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The 4 page 60 minute ESL British English lesson – 15/07/13

Last telegram sent: STOP

Recently the last telegram was sent in India. The country's State-run telegraph service shut down in mid-July following decades of decline. Telegrams have been replaced by text messages and emails. Most young people today have never seen a telegram!

In the old days telegrams brought happy and sad news to millions of Indians every year. A knock at the door could bring a sense of foreboding when one heard the word "telegram".

The telegraph service in India started in 1851. It was set up by the British East India Company in Calcutta. Two years later wide-scale construction of telegraph lines began which took lines right across India. In 1855, the telegraph service was thrown open to the public to use as a new method of rapid communication.

For more than a century and up until the end of the 1980s, telegrams were the fastest form of communication. In the early days telegrams were written by hand with fountain pens. They mostly carried business messages. Until fairly recently they were actually a computer printout.

At the Central Telegraph Office in Delhi's Eastern Court building the mood before closure was downbeat. Most of the machines have now all gone, sold as scrap, and the offices fallen quiet, with only a handful of people around.

A telegram messenger summed it up: "More than 4,000 people worked here. There were hundreds of teleprinter machines and the room was generally so noisy that you had to shout in the ears of the person next to you to be heard."

Perhaps the last message read: "TELEGRAM IS DEAD STOP LONG LIVE TELEGRAM STOP".

SPEAKING

Think of three things you know about the telegram. Go round the room swapping details with others.

LISTENING – WRITING - DICTATION

The teacher will read some lines of the article slowly to the class.

READING

Students should now read the article aloud, swapping readers every paragraph.

SPEAKING - UNDERSTANDING

1) The article – Students check any unknown vocabulary or phrases with the teacher.

2) The article - Students should look through the article with the teacher.

- 1) What is the article about?
- 2) What do you think about the article?
- 3) Was this an easy or difficult article to understand?
- 4) Was this a boring or interesting article?
- 5) Discuss the article.

3) Article quiz - Students quiz each other in pairs. Score a point for each correct answer. Score half a point each time you have to look at the article for help. See who can get the highest score!

Student A questions

- 1) What has recently ceased?
- 2) Name the company.
- 3) Where is India?
- 4) Where is Calcutta?
- 5) Where and what year did the service start?

Student B questions

- 1) What did the last message perhaps say?
- 2) What does downbeat mean?
- 3) What does foreboding mean?
- 4) What has replaced what?
- 5) Where was the mood downbeat?

Category: Communication / Telegram / India
Level: Intermediate / Upper Intermediate

Last telegram sent: STOP – 15th July 2013

WRITING / SPEAKING

In pairs. On the board write as many words as you can to do with '**Telegram**'. *One-two minutes.* Compare with other teams. Using your words compile a short dialogue together.

WRITING / SPEAKING

In pairs – Think of four modern ways to communicate. Write them below. Talk about them!

- 1) _____ (3) _____
- 2) _____ (4) _____

Add four old-fashioned ways to communicate.

- 1) _____ (3) _____
- 2) _____ (4) _____

The teacher will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class.

SPEAKING - COMMUNICATION

In pairs / groups – Look at the following forms of communication. Talk about them...

Personally: Speaking / Body language / Telepathy / Sign language / other...

Verbal communication / Non-verbal communication / Written communication / Cross-cultural communication / organisational communication / Interpersonal communication

Business communication: Web-based / video conferencing / emails / reports / presentations / telephones / forum boards / face to face / suggestion box / other...

DISCUSSION

Student A questions

- 1) Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- 2) Have you ever seen a telegram?
- 3) How do you communicate?
- 4) Have you ever sent a telegram?
- 5) Why have telegrams ceased in India?
- 6) When did telegrams cease in your country?
- 7) What is the fastest way to communicate today?
- 8) Are telegrams a relic of the past?
- 9) How will we communicate in the future?
- 10) Have you learnt anything in today's English lesson?

SPEAKING – ROLEPLAY 1

In groups. One of you is the interviewer. The others are one of the following people. You are in the *BBC Calcutta TV* studio. Today's interview is about: *Last telegram sent: STOP*

- 1) A telegram messenger
- 2) The Minister of Communication
- 3) Someone who remembers telegrams
- 4) A young person

The teacher will choose some groups to roleplay their interview in front of the class.

SPEAKING - ROLEPLAY 2

In pairs. You are in an internet café in Calcutta with a friend. Start a conversation about the last telegram being sent in India. *5 mins.*

SPEAKING

On the board – 10 things about the telegram. Talk about them.

SPEAKING - DISCUSSION

Allow 10 minutes – As a class.

Discuss the following...

Communication – How has it changed?
The future of communication?

The teacher can moderate the session.

DISCUSSION

Student B questions

- 1) Why are people nostalgic about telegrams?
- 2) What were telegrams used for?
- 3) What has replaced telegrams?
- 4) What would you do if you couldn't send SMS messages?
- 5) How would you manage without emails?
- 6) What gadgets do you use to communicate with?
- 7) What is Morse code?
- 8) What has Morse code got to do with the telegram?
- 9) Has this been a difficult lesson in English for you to understand?
- 10) Did you like this discussion?

GAP FILL: READING

Last telegram sent: STOP

Recently the last telegram was sent in India. The country's State-run telegraph service shut down in mid-July following decades of (1)__. Telegrams have been replaced by (2)__ and (3)__. Most young people today have never seen a telegram!

In the old days telegrams brought happy and sad news to millions of Indians every year. A knock at the door could bring a sense of (4)__ when one heard the word "(5)__".

The telegraph service in India started in 1851. It was set up by the British East India Company in Calcutta. Two years later wide-scale construction of telegraph lines began which took (6)__ right across India. In 1855 the telegraph (7)__ was thrown open to the public to use as a new method of (8)__ communication.

rapid / telegram / emails / decline / foreboding / service / text messages / lines

For more than a century and up until the end of the 1980s, telegrams were the fastest form of communication. In the early days telegrams were written by hand with (1)__. They mostly carried business messages. Until fairly recently they were actually a computer printout.

At the Central Telegraph Office in Delhi's Eastern Court building the (2)__ before closure was (3)__. Most of the (4)__ have now all gone, sold as (5)__, and the offices fallen quiet, with only a handful of people around.

A telegram messenger summed it up: "More than 4,000 people worked here. There were hundreds of (6)__ machines and the room was generally so (7)__ that you had to shout in the ears of the person next to you to be heard."

Perhaps the last message read: "TELEGRAM IS DEAD STOP LONG LIVE TELEGRAM (8)__".

stop / scrap / fountain pens / noisy / mood / machines / downbeat / teleprinter /

GAP FILL: GRAMMAR

Last telegram sent: STOP

Recently (1)__ last telegram was sent in India. The country's State-run telegraph service shut down in mid-July following decades of decline. Telegrams have been replaced (2)__ text messages (3)__ emails. Most young people today have never seen a telegram!

In the old days telegrams brought happy and sad news to millions of Indians every year. A knock (4)__ the door could bring (5)__ sense of foreboding when one heard the word "telegram".

The telegraph service (6)__ India started in 1851. It was set up by the British East India Company in Calcutta. Two years later wide-scale construction of telegraph lines began which took lines right across India. In 1855 the telegraph service was thrown open to the public to use (7)__ a new method (8)__ rapid communication.

of / in / at / by / as / a / and / the

For more (1)__ a century and up until the end of the 1980s, telegrams were the fastest form of communication. In the early days telegrams were written by hand (2)__ fountain pens. (3)__ mostly carried business messages. Until fairly recently they were actually a computer printout.

At the Central Telegraph Office in Delhi's Eastern Court building the mood before closure was downbeat. (4)__ of the machines have now all gone, sold as scrap, and the offices fallen quiet, with (5)__ a handful of people around.

A telegram messenger summed it up: "(6)__ than 4,000 people worked here. (7)__ were hundreds of teleprinter machines and the room was generally so noisy (8)__ you had to shout in the ears of the person next to you to be heard."

Perhaps the last message read: "TELEGRAM IS DEAD STOP LONG LIVE TELEGRAM STOP".

that / there / with / more / they / than / most / only

Last telegram sent: STOP – 15th July 2013

GAP FILL: LISTENING

Last telegram sent: STOP

Recently _____ was sent in India. The country's State-run telegraph service shut down in mid-July following _____. Telegrams have been replaced by text messages and emails. Most young people today have never seen a telegram!

In the old days telegrams brought happy and sad news to millions of Indians every year. A knock at the door could bring _____ when one heard the word "telegram".

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A _____ summed it up: "More than 4,000 people worked here. There were hundreds of teleprinter machines and the room was generally so noisy that you had to _____ the person next to you to be heard."

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WRITING/SPELLING

WRITING / SPEAKING

1) On paper - In pairs/As a class – Write 50 words about 'telegrams' then talk about it. *One-two minutes.*

2) EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATING - GAME – Everyone has the same piece of paper. *The teacher will read out the following effective directions:*

- 1) Hold the paper in both hands.
- 2) Fold the paper in half.
- 3) Tear off the lower right-hand side of the paper.
- 4) Fold it in half again.
- 5) Tear off the upper left-hand side of the paper.
- 6) Fold it in half again.
- 7) Tear off the lower left-hand side of the paper.

Check your results!

3) Homework – Write and send a 200 word email to your teacher about: **Last telegram sent: STOP.** Your email can be read out in class.

GAP FILL READING

- 1) decline
- 2) text
- 3) emails
- 4) foreboding
- 5) telegram
- 6) lines
- 7) service
- 8) rapid

ANSWERS

- 1) fountain pens
- 2) mood
- 3) downbeat
- 4) machines
- 5) scrap
- 6) teleprinter
- 7) noisy
- 8) stop

SPELLING

The teacher will ask the class individually to spell the following words that are in the article. Afterwards check your answers.

- 1) telegram
- 2) knock
- 3) foreboding
- 4) Calcutta
- 5) construction
- 6) communication
- 7) fountain pens
- 8) business
- 9) downbeat
- 10) scrap

SPELLING

Use the following ratings:

Pass = 12

Good = 15

Very good = 18

Excellent = 20

- 11) handful
- 12) quiet
- 13) messenger
- 14) teleprinter
- 15) generally
- 16) noisy
- 17) stop
- 18) decades
- 19) decline
- 20) text messages

Last telegram sent: STOP – *15th July 2013*