

UNIT 14 THE TIME OF MY LIFE

UNIT OVERVIEW: In this unit students will talk about good and bad past experiences.

Conversation Starters: *School Memories*

Friends talk about their good and bad high school memories.

Building Fluency

Talking about good and bad experiences; verb phrases — memorable events

Conversation Model

Can't you tell? — Contractions

Let's Talk About It: *Was it good or bad?*

Share your good and bad experiences in a board game activity.

Conversation Idioms:

have the ime of my life

was a blast

was the best time of my life

be on the basketball team

fit in

have a hard time making friends

am in lots of plays and musicals

get a lot out of high school

forgot my lines in the play

fall down at my graduation ceremony

I just couldn't wait to get out of there

get a part in the school play

was a nightmare

was the most embarrassing moment of my life

get along well with everyone

didn't click with any of them

be in the drama club

look forward to school

was an unforgettable experience

shake hands with a famous person

feel nostalgic

find my place

Additional Links for this unit: Six people talk about high school. <http://www.elllo.org/english/Mixer/35-HighSchool.html>

STEP 1 BUILDING THE ATMOSPHERE

Start this lesson with a creative brainstorming activity, which should also prepare students for the **Conversation Starters** listening comprehension exercise which follows. First, play the **Amy and Erik Introduction** and ask students if Erik liked or hated high school (he hated it). In the **Introduction** Erik doesn't go into the details of why he didn't like high school – so, have your students brainstorm possible reasons and encourage them to be as creative as possible. Finally, have students share their ideas with the class.

Script [Track 72]

Amy: Hi everyone. This is Amy and Erik again. And, welcome to Unit 14, "The Time Of My Life." Erik, did you love or hate high school?

Erik: Actually, I'd rather not talk about it.

Amy: That bad hey?

Erik: ...

Amy: Erik? It couldn't have been that bad.

Erik: Trust me. It was.

Amy: Oh... Anyway, we asked some of our friends about their high school life. Let's listen.

STEP 2 CONVERSATION STARTERS: SCHOOL MEMORIES

Students will listen to people talk about their good and bad high school memories.

1. First Listening

Books open. Give the students a minute to preview the questions. Play the audio and have students mark their answers. As students share their answers in pairs, encourage them to discuss whether they know the reason for the answer as well.

2. Second Listening

Play the audio again. Have students confirm or correct their answers in the “reason” column. Allow students to check their answers in pairs before discussing as a class.

Answer Key

First Listening:

1. a 2. b 3. a 4. b 5. b 6. a

Second Listening:

1. c 2. c 3. a 4. b 5. a 6. b

BONUS

Have students answer the questions in pairs. Encourage them to give their reasons for *why* they relate to the person in Question #2. You may want to allow students to refer to the script in order to better answer this question. Give them an opportunity to ask about any unknown words.

Script [Tracks 73-78]

1. Inna

I got an invitation to my high school reunion the other day. And it made me feel so nostalgic about my high school days. I really had the time of my life at high school. I had so many good friends. I was on the basketball team and got along really well with everyone. We did everything together: studied, ate lunch, went to parties...

2. Richard

Some people talk about school as being “the time of their lives,” you know, and how they wish they could go back to the “good old days.” But personally, high school was the worst three years of my life. I just couldn’t wait to get out of there. And, I guess, you know, I just didn’t fit in. You know at school how there are different groups who hang out together — the populars, you know, the nerdies, the people on the school team? Well, I just didn’t click with any of them and I had a really hard time making friends. And it wasn’t until I started at sixth form college that I finally found my place.

3. Malik

I remember, I was really sad to be leaving high school. Oakland Tech. It was a really fun place to be, lots of special memories. I was in the drama club. We called it the Performing Arts Academy and I was in a lot of school plays and musicals and improv contests. I used to look forward to school every day. It really was the time of my life.

4. Blaire

School used to be fun. But toward the end it was like assignments, exams, study, assignments, exams, study, go to class, listen to teachers tell me what to do. My last semester was a total disaster. It was like my body was there, but my mind had already left the building. So glad to be over all of that.

5. Simon

I went to my school reunion the other day and it totally reminded me of why I hated high school so much. The moment I walked in the door someone turned around and yelled, “It’s crybaby!” That was my nickname for the last 6 months of school after I forgot my lines at the school play and started crying on stage, in front of everyone. It was definitely the most embarrassing moment of my entire life. People can be so cruel.

6. Soon

I really enjoyed high school. I think the best part was the amazing teachers we had. In particular, I’ll never forget my history teacher, Kim Sun Seng Nim. His way of teaching made history so interesting, and thanks to him I really got a lot out of high school.

STEP 3 BUILDING FLUENCY: TALKING ABOUT GOOD AND BAD EXPERIENCES

Students will practice introducing good and bad experiences as well as learn several verb phrases for describing memorable events.

1. Expressions

- Have students decide which expressions mean something was a “good experience” and which mean something was a “bad experience.”
- Note: Students may think that “an unforgettable experience” can refer to either a good or a bad experience, as unforgettable means an experience that stays in one’s memory. However, when unforgettable is paired with words like experience and moment and said in a high voice tone, in the vast majority of cases it will refer to a positive experience.

Answer Key

Good experience: 1, 2, 5

Bad experience: 3, 4, 6

2. Vocabulary

In pairs have the students match the phrases with the best pictures. Then, go over the answers as a class. Next, reinforce the vocabulary by having students cover the words above the images with a piece of paper. Then, have students quiz each other using only the images as prompts:

A: *What is image "h"?*

B: *"going on homestay," What is image "f"?*

A: *"tripping at graduation."*

Answer Key

1 – e, 2 – f, 3 – d, 4 – h, 5 – g, 6 – a, 7 – c, 8 – b

VOCAB TROUBLESHOOTING

It was a blast – It was a really fun experience / time

Getting fired – to lose one's job, often for making a mistake at work

HOW THE GRAMMAR WORKS

Have your students brainstorm as many "original" expressions as they can by changing the adjective or adverb/adjective of degree. Write these on the board and discuss them as a class.

3. Let's Practice

Be sure to go over the example dialogue before students begin practicing. Encourage them to add details and to ask their partner follow-up questions.

STEP 4 CONVERSATION MODEL: CAN'T YOU TELL?

Students will look at contractions.

Optional Warm-up:

Write the following questions on the board.

1) *What is the image from?*

2) *What event was it?*

3) *How did he look in the picture?*

Books closed. Direct the students to the questions on the board. Next, have the students listen to the audio and try to answer the questions above. After listening as needed, students compare answers in pairs and then as a class.

1. Situation

- Books open. Have your students check the conversation for unknown words, and explain any difficult phrases.

HOW THE PRONUNCIATION WORKS: CONTRACTIONS

Explain the unit pronunciation point to your students. In this unit we look at contractions. Talking about contractions covers many of the concepts we talked about in Units 1 and 6 when we discussed not stressing short, unimportant words which do not hold much meaning. Moreover, as we've seen in units discussing blending sounds, it is very natural in spoken English to blend and shorten certain sound combinations. Therefore, unless we specifically want to emphasize a word or if we're speaking deliberately, it's very common to use contractions in spoken English. In the case of "picture is" it ends up sounding like the plural of picture "pictures" which can be terribly confusing for learners who must rely on the context to determine the true meaning of the word. With "what are," "are" becomes a schwa sound and blends with "what" to sound like the non-existing word "wata." Again, while students do not have to pronounce words in this way, it is extremely important for them to be aware of this, especially for listening comprehension purposes.

- Next, play the conversation model [Track 79] and encourage your students to listen out for how "picture is" and "what are" are pronounced.
- As a class do a choral practice of this conversation, focusing particularly on the pronunciation point. Say each line or chunk, and have your students repeat.

EXTRA PRONUNCIATION

Can't you tell – Can you tell (?)

Looks like it was a happy time for you – Looks li ki(t) waza happy time for you

That was the best time of my life – Tha was the bes time of my life

2. Substitution

Have students work individually to connect the phrases and sentences in the columns to make a coherent conversation. Then, have students compare answers in pairs.

Answer Key

My 21st birthday party – That's a dance floor. I'm salsa dancing – a great day for you – a blast

My homestay in Canada – That's the dining room. I'm having dinner with my host family – a wonderful experience for you – an unforgettable experience

My wedding in Hawaii – That's the altar. I tripped and fell down – a nightmare – the most embarrassing moment of my life

3. Practice

- Have students use the **substitution** words to practice the conversation. Remind them to take particular care when pronouncing the contracted words. Have early finishers create their own conversations.
- Choose a pair to demonstrate the conversation. Comment on their pronunciation of “picture is” and “what are” and offer pronunciation and intonation advice as necessary.

STEP 5 LET'S TALK ABOUT IT: WAS IT GOOD OR BAD?

Students will share their own good and bad experiences in a board game activity.

1. Get Ready

Get the class started by randomly choosing a few squares from the game board and then telling a good or bad experience about each topic. Have the class guess which square you are talking about after each story. See sample below:

T: *I thought that all of my friends forgot my 16th birthday. But my parents took me out to dinner that night and all of my friends were at the restaurant, too! I had no idea they were throwing a surprise party for me!*

S: *Birthday.*

T: *Correct.*

After doing three or four samples, have students jot down notes about or simply think of their own experiences for each topic.

2. Let's Talk

- Put students in groups of three and go over the rules of the game as a class. After demonstrating how to play with one of the groups, have a student confirm how to play by reiterating the instructions.
- Before students start playing, have them think of some “time descriptions” using the structure “When I was...” This will be useful during their discussions. There are some examples given in the center of the **Let's Talk** board game.
- Monitor the game and assist when possible. Keep notes of any language mistakes and go over them at the end of the game if time allows.

3. Follow Up

Allow time for each group to decide which stories were the best, worst, most interesting and most embarrassing. Then have each group report to the class.

BONUS: Speaking Activity

If time permits, have students try the bonus speaking questions. This could be done as either a pair/group/class discussion or an extemporaneous speaking exercise.

BONUS ACTIVITY: Creative Writing

Have your students write or record a detailed narrative describing their best, worst or most embarrassing experience.

STEP 6 LANGUAGE AWARENESS

Assign the language awareness activity on page 94 for homework. If necessary, do the first one or two questions together as a class. Leave 5 or 10 minutes at the beginning of the next class to go through the answers.

Answer Key

1. totally
2. I got along really well with everyone.
3. I just didn't fit in.
4. hang out
5. We called it...
6. I used to look forward to school every day.
7. School used to be fun.
8. It was a total disaster.
9. it totally reminded me
10. Yes
11. thanks to him
12. I really got a lot out of high school.

STEP 7 ERIK'S VOCABULARY TIP

This tip introduces some North American campus English. Many students pick up these terms from movies and love to use them. However, they need to be reminded that people from non-North American backgrounds often do not know which year level these terms refer to, especially sophomore, junior and senior. So, it's useful for students to be able to use "I'm a ~ year student" or "I'm in my ~ year of ~" as well. Tell your students that you'll give a pop quiz on these "year level" terms at the beginning of the next class, and see how many they can remember.

STEP 8 UNIT TEST

Make copies of the Unit Test for each student. Start by playing the audio for the Listening section (download Track 14 from <http://www.elttestcenter.com>). Decide whether you give them one or two listenings. Then, allow the students about 5-10 minutes to complete the rest of the test. Correct the test in class, and record the score.

AUDIO Script

So many people that I know say they hated high school. They say that it was boring or something. But I think they only say that because they didn't have something that they were passionate about. For me, high school was a really amazing experience, because it was when I first started learning Korean. You know, I had never studied a foreign language before that, so I didn't really know what to expect. But my teacher was so cool and I fell in love with Korea and the Korean language and culture. The best part of high school was when my class went on a trip to Korea. We stayed with host families and saw the sights... it was a blast. I'll never forget it!

Answer Key

Part A.

1. c
2. a

Part B.

3. absolute blast
4. Going to Liverpool
5. a terrible
6. the most

Part C.

7. fainted
8. shook
9. forget
10. fired