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"1,000 IDEAS & ACTIVITIES FOR LANGUAGE TEACHERS"

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Autism in U.S. children on the rise

<http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/0912/091221-autism.html>

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THE ARTICLE

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0912/091221-autism.html>

Autism among children in the USA is rising. This is according to a new report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It estimates that 1 in 110 children in the United States suffers from the developmental disorder. It also says boys are four times more likely to suffer from autism than girls. Researchers compared the statistics of a 2002 report into autism with figures for 2006. Lead author of the report Dr Catherine Rice gave one possible reason for the increase. She said: "Some of the increases are due to better detection, particularly among children who may not have come to our attention in the past." She had no simple explanation for the rise and added that "a true increase in risk cannot be ruled out".

Autism has been the cause of great concern for many years now. The disease can hold back learning and have a negative impact on a child's social interaction. Scientists understand very little about it compared with other medical conditions. It is extremely difficult to diagnose because it means a careful analysis of a child's behaviour. Different tests on the same child can produce varying results. Autism specialist Geraldine Dawson said more money was needed to better understand autism. She explained: "The point is that we need to better explore both the role of genetics and environment, and how they may interact with each other." She was worried that no one had answers for the large increase in autism.

WARM-UPS

1. AUTISM: Walk around the class and talk to other students about autism. 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.

children / reports / estimates / researchers / statistics / reasons / explanations / risks / causes for concern / learning / negative impact / a child's behaviour / genetics

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

3. SIGNS: Look at these signs of autism and complete this table with your partner(s). Change partners and share what you heard.

	How I would try to help this situation
Difficulty in making friends	
Inability to speak to others	
Being unable to play	
Repetitive use of language	
Obsessed with an object	
Repeating same routines	

4. CURE: Students A **strongly** believe doctors will find a way to end autism one day; Students B **strongly** believe the opposite. Change partners again and talk about your conversations.

5. HOW TO HELP: How can we help children with autism? Rate these and share your ratings with your partner: 10 = this would be perfect; 1 = this wouldn't work. Change partners and share your ratings again.

- more money for research
- an autism awareness month
- lessons about autism in schools
- drugs
- TV shows about famous autistic people
- pen pal programmes with autistic kids
- special schools for kids with autism
- more websites about autism

6. LEARNING: Spend one minute writing down all of the different words you associate with the word 'learning'. 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/0912/091221-autism.html>

1. TRUE / FALSE: Read the headline. Guess if a-h below are true (T) or false (F).

- | | |
|--|-------|
| a. The rate of autism among kids in the US is increasing. | T / F |
| b. A report said there were 110 new cases of autism this year. | T / F |
| c. There is a greater chance for girls to be autistic than boys. | T / F |
| d. A researcher said a simple fact explained the increase in autism. | T / F |
| e. Autism can have a negative impact on a child's learning. | T / F |
| f. There are several tests that make autism very easy to diagnose. | T / F |
| g. An autism expert said we needed to better understand genetics. | T / F |
| h. The expert was worried there was no explanation for the rise in autism. | T / F |

2. SYNONYM MATCH: Match the following synonyms from the article.

- | | |
|--------------|----------------|
| 1. estimates | a. statistics |
| 2. likely | b. relate |
| 3. figures | c. ignored |
| 4. detection | d. worry |
| 5. ruled out | e. differing |
| 6. concern | f. guesses |
| 7. negative | g. investigate |
| 8. varying | h. probable |
| 9. explore | i. harmful |
| 10. interact | j. discovery |

3. PHRASE MATCH: (Sometimes more than one choice is possible.)

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Autism among | a. attention |
| 2. 1 | b. diagnose |
| 3. boys are four times more | c. results |
| 4. come to our | d. in 110 children |
| 5. a true increase in risk cannot be | e. learning |
| 6. the cause of great | f. ruled out |
| 7. hold back | g. children in the USA |
| 8. extremely difficult to | h. with each other |
| 9. produce varying | i. likely to suffer |
| 10. how they may interact | j. concern |

WHILE READING / LISTENING

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0912/091221-autism.html>

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

Autism _____ children in the USA is rising. This is according to a new report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It _____ that 1 in 110 children in the United States suffers from the developmental disorder. It also says boys are four times more _____ to suffer from autism than girls. Researchers compared the statistics of a 2002 report into autism with _____ for 2006. Lead author of the report Dr Catherine Rice gave one _____ reason for the increase. She said: "Some of the increases are _____ to better detection, particularly among children who may not have come to our _____ in the past." She had no simple explanation for the rise and added that "a true increase in risk cannot be _____ out".

attention
estimates
possible
ruled
among
due
likely
figures

Autism has been the _____ of great concern for many years now. The disease can hold back learning and have a negative _____ on a child's social interaction. Scientists understand very little about it compared with _____ medical conditions. It is extremely difficult to diagnose because it means a careful _____ of a child's behaviour. Different tests on the same child can _____ varying results. Autism specialist Geraldine Dawson said more money was needed to better understand autism. She explained: "The point is that we need to better _____ both the role of genetics and environment, and how they may _____ with each other." She was worried that no one had answers for the _____ increase in autism.

explore
analysis
cause
large
impact
produce
interact
other

LISTENING – Listen and fill in the gaps

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0912/091221-autism.html>

Autism among children in the USA is rising. This _____ new report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It estimates _____ in the United States suffers from the developmental disorder. It also says boys are four times more _____ autism than girls. Researchers compared _____ 2002 report into autism with figures for 2006. Lead author of the report Dr Catherine Rice gave one possible reason for the increase. She said: "Some of the increases _____ detection, particularly among children who may not have come to our attention in the past." She had no simple explanation for the rise and added that "a true _____ cannot be ruled out".

Autism has been the cause _____ for many years now. The disease can hold back learning and have _____ on a child's social interaction. Scientists understand very little about it compared with other medical conditions. It is extremely difficult to diagnose because it means _____ a child's behaviour. Different tests on the same child can _____. Autism specialist Geraldine Dawson said more money was needed to better understand autism. She explained: "The point is that we need to better explore _____ genetics and environment, and how they may interact with each other." She was worried that no one _____ the large increase in autism.

AFTER READING / LISTENING

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0912/091221-autism.html>

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

disease	control
----------------	----------------

- 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">• 110• four• 2002• possible• attention• ruled	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• great• impact• medical• careful• explore• answers
--	--

STUDENT AUTISM SURVEY

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0912/091221-autism.html>

Write five GOOD questions about autism 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.

AUTISM 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 'autism'?
- c) What do you know about autism?
- d) How great a difficulty do you think autism is?
- e) How do you think governments can do more to educate people about things like autism?
- f) Why do you think boys are four times more likely to be autistic than girls?
- g) Why do you think scientists cannot find answers to why autism is rising?
- h) Would you like to be a researcher and try to find a cure for autism?
- i) Would you be good at helping children with learning and developmental problems?
- j) Did you have any problems when you were a child?

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AUTISM DISCUSSION

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

- a) Did you like reading this article?
- b) What things did you learn from this article?
- c) What has been a cause of great concern for you?
- d) Did anything hold back your learning when you were a child?
- e) Do you think scientists will find a cure for autism one day?
- f) How do you think parents of autistic children can encourage social interaction?
- g) How rewarding or difficult do you think it is to work with autistic kids?
- h) Why don't governments spend more money on autism research?
- i) What would you like to know about autism?
- j) What questions would you like to ask Geraldine Dawson?

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LANGUAGE – MULTIPLE CHOICE

From <http://www.BreakingNewsEnglish.com/0912/091221-autism.html>

Autism (1) _____ children in the USA is rising. This is according to a new report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It (2) _____ that 1 in 110 children in the United States suffers from the developmental disorder. It also says boys are four times more (3) _____ to suffer from autism than girls. Researchers compared the statistics of a 2002 report into autism with (4) _____ for 2006. Lead author of the report Dr Catherine Rice gave one possible reason for the increase. She said: "Some of the increases are due to better (5) _____, particularly among children who may not have come to our attention in the past." She had no simple explanation for the rise and added that "a true increase in risk cannot be (6) _____ out".

Autism has been the (7) _____ of great concern for many years now. The disease can hold back learning and have a negative impact (8) _____ a child's social interaction. Scientists understand very little about it compared with other medical conditions. It is (9) _____ difficult to diagnose because it means a careful analysis of a child's behaviour. Different tests on the same child can produce varying results. Autism specialist Geraldine Dawson said more money was needed to (10) _____ understand autism. She explained: "The point is that we need to better explore both the (11) _____ of genetics and environment, and how they may interact (12) _____ each other." She was worried that no one had answers for the large increase in autism.

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

- | | | | | |
|-----|----------------|--------------|----------------|----------------|
| 1. | (a) among | (b) between | (c) surrounded | (d) along with |
| 2. | (a) estimation | (b) estimate | (c) estimates | (d) estimating |
| 3. | (a) likable | (b) liked | (c) liking | (d) likely |
| 4. | (a) figured | (b) figures | (c) figuring | (d) figure |
| 5. | (a) detect | (b) detects | (c) detector | (d) detection |
| 6. | (a) rules | (b) ruler | (c) ruled | (d) ruling |
| 7. | (a) because | (b) cause | (c) case | (d) caused |
| 8. | (a) on | (b) in | (c) at | (d) to |
| 9. | (a) extremely | (b) extremes | (c) extremity | (d) extreme |
| 10. | (a) good | (b) goodly | (c) better | (d) well |
| 11. | (a) roll | (b) rule | (c) real | (d) role |
| 12. | (a) at | (b) with | (c) on | (d) to |

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 autism. Share what you discover with your partner(s) in the next lesson.

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

4. AWARENESS: Write a magazine article about autism. Include imaginary interviews with experts who want to make more people aware of it.

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 an expert on autism. Ask him/her three questions about the condition. Give him/her three suggestions on how to increase the amount of money spent on autism research. 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. F e. T f. F g. T h. T

SYNONYM MATCH:

- | | |
|--------------|----------------|
| 1. estimates | a. guesses |
| 2. likely | b. probable |
| 3. figures | c. statistics |
| 4. detection | d. discovery |
| 5. ruled out | e. ignored |
| 6. concern | f. worry |
| 7. negative | g. harmful |
| 8. varying | h. differing |
| 9. explore | i. investigate |
| 10. interact | j. relate |

PHRASE MATCH:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1. Autism among | a. children in the USA |
| 2. 1 | b. in 110 children |
| 3. boys are four times more | c. likely to suffer |
| 4. come to our | d. attention |
| 5. a true increase in risk cannot be | e. ruled out |
| 6. the cause of great | f. concern |
| 7. hold back | g. learning |
| 8. extremely difficult to | h. diagnose |
| 9. produce varying | i. results |
| 10. how they may interact | j. with each other |

GAP FILL:

Autism in U.S. children on the rise

Autism **among** children in the USA is rising. This is according to a new report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It **estimates** that 1 in 110 children in the United States suffers from the developmental disorder. It also says boys are four times more **likely** to suffer from autism than girls. Researchers compared the statistics of a 2002 report into autism with **figures** for 2006. Lead author of the report Dr Catherine Rice gave one **possible** reason for the increase. She said: "Some of the increases are **due** to better detection, particularly among children who may not have come to our **attention** in the past." She had no simple explanation for the rise and added that "a true increase in risk cannot be **ruled** out".

Autism has been the **cause** of great concern for many years now. The disease can hold back learning and have a negative **impact** on a child's social interaction. Scientists understand very little about it compared with **other** medical conditions. It is extremely difficult to diagnose because it means a careful **analysis** of a child's behaviour. Different tests on the same child can **produce** varying results. Autism specialist Geraldine Dawson said more money was needed to better understand autism. She explained: "The point is that we need to better **explore** both the role of genetics and environment, and how they may **interact** with each other." She was worried that no one had answers for the **large** increase in autism.

LANGUAGE WORK

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