day" – taking place each day.

UNIT IV: HEALTH



Under the Knife



Recently, Chinese authorities have launched a probe into the death of an aspiring pop singer during plastic surgery, an incident that has sparked concerns about the dangers of going under the knife.

The procedure that was done was facial bone grinding, this procedure will result into making your bone structure less visible. But unfortunately for the singer she died in an “anesthetic accident” her jaw suddenly started bleeding during the procedure, blocking her windpipe and causing her to suffocate.

For some people, this all just happened because of her little dream to make it big in the world of entertainment where beautiful are IN and ugly are OUT.

Talking Points:

- Are there a lot of artists in your country that has surgically enhanced beauties?
- What is the common procedure people go through under the knife in your country?
- If there's something in your body that you would want to surgically enhance what would it be?

Vocabulary/Expressions:

- Probe – to search or examine thoroughly
- Suffocate - to block the air passages or have the air passages blocked.
- Under the knife - undergoing a medical operation
- *“Beautiful are IN and ugly are OUT”*

UNIT IV: HEALTH



How much does life cost?

How much does a life cost in the hospital? This was the question of a woman after the hospital refused to admit her son who was fighting for every single breath he could get.

The hospital didn't give immediate medical care for the patient because the mother doesn't have a health care insurance that will cover her son's expenses aside from that the hospital also gave her other reasons like there's no facility available, no special unit available for head trauma in the hospital and yadda yadda yadda ... But for the mother she realized that the only reason why the hospital is refusing them is that they do not have money to pay for the bills that's why the hospital is giving them all these blah blah reasons to kick them to the curb.



Talking Points:

- Is there enough health care insurance funding from your government for free hospitalization for the poor?
- When was the last time that you were admitted in the hospital?
- How modern are the hospital facilities in your country?

Vocabulary/Expressions:

- *"Yadda yadda yadda"* – a phrase that means "and so forth" or "on and on", usually refers to something minor details.
- *"Blah blah blah"* – use to describe a situation or circumstance to which the other person in the conversation is familiar or can anticipate.
- *"Kick someone to the curb"* – get rid of someone.

UNIT IV: HEALTH



Practice what you preach

Little do they know there are a lot of influential people in the world that smoke. To name a few, the U.S. President Barack Obama, the owner of Disneyland Walt Disney and could you believe that even doctors smoke!

Doctors told us to quit smoking, well they should practice what they preach. Recently, a medical association has urged its members to set an example to their patients by not smoking. *"Physicians must be role models on matters of health, that is why it is highly inappropriate for physicians to be seen smoking."* said the president of medical association. Well of course some practitioners keep mum about it as they are also guilty of smoking. Can they really stop smoking?

Talking Points:

- What are some of the common reasons why people smoke?
- Do you agree with the idea that doctors should set an example by not smoking? Or do you think it is a violation of their rights?
- Do you have a law or ordinance about smoking in Korea?

Vocabulary/Expressions:

- Association- an organization of people with a common purpose and having a formal structure.
- Practitioner - a person engaged in the practice of a profession, occupation; etc.
- *"Practice what you preach"*

UNIT IV: HEALTH



The power of power nap

Falling asleep on the job may be evolving into office protocol—not grounds for termination. A growing number of companies are recognizing the health benefits of a quick snooze, including increased alertness, enhanced brainpower, and fewer sick days. Some companies are offering designated nap rooms or even setting up tents or lofted beds.

Most employers who allow napping say they do so in the name of their staffers' well-being, which research suggests is a smart idea. People who take daily 30-minute naps are 37 percent less likely to die of heart disease than those who don't nap, according to a study published in the *Archives of Internal Medicine* in 2007. Plus, a well-rested employee is a cheery employee.

Talking Points:

- Do you often take power naps in between work?
- Do you have mood swings when you are lack of sleep?
- I'm in the bad mood at work/school when:

_____.

_____.

Vocabulary/Expressions:

- Snooze – to sleep; dose; nap
- Protocol - the customs and regulations dealing with diplomatic formality, precedence, and etiquette.
- Cheery – in good spirit; gay.

UNIT V: FACTS AND IDEAS



**AN EYE
FOR AN
EYE AND
THE WHOLE
WORLD WOULD
BE BLIND**

An eye for an eye

In my country people have mixed emotions about capital punishment such as death penalty with different ways of execution. Many people were opposing it on religious ground with some supporting it as a way of deterring crime.

An “an eye for an eye” punishment had been a practice in my country for so many years. Punishment may range from a slap on the wrist to death, but the punishment must fit the crime.

Personally, I was glad when it was abolished four years ago. I can not explain in “plain english” why I oppose in capital punishment but the thing is “why do we kill people who kill people to show killing people is wrong?” ... *you know?*

Talking points:

- What is the capital punishment for a serious crime in your country?
- Do you believe that an eye for an eye is just fair?
- Can you try to simplify this in plain english:
“why do we kill people who kill people to show killing is wrong?”

Vocabulary / Expressions

- an eye for an eye – punishment equal in kind to the offense.
- Plain English – simple, straightforward, easily understood English.
- “You know” – an expression; substitution for something that can not be thought at the present moment.

UNIT V: FACTS AND IDEAS



Sports Minded



Amazing, fantastic, superb, mind blowing...many words but only one thing to describe: Sports. Sports have become an internationally dominating field in which every country is actively participating. It has led many people to great height. Not only people but the countries they are representing.

Sports also publicize the beauty of the country through media. Sports have helped various countries to thrive their economy by organizing various sports events, they get opportunity to earn money. Recently world cup football was held in Africa. People from all over the world had booked tickets for the football matches. Organizing sport play a vital role in publicizing what one country has to offer. Well, this also cause a dispute to every country because all of them want to be the host country for sports.

Talking Points:

- Has your country been the host country to any big sports event?
- In what sport do you think your country is good at? Give details.
- What are the top 3 sports that you like watching the most in Olympic Games?

Vocabulary / Expressions

- Superb – extremely good; breathtaking
- Mind blowing – overwhelming
- “Great height” – on top
- Dispute – to engage in argument or debate

UNIT V: FACTS AND IDEAS



On duty

I am a woman who will be going through Army basic training in a few months. It would be foolish of me to say that I want to go into battle, but I think it's totally unfair to exclude women from combat duty when they can handle it as well as men. Women should be expected to do the same work as men. When are the people going to realize that women are a viable source of our national defense?

Canadian law has been revised, and now women are allowed to served in all military positions-except on submarines-in the Canadian armed forces. Women in Afghan are ready to die for their country.

There are plenty of men out there who would gladly give up their combat positions to women, and plenty of women who would jump at the chance to prove themselves in the battlefield.



Talking Points:

- How do you feel about sending women in combats?
- Do you think female casualties would affect army morale differently than male losses?
- Would you consider sending your daughter in to military school?

Vocabulary / Expressions

- Viable – capable
- Casualty - a member of the armed forces lost to service through death, wounds, sickness, capture.
- *"in the battlefield"* - in the place of war.

UNIT V: FACTS AND IDEAS



HAPPINESS

“What is happiness? How does a person determine whether he or she is happy? Often people confuse joy with happiness, but they are not the same. Joy is fleeting moments of happiness, while happiness is long lasting. A person winning a lottery is overwhelmed with joy, but it may not bring happiness. An elderly woman with five children and twenty grandchildren is happy because she knows she is loved. Happiness can be defined as an emotion similar to being sad, mad, angry, frustrated, joy, love, etc.”

-unknown-

Talking points:

- How do you make your self happy?
- How do you make other people happy?
- What was the happiest moment of your life?

Vocabulary / Expressions

- Fleeting – vanishing quickly
- Lottery – a gambling game or method of raising money.

“Happiness can be defined as an emotion similar to being sad, mad, angry, frustrated, joy, love”



Thank You !

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