

EPISODE 52

LEVEL B2

READING COMPREHENSION



HOBBIES

I bet you've never heard of a person who's been into so many things as my cousin, Dave. His interests **range from** trekking in the mountains **to** pottery and even numerology. But, to start at the very beginning...

I remember that already as a kid, he was quite **versatile** (= having different abilities, interests). At 14 he belonged to three **interest clubs**, took up volleyball and made up his mind to become a scout. Now that I think about it, I just wonder how he managed to **reconcile** (= make exist together) studying and all those extra classes. Yet, the truth is that Dave's genuine, as it was, liking for whatever he was involved in, didn't use to be long-lasting. So, being 16 he **lost interest in** (= stopped being interested in) volleyball and **didn't relish the thought of** (= didn't like the idea of) camping with the scouts any more. It was around that time that he fell in love with Christina, **a keen admirer of** theatre. He **took to** (= started liking) theatre as quickly as to Christina. He somehow **had a strong preference for** (= liked very much) similar kinds of performances as her. They just wouldn't **give any premiere a miss**. But... what some people call love is a passing thing. Dave fell out of love with Christie a year later and so he started **pursuing new interests**. What was it this time, you may ask?



You wouldn't guess - he decided to take a deep breath and get involved in some **outdoor activities**, the first of which was the already mentioned mountain trekking. And I'll leave it for you to work out the way that took him from the mountains to predicting the future by means of numbers...

More contexts for the new words:

- He's left our company and decided to **pursue a career** in banking.
(= follow a course of activity)
- It's just a matter of **personal preference** which one you choose.
(= choice; a feeling of liking something more than something else)



EXERCISE 1

Match the expression halves.

- | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1) to range | a. thought of sth |
| 2) an interest | b. from sth to sth |
| 3) to lose | c. a miss |
| 4) to relish the | d. admirer of sth |
| 5) a keen | e. interest in sth |
| 6) to have a strong | f. preference for sth |
| 7) to pursue | g. new interests |
| 8) to give sth | h. club |



EXERCISE 2

Complete the questions with the missing prepositions. Then answer the questions.

1. When did you last lose interest an activity? Why did it happen?
2. What kind of films do you have a strong preference ? Why did you take them in the first place?
3. Which celebrity are you a keen admirer ? Why?

ENGLISH IN USE



We already know that 'would' can be used in second conditional sentences when talking about hypothetical situations in the present/future, but in today's lesson it wasn't used with such a meaning:

*'They just **wouldn't** give any premiere a miss.'*

When you know the context for this sentence, you also know that we are talking about someone's past habits here. The structure in bold is fairly similar to 'be used to' for past habits. So, you could say:

*'We **used to meet** every day and talk for hours.'* as well as
*'We **would meet** every day and talk for hours.'*

The two structures (USED TO and WOULD) are on the whole interchangeable, yet the key thing is that WOULD cannot be used with verbs that denote states (e.g. be, have, like, live etc.). Which is why it's perfectly OK to say

'She **didn't use to live** in the city as a child.'

But the same sentence with WOULD is already wrong.

IDIOM CLOSE-UP 

A/ Is there any topic I should avoid while talking with Sheena?
B/ Taxes. Don't mention them – they're her **HOBBY HORSE**.

A **hobby horse** is a subject that you have strong opinions about and often talk about, especially in a way that annoys other people. You can 'get on your hobby horse.'

PHRASAL VERBS CLOSE-UP 

1. When you **BUY INTO** something, you start doing something that a lot of others are doing, or you believe something that they believe.

Teenagers often **buy into** dangerous hobbies.
I don't really **buy into** all that homeopathic medicine stuff.

2. When you **SEX** something **UP**, you to make it seem more exciting or interesting.

His greatest hobby is physics, and he can **sex it up** in a way that you start liking it yourself!
Sports promoters are trying to **sex up** cricket for kids.



EXERCISE 3

Transform the sentences so that they mean the same. Use the words in brackets.

1. You don't believe all this nonsense, do you? [BUY]

.....

2. An advertising agency is trying to improve the city's image. [SEX]

.....

3. He can talk for hours about politics. [HORSE]

.....

NEWS 

STRANGE HOBBIES

Do you think your hobbies are original? After reading this text, you will no longer think so! For instance, have you ever tried **duct tape** art? This is art which uses – yes, you guessed it – duct tape as its chief material. You can make **sculptures**, paintings, shoes, clothes and jewellery out of it. Or, have you heard of **handcuff** collecting? The largest collection has a few thousand handcuffs, and is still growing! If you want something more extreme, try **javelin** catching – a sport where you try to catch a javelin thrown by another person. But be careful, the sport is quite deadly, and your first time might be your last! Last but not least, if you want to get close to nature, try noodling – fishing with your hands. Just don't try to catch a shark!

GLOSSARY

- **duct tape** – strong and very sticky cloth that is often used for covering cracks or holes in pipes
- **a sculpture** – a work of art made of stone, metal or wood
- **handcuffs** – metal rings that a police officer puts on a prisoner's hands
- **a javelin** – a long sharp stick that is thrown in a sports competition

KEY TO EXERCISES

Ex.1

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

Ex.2

1. in
2. for, to
3. of

Ex.3

1. You don't buy into all this nonsense, do you?
2. An advertising agency is trying to sex up the city's image.
3. Politics is his hobby horse.