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London subway passengers stressed out

http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/0912/091203-london_underground.html

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THE ARTICLE

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0912/091203-london_underground.html

A survey on London's subway train system has found over 80 per cent of passengers are stressed. The report is called 'Too close for comfort: Passengers' experiences of the London Underground'. It was made by a London transport committee, who questioned more than 700 commuters. The findings paint an ugly picture of the famous railway system. The situation is so bad that the majority of travellers had to "psyche" themselves up before getting on a Tube train. People had to prepare mentally for their rail journey. Overcrowding was the biggest cause of discomfort. Over half of those questioned said they couldn't get on the first train to arrive at a station because it was too full. Others said they hated being squashed against strangers.

The London Underground carries more than 1 billion passengers a year. At the busiest times, there are four people per square metre packed onto the train. This has an impact on travellers' behaviour. The report notes that the "overwhelming majority of passengers" think overcrowding is "a highly unpleasant and abnormal situation". The committee listed a number of strategies people use to cope with travelling on the Tube. These include adopting a "dog-eat-dog" or "survival-of-the-fittest" attitude, ignoring pregnant women who want to sit down, and switching off to what's happening around them. One passenger said: "I'm a different animal on the Tube to normal life. I'm not me. I'm a bit less interested in others."

WARM-UPS

1. SUBWAYS: Walk around the class and talk to other students about subways. Change partners often. Sit with your first partner(s) and share your findings.

2. CHAT: In pairs / groups, decide which of these topics or words from the article are most interesting and which are most boring.

surveys / passengers / stressed / ugly pictures / prepare mentally / discomfort / packed / travellers' behaviour / coping strategies / survival of the fittest / animals

Have a chat about the topics you liked. Change topics and partners frequently.

3. STRESSED: What stresses you about travelling? Complete this table. Talk about what you wrote to your partner(s). Change partners and share what you heard.

Transport	Stresses	How to cope
Subway		
Airplane		
Car		
Bus		
Train		
Boat		

4. BEHAVIOUR: Students A **strongly** believe subways are a horrible way to travel; Students B **strongly** believe subways are the best way to travel. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

5. DISCOMFORT: What do you hate about trains? Rate these and share your ratings with your partner: 10 = hate, hate, hate; 1 = no problem. Change partners and share your ratings again.

- being squashed next to someone
- not having a seat
- delays
- people listening to music
- people using mobiles
- graffiti
- couples kissing
- badly-behaved children

6. TRAIN: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'train'. Share your words with your partner(s) and talk about them. Together, put the words into different categories.

BEFORE READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0912/091203-london_underground.html

1. TRUE / FALSE:

Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- | | |
|--|-------|
| a. Around four-fifths of London subway passengers are stressed out. | T / F |
| b. There was a survey of 7,000 London Underground users. | T / F |
| c. Most people surveyed hated the ugly pictures in the subway trains. | T / F |
| d. More than 50% of people have to get on the second train to arrive. | T / F |
| e. The London Underground has over a billion passengers a year. | T / F |
| f. There is a daily average of four people per square metre on the trains. | T / F |
| g. One passenger reported seeing a dog eat another dog on the train. | T / F |
| h. Another passenger reported being interested in others on the train. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH:

Match the following synonyms from the article.

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| 1. survey | a. transports |
| 2. questioned | b. unusual |
| 3. majority | c. crushed |
| 4. discomfort | d. effect |
| 5. squashed | e. questionnaire |
| 6. carries | f. zoning out |
| 7. impact | g. bulk |
| 8. abnormal | h. irritation |
| 9. cope | i. surveyed |
| 10. switching off | j. manage |

3. PHRASE MATCH:

(Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Too close | a. themselves up |
| 2. The findings point | b. square metre |
| 3. travellers had to "psyche" | c. against strangers |
| 4. Overcrowding was the biggest cause | d. to cope |
| 5. being squashed | e. majority of passengers |
| 6. four people per | f. for comfort |
| 7. the overwhelming | g. the fittest |
| 8. strategies people use | h. of discomfort |
| 9. survival of | i. happening around them |
| 10. switching off to what's | j. an ugly picture |

London subway passengers stressed out – 3rd December, 2009

WHILE READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0912/091203-london_underground.html

GAP FILL: Put the words into the gaps in the text.

A survey on London's subway train system has _____ over 80 per cent of passengers are stressed. The report is called 'Too close for _____: Passengers' experiences of the London Underground'. It was made by a London transport committee who questioned more than 700 _____. The findings paint an _____ picture of the famous railway system. The situation is so bad that the _____ of travellers had to "psyche" themselves up before getting on a Tube train. People had to prepare _____ for their rail journey. Overcrowding was the biggest _____ of discomfort. Over half of those questioned said they couldn't get on the first train to arrive at a station because it was too full. Others said they hated being _____ against strangers.

ugly
squashed
found
commuters
mentally
comfort
majority
cause

The London Underground _____ more than 1 billion passengers a year. At the busiest times, there are four people per square metre _____ onto the train. This has an _____ on travellers' behaviour. The report notes that the "overwhelming majority of passengers" think overcrowding is "a _____ unpleasant and abnormal situation". The committee listed a number of strategies people use to _____ with travelling on the Tube. These include adopting a "dog-eat-dog" or "survival-of-the-_____" attitude, ignoring pregnant women who want to sit down, and _____ off to what's happening around them. One passenger said: "I'm a different _____ on the Tube to normal life. I'm not me. I'm a bit less interested in others."

highly
switching
packed
fittest
carries
impact
animal
cope

LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

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AFTER READING / LISTENING

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0912/091203-london_underground.html

1. WORD SEARCH: Look in your dictionary / computer to find collocates, other meanings, information, synonyms ... for the words 'vVVVV' and 'vVVVV'.

vVVVV	vVVVV
--------------	--------------

- Share your findings with your partners.
- Make questions using the words you found.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

2. ARTICLE QUESTIONS: Look back at the article and write down some questions you would like to ask the class about the text.

- Share your questions with other classmates / groups.
- Ask your partner / group your questions.

3. GAP FILL: In pairs / groups, compare your answers to this exercise. Check your answers. Talk about the words from the activity. Were they new, interesting, worth learning...?

4. VOCABULARY: Circle any words you do not understand. In groups, pool unknown words and use dictionaries to find their meanings.

5. TEST EACH OTHER: Look at the words below. With your partner, try to recall how they were used in the text:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• vVVVVV• vVVVVV• vVVVVV• vVVVVV• vVVVVV• vVVVVV• vVVVVV	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• vVVVVV• vVVVVV• vVVVVV• vVVVVV• vVVVVV• vVVVVV• vVVVVV
--	--

STUDENT SUBWAYS SURVEY

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0912/091203-london_underground.html

Write five GOOD questions about subways in the table. Do this in pairs. Each student must write the questions on his / her own paper. When you have finished, interview other students. Write down their answers.

	STUDENT 1 _____	STUDENT 2 _____	STUDENT 3 _____
Q.1.			
Q.2.			
Q.3.			
Q.4.			
Q.5.			

- Now return to your original partner and share and talk about what you found out. Change partners often.
- Make mini-presentations to other groups on your findings.

SUBWAYS DISCUSSION

STUDENT A's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student B)

- a) What did you think when you read the headline?
- b) What springs to mind when you hear the word 'vvvvvvvvvv'?
- c) vvvvvvvvvv?
- d) vvvvvvvvvv?
- e) vvvvvvvvvv?
- f) vvvvvvvvvv?
- g) vvvvvvvvvv?
- h) vvvvvvvvvv?
- i) vvvvvvvvvv?
- j) vvvvvvvvvv?

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SUBWAYS DISCUSSION

STUDENT B's QUESTIONS (Do not show these to student A)

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) vvvvvvvvvv?
- c) vvvvvvvvvv?
- d) vvvvvvvvvv?
- e) vvvvvvvvvv?
- f) vvvvvvvvvv?
- g) vvvvvvvvvv?
- h) vvvvvvvvvv?
- i) vvvvvvvvvv?
- j) What questions would you like to ask vvvvvvvvvv?

LANGUAGE – MULTIPLE CHOICE

From http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0912/091203-london_underground.html

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Put the correct words from the table below in the above article.

- | | | | | |
|-----|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1. | (a) vvvvv | (b) vvvvv | (c) vvvvv | (d) vvvvv |
| 2. | (a) vvvvv | (b) vvvvv | (c) vvvvv | (d) vvvvv |
| 3. | (a) vvvvv | (b) vvvvv | (c) vvvvv | (d) vvvvv |
| 4. | (a) vvvvv | (b) vvvvv | (c) vvvvv | (d) vvvvv |
| 5. | (a) vvvvv | (b) vvvvv | (c) vvvvv | (d) vvvvv |
| 6. | (a) vvvvv | (b) vvvvv | (c) vvvvv | (d) vvvvv |
| 7. | (a) vvvvv | (b) vvvvv | (c) vvvvv | (d) vvvvv |
| 8. | (a) vvvvv | (b) vvvvv | (c) vvvvv | (d) vvvvv |
| 9. | (a) vvvvv | (b) vvvvv | (c) vvvvv | (d) vvvvv |
| 10. | (a) vvvvv | (b) vvvvv | (c) vvvvv | (d) vvvvv |
| 11. | (a) vvvvv | (b) vvvvv | (c) vvvvv | (d) vvvvv |
| 12. | (a) vvvvv | (b) vvvvv | (c) vvvvv | (d) vvvvv |

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HOMEWORK

1. VOCABULARY EXTENSION: Choose several of the words from the text. Use a dictionary or Google's search field (or another search engine) to build up more associations / collocations of each word.

2. INTERNET: Search the Internet and find out more about subways. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

3. SUBWAYS: Make a poster about subways. Show your work to your classmates in the next lesson. Did you all have similar things?

4. SEALING: Write a magazine article about ----- . Include imaginary interviews with a seal and a hunter.

Read what you wrote to your classmates in the next lesson. Write down any new words and expressions you hear from your partner(s).

5. LETTER: Write a letter to vvvvv. Ask him/her three questions about subways. Give him/her three vvvvv. Read your letter to your partner(s) in your next lesson. Your partner(s) will answer your questions.

ANSWERS

TRUE / FALSE:

a. T b. F c. F d. T e. T f. F g. F h. F

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|-------------------|------------------|
| 1. survey | a. questionnaire |
| 2. questioned | b. surveyed |
| 3. majority | c. bulk |
| 4. discomfort | d. irritation |
| 5. squashed | e. crushed |
| 6. carries | f. transports |
| 7. impact | g. effect |
| 8. abnormal | h. unusual |
| 9. cope | i. manage |
| 10. switching off | j. zoning out |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Too close | a. for comfort |
| 2. The findings paint | b. an ugly picture |
| 3. travellers had to "psyche" | c. themselves up |
| 4. Overcrowding was the biggest cause | d. of discomfort |
| 5. being squashed | e. against strangers |
| 6. four people per | f. square metre |
| 7. the overwhelming | g. majority of passengers |
| 8. strategies people use | h. to cope |
| 9. survival of | i. the fittest |
| 10. switching off to what's | j. happening around them |

GAP FILL:

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A survey on London's subway train system has **found** over 80 per cent of passengers are stressed. The report is called 'Too close for **comfort**: Passengers' experiences of the London Underground'. It was made by a London transport committee who questioned more than 700 **commuters**. The findings paint an **ugly** picture of the famous railway system. The situation is so bad that the **majority** of travellers had to "psyche" themselves up before getting on a Tube train. People had to prepare **mentally** for their rail journey. Overcrowding was the biggest **cause** of discomfort. Over half of those questioned said they couldn't get on the first train to arrive at a station because it was too full. Others said they hated being **squashed** against strangers.

The London Underground **carries** more than 1 billion passengers a year. At the busiest times, there are four people per square metre **packed** onto the train. This has an **impact** on travellers' behaviour. The report notes that the "overwhelming majority of passengers" think overcrowding is "a **highly** unpleasant and abnormal situation". The committee listed a number of strategies people use to **cope** with travelling on the Tube. These include adopting a "dog-eat-dog" or "survival-of-the-**fittest**" attitude, ignoring pregnant women who want to sit down, and **switching** off to what's happening around them. One passenger said: "I'm a different **animal** on the Tube to normal life. I'm not me. I'm a bit less interested in others."

LANGUAGE WORK

1 - d 2 - b 3 - a 4 - c 5 - c 6 - b 7 - a 8 - d 9 - b 10 - d 11 - c 12 - a