ACTIVITY 1

# Break Headlines

A2 to C1 · pairs or groups of 3 · 15 to 20 minutes · a pen

1. Write three newspaper headlines about your break: one big thing, one small thing, one funny thing. Eight words or fewer.
2. Give your page to your partner. Your partner chooses one headline and asks you at least four questions about it.
3. Tell the full story. Then your partner writes the best detail in the notes box, and you swap.

### THREE REAL HEADLINES

**Local Man Survives Ten Days With His In-Laws**
Lucas

**Three Weeks, Zero Work Emails**
Carmen

**Kitchen Tap Finally Fixed After Two Years**
Mateo

### HOW HEADLINES WORK

**Drop small words**
~~*The*~~ *Woman Finds* ~~*a*~~ *Wallet*

**Present simple for the past**
*Family Drives 900 km*

**Numbers, not words**
*3 Weeks, 0 Emails*

## My three headlines

HEADLINE 1

HEADLINE 2

HEADLINE 3

QUESTION STARTERS

Who was there? · When did it happen? · Why did you ...? · What happened next? · How did you feel? · What was the worst part? · Would you do it again? · What did ... say?

MY PARTNER'S BEST DETAIL

ACTIVITY 2

# Since We Last Met

B1 to B2 · pairs or groups of 3 or 4 · 15 to 20 minutes · cut on the dashed lines

1. Cut out the cards and put them face down. Take a card and read it.
2. Give the news in one present perfect sentence: *I've started running.* Then tell the story in the past simple: *I started in July because ...*
3. The listeners ask one *When* or *How* question each. Then the next player takes a card.

**The news**
present perfect, no time
*I've fixed my bike.*

**The story**
past simple, with a time
*I fixed it last week. It took two hours.*

**Not this**
time + present perfect
~~*I've fixed it last week.*~~

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **STARTED**<br>SINCE WE LAST MET<br>Tell us about something new you've started. | **STOPPED**<br>SINCE WE LAST MET<br>Tell us about something you've stopped doing. | **FIXED**<br>SINCE WE LAST MET<br>Tell us about something you've fixed, cleaned or sorted out. |
| **BOUGHT**<br>SINCE WE LAST MET<br>Tell us about something you've bought and use every day. | **LEARNED**<br>SINCE WE LAST MET<br>Tell us about something new you've learned to do. | **AGAIN**<br>SINCE WE LAST MET<br>Tell us about a place you've been back to. |
| **MET**<br>SINCE WE LAST MET<br>Tell us about a person you've met or seen again. | **CHANGED**<br>SINCE WE LAST MET<br>Tell us about something that has changed at work or at home. | **FINISHED**<br>SINCE WE LAST MET<br>Tell us about a book, series or project you've finished. |
| **GIVEN UP**<br>SINCE WE LAST MET<br>Tell us about something you've given up, for now or forever. | **EATEN**<br>SINCE WE LAST MET<br>Tell us about the best thing you've eaten. | **WILDCARD**<br>SINCE WE LAST MET<br>Tell us about anything you want to tell the group. |

ACTIVITY 3

# The Bit That Went Wrong

B1 to C1 · pairs or groups of 3 · 20 minutes · a pen

1. Think of a trip, a vacation or a weekend that didn't go to plan. Stuck? Choose an idea below.
2. Fill in the story map with key words only, no full sentences. You have three minutes.
3. Tell your story without reading. Your partner reacts at least three times and says what they would have done. Then swap.

NO DISASTER? CHOOSE ONE

A missed train or flight · Rain every single day · The wrong booking · Lost luggage · Ill on vacation · The car broke down · A difficult guest · Too much family time · No Wi-Fi · A neighbor's party

**1 The scene**
Where were you? When? Who with?
*It was the second day of ... / We were staying in ...*

**2 The plan**
What were you trying to do?
*We were going to ... / The idea was to ...*

**3 The problem**
What went wrong?
*Suddenly, ... / It turned out that ... / I had forgotten ...*

**4 What you did**
How did you deal with it?
*So we ... / In the end, I had to ...*

**5 Now**
How do you feel about it now?
*Looking back, ... / Now it's a funny story, but ...*

LISTENER, REACT

No way! · You're kidding! · Oh no, what did you do? · That sounds awful. · That's hilarious! · I would have ...

ACTIVITY 4

# Guess What I Did

**A1 to A2 · pairs or groups of 3 or 4 · 10 to 15 minutes · cut on the dashed lines**

1. Cut out the cards and put them face down. Take a card. Don't show it.
2. Give three clues in the past simple. Don't say the words on the card. *I slept outside. It was cold.*
3. The others guess: *Did you go camping?* Answer *Yes, I did* or *No, I didn't.* A right guess wins the card.

**GUESS**

*Did you ...?*

**ANSWER**

*Yes, I did. / No, I didn't.*

**PAST SIMPLE: IRREGULAR VERBS**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| go **went** | eat **ate** | sleep **slept** | see **saw** |
| swim **swam** | take **took** | buy **bought** | meet **met** |
| make **made** | read **read** | ride **rode** | have **had** |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| SECRET ACTIVITY<br>**I went camping**<br>Clue words: sleep, outside, forest | SECRET ACTIVITY<br>**I swam in the sea**<br>Clue words: water, cold, beach | SECRET ACTIVITY<br>**I visited my family**<br>Clue words: parents, dinner, talk |
| SECRET ACTIVITY<br>**I painted a room**<br>Clue words: wall, color, brush | SECRET ACTIVITY<br>**I read a long book**<br>Clue words: pages, story, sofa | SECRET ACTIVITY<br>**I cooked for friends**<br>Clue words: kitchen, food, guests |
| SECRET ACTIVITY<br>**I went to a wedding**<br>Clue words: dress, dance, cake | SECRET ACTIVITY<br>**I rode a bike every day**<br>Clue words: wheels, road, legs | SECRET ACTIVITY<br>**I watched a whole series**<br>Clue words: TV, episodes, night |
| SECRET ACTIVITY<br>**I went to a festival**<br>Clue words: music, crowd, tent | SECRET ACTIVITY<br>**I worked in the garden**<br>Clue words: plants, water, sun | SECRET ACTIVITY<br>**I slept a lot**<br>Clue words: bed, tired, morning |

**YOUR OWN BREAK**

Now give three clues about something you really did. Can your partner guess it?

ACTIVITY 5

# The Rust Check

B1 to C1 · pairs · 15 minutes · a pen and a phone timer

1. Read the eight lines. Tick one box for each: did this skill come back fast, is it a bit rusty, or is it gone for now?
2. Give your page to your partner. Your partner chooses two lines you ticked **a bit rusty** and gives you the test.
3. Did you pass? Change your tick if you want. Then swap pages and test your partner.

| | CAME BACK FAST | A BIT RUSTY | GONE FOR NOW | YOUR PARTNER'S TEST |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 **I can tell a story about my break without stopping.** | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Tell your partner about one day of your break. Talk for 45 seconds. |
| 2 **I can ask follow-up questions.** | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Your partner says one sentence about their weekend. Ask three follow-up questions. |
| 3 **I can ask when I don't understand.** | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Your partner talks fast for 20 seconds about their morning. Ask two questions: Sorry, did you say ...? |
| 4 **I can keep talking when I don't know a word.** | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Describe your kitchen for 30 seconds. No words in your own language. |
| 5 **I can talk about my plans.** | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Say three plans for next month. Use three different forms: going to, hoping to, might. |
| 6 **I can agree and disagree politely.** | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Your partner says: Summer is the best season. Disagree politely, with a reason. |
| 7 **I can talk about my work or studies.** | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Explain what you'll do at work or in your studies this week, in four sentences. |
| 8 **I can make small talk.** | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | Meet your partner at the coffee machine. Keep the conversation going for one minute. |

### A NOTE FOR MY TEACHER

The two things I want to practice most in the next few weeks:

Free for classroom use. Share the link, not the file: **esllaboratory.com**

**esl.laboratory**

ACTIVITY 6

# The Next Ten Weeks

B1 to B2 · the whole group, in pairs · 15 to 20 minutes · a phone timer

1. Stand in two lines facing each other. Each round lasts two minutes: both partners answer the round's question.
2. Use all four future forms below at least once. Listen for them in your partner's answers too.
3. When the timer rings, one line moves one place to the left, and the person at the end walks to the other end. New partner, next round. Small group or one-to-one? Just change who answers first.

**ROUND 1**
**What do you want to get better at in the next ten weeks?**

**ROUND 2**
**Which habit are you going to start?**

**ROUND 3**
**What are you going to stop doing?**

**ROUND 4**
**Where do you want to use your English soon?**

**ROUND 5**
**What could get in the way? What will you do then?**

**ROUND 6**
**How will you know you've improved?**

**ROUND 7**
**What are you looking forward to in the next few weeks?**

**ROUND 8**
**How will you celebrate when the ten weeks are over?**

## Four ways to talk about the future

**going to**
a plan you've already made
*I'm going to read one article a week.*

**hoping to**
something you want, not sure
*I'm hoping to give a talk at work.*

**planning to**
a plan with steps
*I'm planning to book a trip to Dublin.*

**might**
maybe, 50/50
*I might join a book club.*

**MY NEXT TEN WEEKS**

Write one sentence with each form. Keep this page: you will need it at the end of the course.

**going to** _____

**hoping to** _____

**planning to** _____

**might** _____