

## UNIT 8 UNPLUGGED

**UNIT OVERVIEW:** In this unit students will talk about what changes they'd like to make in their lives.

**Conversation Starters: *Dealing with Stress***

Friends talk about balancing work and health.

**Building Fluency**

Expressing a need for change; verb phrases — unusual activities

**Conversation Model**

I'm so bored. — Stress words for emphasis

**Let's Talk About It: *How do you feel about your life?***

Talk about your lives — are you satisfied?

**Conversation Idioms:**

deal with stress	take time off work	need a break
upgrade my phone	quit my job	dye my hair green
get away for the weekend	be bored with work	make a sale
spice up ...	Can I ask you a favor?	take a week off
take it easy	back out on someone	am stressed out
answer the phone	feel stressed	feel bored
check my email	make a presentation	go on holiday
find a new job	be caught up in the rat race	

Additional Links for this unit: Phil from England talks about gadgets.

<http://www.elllo.org/english/0701/711-Phil-Gadgets.html>

### STEP 1 BUILDING THE ATMOSPHERE

Ask your students about when they tend to feel stressed, and why. Next, tell them that Erik has been feeling stressed recently. Have them listen to the **Amy and Erik introduction** for the reason why Erik is stressed (because he's very busy with work). Have them brainstorm some suggestions for Erik to deal with his stress.

**Script [Track 45]**

Erik: Hi, everyone. This is Unit 8, "Unplugged."

Amy: Hey, Erik, what's wrong? You seem stressed out.

Erik: Yeah, I am. I'm just so busy. I have so much to do.

Amy: Ahh... caught up in the rat race, huh?

Erik: Exactly.

Amy: Well, don't worry. You're not the only one. Two of our friends are talking about their experiences with stress. Let's listen.

### STEP 2 CONVERSATION STARTERS: DEALING WITH STRESS

*Students will listen to people talk about balancing work and health.*

#### 1. First Listening

Play the audio and have students circle the items. If necessary, play the audio again. Have students go over their answers in pairs and then confirm as a class.

#### 2. Second Listening

- Give students time to read through the questions and answers before playing the audio again. Have students answer the questions and then check the answers as a class.
- Next, using the answers to the questions and other key words, have students work in pairs to write a summary of what the conversation is about.
- As a class have students share their summaries.
- Next, in pairs, have students read the audio script in pairs to check and see how close their summary was.

## Answer Key

First listening: computer, the country, email, feel stressed, answer the phone

Second listening: 1 – b, 2 – b, 3 – c, 4 – a

## BONUS

For #1 have students discuss Ken's situation. For #2 you could narrow down the question by asking students to list the three things that stress them out the most (for example, job, school, tests, parents, etc.).

## BONUS ACTIVITY

- First, make sure that students understand the meaning of “unplugged” in the context of this unit. Then, on the board list five electric devices. Have students discuss if they could live without them and for how long. See sample list below:  
1) phone 2) computer 3) heater / air-con 4) car / motorcycle 5) ipod / music player
- (Note: This can also be done as a warmer to the activity.)

## Script [Track 46]

**Ken:** Emma, can I ask you a favor?

**Emma:** Um, sure, I guess. What is it?

**Ken:** Would you be able to answer my phone next week?

**Emma:** Answer your phone next week? All next week?

**Ken:** Yeah.

**Emma:** Why? Are you taking a week off or something?

**Ken:** Kind of. You know how I've been feeling a bit stressed and stuff lately?

**Emma:** Yeah, aren't we all? But that's what you get in this line of work. That's what makes it so fun!

**Ken:** Yeah, well, maybe, up to a point, I guess. Anyway, I talked with the doctor about it yesterday, and she said that I'm overworked and need to get unplugged.

**Emma:** Your doctor said what? You need to get “unplugged”? What are you talking about?

**Ken:** You know, unplugged — just disconnect from all of this for a while. No computer, no cell phone, no email. She says I need to get some R & R.

**Emma:** R & R? Rest and relaxation? Are you nuts? Oh, man, that's definitely not a good idea!

**Ken:** Well, she recommended a country retreat for a whole week to just unwind and take it easy.

**Emma:** A country retreat? For one week? But, Ken, this is the busiest time of the year. What about our deadlines? What about that big presentation we've got on Wednesday? You can't back out on me now!

**Ken:** Look, Emma, I'm really sorry, but I've just got to take it easy for a while.

**Emma:** Take it easy? But you love life in the fast lane!

**Ken:** Well, I'm not so sure anymore, Emma. I think I need a change of...

**Emma:** Well, here's \$50 saying you'll call me on your first night to ask about what you missed at work.

## STEP 3 BUILDING FLUENCY: EXPRESSING A NEED FOR CHANGE

*Students will practice expressing a need for change and learn several verb phrases to describe unusual activities.*

### 1. Expressions

- Have students work in pairs to put the expressions in the correct category. Have them compare answers and then confirm the answers as a class.
- Note: Some students may struggle with the vocabulary in this section, so you may want to take the time to go over any unknown words before asking students to do the exercise. See Vocab Troubleshooting below.
- Next, do a peer drilling exercise for vocalization practice. In pairs have students prompt each other to say the phrases first clearly, then quickly, then without looking and finally by substituting a similar phrase. See the sample below:  
A: *Number 6.*  
B: *I want to get out of the rat race.*  
A: *Faster.*  
B: *I wanna.... ge-dow-ta..... the rat race.*  
A: *Without looking*  
B: *I wanna.... ge-dow-ta..... the rat race.*  
A: *Switch.*

B: *I want to take it easy.*

### Answer Key

More excitement = 1, 5, 8

More peace and quiet = 2, 4, 6, 7, 9

Either = 3, 10

## 2. Vocabulary

- In pairs have the students match the phrases with the best pictures. Then go over as a class.
- Next, have students decide if the ideas are “mild” or “wild.” Explain that mild is something that is common whereas “wild” is kind of crazy and strange. Have students mark their thoughts and share their opinions in pairs.
- Finally, reinforce the vocabulary by having students cover the words above the images with a piece of paper or cards. Then, have students quiz each other using only the images as prompts:

A: *What is image “h”?*

B: *“Get away for the weekend.” What is image “f”?*

A: *“Learn something new.”*

### Answer Key

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

## VOCAB TROUBLESHOOTING

Spice things up – add more excitement to one’s life

I want a change of pace – I want a slower / faster life

The rat race – competitive business society

Liven things up – make things more interesting

R & R – rest and relaxation

To take things easy – to relax

I have too many things on my plate – I have too many responsibilities and I’m too busy

Upgrade my mobile phone – get a new, more up to date mobile phone

Get away for the weekend – go on a short holiday over the weekend

## HOW THE GRAMMAR WORKS

Before moving on the **Let’s Practice** activity, go over the structures in the box. Have students write two sentences using the three different structures. Ask for volunteers to share a few of their sentences with the class.

## 3. Let’s Practice

Go over the example dialogue before students begin practicing. Encourage them to add details and to ask their partners follow-up questions.

### **STEP 4** CONVERSATION MODEL: I’M SO BORED.

*Students will look at stressing words for emphasis.*

### Optional Warm-up

Write the following questions on the board.

1) *What is the woman bored with?*

2) *What is always the same old thing?*

3) *What does the man suggest?*

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.

## VOCAB TROUBLESHOOTING

It can’t be that bad – your work can’t be that boring

Make some sales – sell some products

## HOW THE PRONUNCIATION WORKS: STRESS WORDS FOR EMPHASIS

Explain the unit pronunciation point to your students. In Units 1 and 6 we looked at not stressing words. In this unit we look at the use of stress. There are many reasons why we stress words, including for emphasis and to make corrections. Stress is important for communicating our feelings and standpoints. In the **Conversation Model** the female character emphasizes “so” in “I’m so bored” to express her feelings. The male character stresses “that” in “It can’t be that bad” to emphasize that he doubts that her job is really boring. In “It is” the female character stresses “is” to correct the male character and ensure him that her job actually *is* very boring.

- Next, play the conversation model [Track 47] and encourage your students to listen out for the use of stress in the conversation.
- 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 POINTS: CUT AND BLEND SOUNDS, CHANGE SOUNDS

It can’t be that bad – it can(t) be tha(t) bad

It’s just the same old thing – it’s jus(t) the samol(d) thing

It’s just so boring – it’s jus(t)so boring

Why don’t you find a new job – why *don chu finda* new job

### 2. Substitution

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

#### Answer Key

School – go to class, do my homework – change majors

Summer vacation – wake up, watch TV – get a part-time job

My girlfriend – talk to her on the phone, have dinner together – take her on a special date

The Internet – check my emails, chat online – find another hobby

My hair – put it in a ponytail, leave it down – dye it green

### 3. Practice

- Have students use the **substitution** words to practice the conversation. Remind them to stress “so,” “that” and “is.” Have early finishers create their own conversations.
- Choose a pair to demonstrate the conversation. Comment on their use of stress and offer pronunciation and intonation advice as necessary.

## STEP 5 LET’S TALK ABOUT IT: HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT YOUR LIFE?

*Students will talk about whether they are satisfied with their lives.*

### 1. Get Ready

Ask for a volunteer to read the instructions as a class. Elicit what the task requires from the students so they are sure of what to do. Be sure to demonstrate what *spice up* and *slow down* mean. Give students time to mark their answers.

### 2. Let’s Talk

Be sure to go over the sample conversation as a class before having students discuss their feelings in pairs or small groups.

### 3. Follow Up

Give students time to summarize their group’s feelings. It’s probably best to have each group assign a note-taker and spokesperson. Then, nominate a student as the class leader and have him or her elicit each group’s summary. Prepare sample questions the students can ask the other students. See sample below:

*What is your group bored with?*

*How do people want to spice thing up a bit?*

*How do people want to slow thing down?*

*What is your group happy with?*

*Anything else?*

### **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**

Have a class contest in which pairs think of the best idea to spice up the class. Then, by a show of hands, have the class vote for the best idea. Before the students vote, explain that pairs cannot vote for their own idea. If possible, try to implement the winning idea into your class.

### **STEP 6 LANGUAGE AWARENESS**

Assign the language awareness activity on page 88 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. Can I ask you a favor?
2. Answer your phone next week? / All next week? / Your doctor said what? / You need to get “unplugged”? / R&R? / Rest and relaxation? / A country retreat? / For one week? / Take it easy?
3. take a week off
4. this line of work
5. anyway
6. cell phone
7. Are you nuts?
8. unwind
9. You can't back out on my now!
10. I'm not so sure.

### **STEP 7 ERIK'S LEARNING TIP**

Even the most diligent student can feel a bit bored with their English study from time to time. It's important to encourage your students to actually use, and most importantly, enjoy using their English. Give them some fun homework – go to karaoke and sing an English song, chat online with some friends in English!! Another idea is to start an enjoyable, creative class project. One idea that would tie in well with the theme of this unit is to get your students to create a short film (around 2 minutes) about a character who “wants to spice things up” and some friends who give him/her some advice. You can have them perform it in front of the class or actually make it into a movie. This can be done easily using free software such as Windows Movie Maker, and you can cut out the hassle of editing by using still photographs rather than actual moving images. If you have a blog upload your students' movies and get them to comment on other groups' masterpieces!

### **STEP 8 UNIT TEST**

Make copies of the Unit Test for each student. Start by playing the audio for the Listening section (download Track 8 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**

I've had it with my job. Just thinking about it makes me feel sick. It's not my job itself that stresses me out. It's the people who I work with. Seriously, you've never met such a bunch of rude and just plain mean people in your life. For example, some people at work just completely ignore me. They don't even say “hello” when I walk past them. Then there are others who act really friendly, but it's just an act, because they'll gossip about you later. Putting up with them really stresses me out. I really want a change of scene... and to work with people who I actually like.

#### **Answer Key**

##### **Part A.**

1. a                      2. c

##### **Part B.**

3. spice things up    4. on my plate                      5. get some rest                      6. with

##### **Part C.**

7. a tattoo                      8. for the weekend                      9. my hair green                      10. my car bright pink