

## EPISODE 33

### LEVEL B2

#### READING COMPREHENSION



#### A BIT OF HISTORY

I didn't like history lessons at primary school. Maybe it was because I was still too young to get interested in all those kings and queens that **reigned** (= were in power) ages ago or famous **events** which took place such a long time ago I couldn't even imagine. Or maybe, as a girl, I didn't find great pleasure in learning about soldiers and armies who **fought** in wars and all the dates of the **battles** they **waged** (= took part in, conducted). As a diligent pupil, however, I was able to learn by heart and recite the names of the kings as well as names of **heirs to the throne** (= their successors). I even memorized the battles and I knew who won, who was **defeated** (= who lost) and who **surrendered** (= gave up) without fighting.



Things changed when I went to high school, though. There I met a teacher who was a **historian** (= someone who studies history) himself, keen on history, who managed to infect us with his love of the subject. Thanks to him, I not only knew about the significant **historical** (= connected with history, the past) events but also saw people and real life behind all this. He was the one who started taking us to various places **of historic interest** (= old and interesting/impressive). And by that time, we were all in love with history.

#### More contexts for the new words:

- She **made history** by becoming the first woman prime minister in this country.  
(= to do something that many people will remember or learn about because it is very important)
- **History will show** whether the reforms were introduced at the right time.  
(= used for talking about the way someone or something will be remembered in the future)



### EXERCISE 1

Decide if the sentences below are true or false. Correct the false ones.

1. Heirs to the throne are usually princes.
2. Places of historic interest are fascinating to historians.
3. The Battle of Grunwald is a famous historic event.
4. When someone reigns, they feel bad because of the weather.
5. When you wage a battle, you always win it.
6. When an army surrenders, it is automatically defeated.



### EXERCISE 2

Add the missing vowels, then answer the questions.

1. What historic VNTS ..... do you remember best from your history lessons?
2. Which places of historic NTRST ..... are your favourites?
3. Which of the politicians presently in power do you think will MK ..... history?

## ENGLISH IN USE



Today I'd like you to pay attention to the structure used when talking about ability, namely BE ABLE TO.

*I was able to learn by heart and recite the names of the kings in power (...)*

BE ABLE TO is used when referring to a general ability (just like CAN):

*I was able to swim at the age of four. OR I could swim at the age of four.*

*He is able to sing just like Madonna. OR He can sing just like Madonna.*

but also when talking about one particular situation when someone did something although it was difficult (in this meaning, you do not use CAN):

*We were able to get there on time despite the heavy traffic.*

BE ABLE TO can be used in any tense you wish, even in the infinitive and gerund forms, which is not the case with CAN. CAN can only be used in the present form (= can) and in the past form (= could). Look then how this useful and flexible semi-modal expression BE ABLE TO can be applied in sentences in different tenses:


*Would you like to be able to dance tango?*

Travelling **without being able to** speak the language might be dangerous.  
If you don't hurry, we **won't be able to** catch the train.  
She **hasn't been able to** find a job yet.

**IDIOM CLOSE-UP** 

A/ Hey, what happened between you and Kate?  
B/ Finally we realized that we could never get along, and **THE REST IS HISTORY**.

When you say **the rest is history**, it means that everyone knows the rest of the story that you are referring to.

**PHRASAL VERBS CLOSE-UP** 

1. When you **STAND OUT** from a group of others, you are much better than them. The related adjective is 'outstanding.'

Queen Elizabeth II **stands out** from all the other monarchs due to her exceptionally long reign.  
Their old orange car **stood out** from all the rest.

2. When you **SHOW OFF**, you behave in a way that is intended to attract people's attention and make them admire you. The related noun for such a person is 'a show-off.'

Many contemporary heirs to the throne can't resist the temptation to **show off** their power.  
The kids start **showing off** the minute anyone comes into the house.



**EXERCISE 3**

Complete each gap with one word.

1. Then they arrested all the officers of the corporation, and the rest .....  
history.
2. Her bright clothes always make her stand ..... in a crowd.
3. He's such a playboy – he's always showing ..... with women around.

## NEWS



### THE BATTLE OF GRUNWALD (*Medieval Times Special Edition*)

And here's the latest news from the ongoing Polish–Lithuanian–**Teutonic** War – a battle which took place just a few days ago near the town of Grunwald. You will be delighted to know that the alliance of the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand **Duchy** of Lithuania, led **respectively** by King Jogaila (Władysław Jagiełło) and Grand Duke Vytautas (Witold), decisively defeated the Teutonic **Knights**, led by Grand Master Ulrich von Jungingen. Most of the Teutonic Knights' leadership were killed or became **POWs**. The victory is largely attributed to the tactics of the Polish and Lithuanian leaders, who made the Teutonic Knights wait in the sun for the whole day, thus making them totally exhausted. We await forthcoming events in this great war, and hope for Polish victory. Long live the King!

#### GLOSSARY

- **Teutonic** – relating to the Teutons (a group of people who lived in northern Europe a long time ago)
- **Duchy** – an area of land belonging to a duke or duchess
- **respectively** – in the order in which they are mentioned
- **a knight** – in the past, a European soldier from a high social class who wore a suit of armour (a metal suit) and rode a horse
- **a POW** – a prisoner of war - someone, usually a soldier, who is held as a prisoner by the enemy during a war

## KEY TO EXERCISES

#### Ex.1

1. T
2. T
3. T
4. F – they are king or queen
5. F – you might win or lose
6. T

#### Ex.2

1. events
2. interest
3. make

#### Ex.3

1. is
2. out
3. off