

EPISODE 81
LEVEL A1.2/A2.1

READING COMPREHENSION



HISTORY: WHEN DID IT HAPPEN?

First of all, we can say that something happened **approximately** (= more or less) 100 years ago and it means we are not sure when it happened. We can also say that something happened **around** 1896 (= more or less in 1896) when we don't know what the right year is. If we say that something happened **in those days**, we say it happened sometime in the past. Then, if something has happened **over the last decade** (= 10 years), we think about the period of time after 2002. If we say "**not long ago**" (= quite recently), we talk about a situation which is quite new. If we talk about **our own times** (= now), we think about the time when we live. Finally, we can say that something happened **a couple of weeks ago** (= two weeks ago).



More contexts for the new words:

- **At one time**, women didn't work professionally.
(= sometime in the past women didn't work professionally)
- It happened **about** two months ago.
(= it happened more or less two months ago)



EXERCISE 1

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

1. 'Approximately' and 'around' are synonyms.
2. 'In those days' can refer to the future.
3. 'A couple of weeks ago' can mean four or five weeks ago.
4. If something happened not long ago, it happened quite recently.
5. There have been no world wars over the last decade.
6. In our own times, Poland is a democratic country.



EXERCISE 2

Fill in the gaps with the missing prepositions. Then answer the questions.

1. What are the most important events that have happened in the world the last decade?
2. What were you doing a couple weeks ago?
3. Think about your childhood. What was life like those days?

ENGLISH IN USE



The expression for today is "**a couple of**".

We can say that something happened two weeks ago or that "*something happened a couple of weeks ago.*"

We use this expression with countable nouns.

Look at some more examples with "**a couple of**":

- *A couple of hours*
- *Over the past couple of weeks*
- *A couple of people*

IDIOM CLOSE-UP



A/ Joanna broke up with her boyfriend again. That's the third time this year.
B/ Well, you know what they say. **HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF.**

When you say '**history repeats itself,**' you say that things which happened in the past are likely to happen again.

PHRASAL VERBS CLOSE-UP



1. When you **BACK** someone **UP**, you support them.

Napoleon was **backed up** by his military advisors.
If I ask for more money will you **back me up**?

2. When you BACK OFF, you move backwards in order to get away from something.

*The enemy army **backed off** when they realized their opponents were much stronger.
Everyone **back off** and let the doctor through!*



EXERCISE 3

Match the sentence halves.

- | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------|
| 1. My wife backed me up over | | a. backed off. |
| 2. I saw the knife and | b. my decision to quit my job. | |
| 3. History repeats | c. itself. | |

NEWS



WAR IN SUDAN

Another **civil war** has started in Sudan this week. This is the third **outbreak** of violence this year in this region of the world. News commentators are **astonished** by how primitive the **warfare** seems to be here – in a country **fraught with** poverty, the fighting sides cannot really afford modern military equipment. Apart from the obvious war **casualties**, the negative effects of this war will include greater hunger, as the Red Cross will have problems delivering food to the needy.

GLOSSARY

- **civil war** – an internal war within a country
- **outbreak** – beginning of sth unpleasant
- **astonished** – very surprised
- **warfare** – the activity of fighting a war
- **fraught with** – full of
- **casualties** – people killed or injured

KEY TO EXERCISES

Ex.1

1. True
2. False – it can refer only to the past.
3. False – it usually means two weeks ago.
4. True
5. True
6. True

Ex.2

1. over
2. of
3. in

Ex.3

1. b
2. a
3. c