

The Happiest Country in the World, C1

Lesson plan and notes:

This is a full lesson including the speaking, reading and vocabulary activities for students of A2, B2 and C1. The order of activities is meant to smoothly introduce students to new vocabulary and practice both speaking and reading. However, when you go through the pages, T may decide to use individual elements that suit their needs.

C1

Intro - brainstorming the topic and a brief discussion

Slide 3 and 4 - T starts by initiating a discussion based on the intro questions that are meant to encourage ss to talk about their personal opinions and experiences. There is an individual question which allows ss to think independently or in groups, make notes and present their opinion to the teacher.

Vocabulary introduction and practice

Slide 5 - T introduces vocabulary through text practice. Ss are given their article with marked words and need to find and match the words that fit the definitions. They can check if they are correct.

Reading practice

Slide 6 - The exercise gives ss a set of comprehensions questions which ss need to find in the article and answer. The slide contains a notepad for ss to make notes. Discuss.

Vocabulary in context

Slide 7 and 8 - This exercise contains a set of sentences that use the new words in context. The ss are supposed to find the correct words to fit the context. Altogether there are 20 sentences to practice.

Discussion

Slide 9 - It contains discussion questions for further speaking practice. They encourage ss to express their opinions and expand on the topic of happiness.

Vocabulary review

Slide 10 - contains more vocabulary review in different formats. There's a quizlet set that T can use in many different ways to review new words. In addition, there are 2 more sets with the context sentences also from quizlet.

The navigation through the set is self-explanatory. It's quite easy to follow the icons and different instructions. The buttons may look different but their function is the same.



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restart the set



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The Happiest Country in the World, C1 - WS

1. **Introduction.** Let's talk. What's your opinion?

1. Which countries do you think are the happiest in the world? Why?
2. What makes a person or a country "happy" in your opinion?
3. What do you think the government can do to enhance national well-being?
4. Do you think happiness should be used as a measure of a country's success, just like GDP or economic growth? Why or why not?
5. How important is nature and outdoor time in your daily life? Do you think it affects your happiness or mental health?

"Finland has been named the happiest country again. Why do you think that is?" - write your ideas

2. Vocabulary in context: Look at the definitions and read the article. What are the words? Find them in the context.

The Happiest Country in the World, C1

Why Is Finland the Happiest Country in the World?

March 25, 2025, Global Affairs

The World Happiness Report 2024 provides an **in-depth** analysis of global happiness trends, highlighting Finland's consistent position as the happiest country for the seventh **consecutive** year. This article explores the factors contributing to Finland's top ranking, examines **insights** from current reports, and discusses lessons that other nations might draw from Finland's example.

Finland's Consistent Happiness Leadership

Finland has maintained its status as the world's happiest nation, a position it has held since 2018. The 2024 report **underscores** several key factors contributing to this sustained happiness:

1. **Robust** Social Support Systems: Finnish society places a strong emphasis on social **welfare**, **ensuring** that citizens have access to **comprehensive** healthcare, education, and unemployment benefits. This safety net **fosters** a sense of security and well-being among the population.
2. High Levels of Trust: Trust in public institutions and among citizens is **notably** high in Finland. This trust **facilitates** effective governance and a **cohesive** society, where individuals feel confident in their interactions and the functioning of their communities.

3. Work-Life Balance: Finns prioritize a balanced lifestyle, valuing leisure and family time alongside professional commitments. This balance **contributes** to overall life satisfaction and reduces stress levels.

4. Connection with Nature: The Finnish lifestyle includes a deep connection with nature, with activities like hiking, skiing, and **foraging** being common. This relationship with the natural environment has been linked to improved mental health and happiness.

Insights from the 2024 World Happiness Report

The 2024 report offers a comprehensive analysis of happiness across different age groups and generations. Notable findings include:

- Generational Happiness Trends: Individuals born before 1965 generally report higher happiness levels than those born since 1980. Among Millennials, life satisfaction tends to decrease with age, whereas Baby Boomers experience increased life satisfaction as they grow older.
- Youth Well-being Decline: In regions such as North America, Western Europe, the Middle East, and South Asia, the well-being of individuals aged 15 to 24 has declined since 2019. This trend is particularly concerning in North America, where the traditional pattern of younger individuals reporting higher life satisfaction than older adults has **reversed**.

- Global Acts of Kindness: The "benevolence bump," a surge in acts of kindness observed during the COVID-19 pandemic, has persisted. Actions such as donating and volunteering remain over 10% higher than pre-pandemic levels, indicating a sustained increase in prosocial behavior.

Lessons from Finland's Happiness

Finland's consistent top ranking offers valuable insights for other nations seeking to enhance the well-being of their citizens:

1. Embrace Outdoor Activities: Despite long, dark winters, Finns maximize their exposure to natural light during extended summer days. Engaging in outdoor activities and enjoying sunlight can boost serotonin levels and improve mood.
2. Foster Community Engagement: Finnish culture encourages communal activities, such as shared meals and public events, which strengthen social bonds and support networks.
3. Prioritize Mental Health: There is a national focus on mental health awareness and support, ensuring that individuals have access to necessary resources and reducing the stigma associated with seeking help.
4. Cultivate Resilience (Sisu): The Finnish concept of "sisu" embodies resilience and perseverance. Encouraging individuals to develop inner strength and determination can help them navigate challenges more effectively.

Conclusion

Finland's enduring position as the happiest country in the world underscores the importance of social support, trust, work-life balance, and a strong connection with nature in fostering national well-being. The 2024 World Happiness Report provides valuable insights into generational happiness trends and highlights areas for improvement, particularly concerning the declining well-being of younger populations in certain regions. By examining and adopting elements of Finland's approach, other nations can work towards enhancing the happiness and quality of life of their citizens.

The Happiest Country in the World, C1 - WS

- | | |
|-------|---|
| _____ | 1. Detailed and thorough |
| _____ | 2. Following one after another without interruption |
| _____ | 3. To help cause or bring about |
| _____ | 4. Understanding of a complex situation |
| _____ | 5. To highlight or stress something as important |
| _____ | 6. Strong and effective |
| _____ | 7. System supporting people's health, income, etc. |
| _____ | 8. Complete and including everything |
| _____ | 9. To make sure something happens |
| _____ | 10. To encourage growth or development |
| _____ | 11. Especially; particularly |
| _____ | 12. To make something easier |
| _____ | 13. United and working well together |
| _____ | 14. Searching for wild food outdoors |
| _____ | 15. To go in the opposite direction |
| _____ | 16. Kindness and willingness to help others |
| _____ | 17. Sudden large increase |
| _____ | 18. To continue firmly or stubbornly |
| _____ | 19. To improve the quality or value of something |
| _____ | 20. Continued effort to achieve something |

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4. Comprehension Questions

Comprehension Questions:

1. What are the main factors contributing to Finland's happiness, according to the report?
2. How does Finland's social welfare system affect citizens' well-being?
3. Why is trust in institutions important in Finland?
4. What generational trend did the report identify about Millennials and Baby Boomers?
5. What does the term "benevolence bump" refer to?
6. How does the Finnish connection with nature contribute to happiness?
7. What can other countries learn from Finland according to the article?
8. Why is mental health a national focus in Finland?
9. What is "sisu," and why is it important?
10. What are the key insights other nations can apply from Finland's example?

The Happiest Country in the World, C1 - WS

5. Vocabulary practice - Context sentences. Fill the gaps with the correct word from the box:

benevolence | cohesive | comprehensive | to contribute to | to ensure | to foster
| to forage | in-depth | perseverance | to reverse

1. Finland's _____ social systems are designed to protect everyone, no matter their situation.
2. One major factor that _____ to national happiness is work-life balance.
3. The report provides an _____ look at why some societies are happier than others.
4. Acts of kindness and _____ grew significantly during the pandemic.
5. To build a more _____ society, people must trust their institutions and one another.
6. Public services in Finland aim _____ that everyone can access mental healthcare.
7. The increase in youth depression raises concerns about how to _____ the downward trend.
8. Community activities help _____ social cohesion and a sense of belonging.
9. Volunteers often show great _____, continuing to help even in difficult conditions.
10. Nature-based activities like hiking and _____ are linked to mental health.

comprehensive | consecutive | to enhance | to facilitate | insight |
notably | to persist | to underscore | welfare | surge

1. Finland has held the title of happiest country for seven _____ years, reflecting its consistent approach to well-being.
2. The report offers valuable _____ into how different generations experience happiness.
3. These findings _____ the importance of long-term investment in social programs.
4. Social _____ programs in Finland ensure that no one is left without basic support.
5. The Finnish education system is admired worldwide for its _____ structure and equal access.
6. Finland's success is due in part to policies that _____ access to education and healthcare.
7. A rise in volunteering and community aid led to a noticeable _____ in prosocial behavior after the pandemic.
8. Even in difficult times, many people continued to support others, showing that acts of kindness can _____ despite social and economic hardship.
9. Mental health initiatives are designed to _____ emotional well-being across all age groups.
10. The Nordic countries have performed well in the rankings, _____ Finland, which has held the top spot for several years.

The Happiest Country in the World, C1 - WS

6. Discussion Questions

1. What do you think is the most important factor for happiness in your country? Why?
2. Do you agree that trust in government is essential for a happy society? Explain your opinion.
3. How do you balance work and free time? What could your country learn from Finland?
4. Do you spend much time in nature? How does it affect your mood?
5. What challenges do young people face in your country today? How could these be addressed?
6. Why do you think kindness is important for happiness? Have you seen examples of kindness recently?
7. How can governments make their policies more transparent? Why does this matter?
8. What can individuals do to become more resilient in difficult times?

The Happiest Country in the World, C1 - WS

7. More vocab practice - context sentences. Fill the gaps with the correct word

Set 1

1. A healthy work-life balance is known _____ people's overall well-being.
2. A strong social _____ system guarantees support for all citizens, regardless of income.
3. Although the crisis ended, many of these positive behaviors _____ over time.
4. Authorities are working on measures _____ the decline in youth well-being.
5. Finland has remained at the top of the World Happiness Index for several _____ years.
6. Finland's _____ healthcare and education systems are admired around the world.
7. Finnish people are admired for their _____ in facing long winters and personal challenges.
8. New funding has been allocated _____ access to mental health services for teenagers.
9. Northern European countries, _____ Finland and Denmark, rank high in social trust.
10. Outdoor hobbies such as hiking and _____ help reduce stress and promote mindfulness.
11. Public campaigns are designed _____ dialogue and empathy across generations.
12. Regular exercise and nature walks have been shown _____ both mood and physical health.
13. Researchers gained valuable _____ into generational differences in life satisfaction.
14. Shared community activities build a more _____ and trusting society.
15. The government has launched a _____ strategy to address youth mental health.
16. The pandemic inspired a renewed sense of _____, with many people helping strangers.
17. The report provides an _____ analysis of the factors influencing national happiness levels.
18. There was a sudden _____ in volunteering and charitable donations during lockdowns.
19. These results _____ the importance of mental health education in schools.
20. Well-designed infrastructure helps _____ smooth access to services in remote regions.

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Context sentences. Fill the gaps with the correct word

Set 2

1. A post-pandemic _____ in volunteering showed how crises can spark community action.
2. Activities such as berry picking and _____ connect people with nature.
3. Art therapy has been shown _____ emotional expression and confidence in adolescents.
4. Digital tools are being developed _____ communication between schools and parents.
5. Experts offered fresh _____ on how technology is affecting teenage mental health.
6. Finland's model combines strong economic performance with _____ social policies.
7. Local projects aim to create more _____ neighborhoods through shared initiatives.
8. Long-term goals require effort, planning, and a great deal of _____.
9. National programs that protect health and income belong to the broader concept of social _____.
10. Nordic countries are known for their _____ public institutions and policies.
11. Psychologists are exploring new techniques _____ negative mental health trends.
12. Schools are now integrating emotional literacy courses _____ resilience in students.
13. Several countries, _____ those in Scandinavia, are moving toward shorter workweeks.
14. Social connections and physical activity are proven _____ greater happiness.
15. Some positive changes have _____, even after the return to normal life.
16. The country received international praise after winning the award three years in _____.
17. The crisis reminded people of the value of _____ and generosity.
18. The documentary offered an _____ perspective on how cultural values affect happiness.
19. The government is working hard _____ that all young people feel supported.
20. These findings clearly _____ the need for urgent reforms in public education.

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Gapped text practice

Finland: A Model of Modern Resilience

In recent years, Finland has gained notable international recognition 1. _____ its robust education system, social welfare model, and commitment 2. _____ sustainability. While many nations struggle 3. _____ fragmented policies, Finland takes a comprehensive approach that aims 4. _____ foster equality and social cohesion. This strategy 5. _____ helped build a cohesive society where trust and benevolence are 6. _____ just ideals but everyday realities.

One of the most in-depth examples of this is Finland's approach 7. _____ education reform. Through consecutive improvements over the last two decades, the country has managed to enhance 8. _____ academic performance and student wellbeing. Teachers are valued as professionals, and their input is seen 9. _____ vital to contributing to the national dialogue on education.

The Finnish lifestyle also offers insight 10. _____ how a society can live in harmony with nature. Traditions 11. _____ as foraging for berries and mushrooms are still widely practiced, helping to facilitate a deep connection to the environment. This connection underscores the Finnish commitment 12. _____ reversing environmental degradation.

Despite 13. _____ achievements, Finland faces challenges, including a recent surge in youth mental health issues. The government has responded 14. _____ investing in mental health services to ensure access and continuity of care. Yet, problems persist, reminding policymakers that 15. _____ the best systems require constant attention and adaptability.

Ultimately, the Finnish model is not about perfection, but about perseverance. It shows that with a clear vision, collective will, and the courage to stick to one's guns, societies 16. _____ evolve. Finland's path is one that enhances well-being not just materially, but emotionally and spiritually—setting a powerful example 17. _____ others to follow.

Answer key

2. Vocabulary - Definitions

- | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| 1. in-depth | 8. comprehensive | 15. to reverse |
| 2. consecutive | 9. to ensure | 16. benevolence |
| 3. to contribute to | 10. to foster | 17. surge |
| 4. insight | 11. notably | 18. to persist |
| 5. to underscore | 12. to facilitate | 19. to enhance |
| 6. robust | 13. cohesive | 20. perseverance |
| 7. welfare | 14. foraging | |

5. Vocabulary in context - part 1

1. robust
2. contributes to
3. in-depth
4. benevolence
5. cohesive
6. to ensure
7. to reverse
8. to foster
9. perseverance
10. foraging

part 2

1. comprehensive
2. consecutive
3. enhance
4. facilitate
5. insight
6. notably
7. persist
8. underscore
9. welfare
10. surge

6. Vocab review - Context sentences 1

- | | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1. to contribute to | 9. notably | 16. benevolence |
| 2. welfare | 10. foraging | 17. in-depth |
| 3. persist | 11. to foster | 18. surge |
| 4. to reverse | 12. to enhance | 19. underscore |
| 5. consecutive | 13. insight | 20. to facilitate |
| 6. robust | 14. cohesive | |
| 7. perseverance | 15. comprehensive | |
| 8. to ensure | | |

Context sentences 2

- | | | |
|------------------|----------------------|-----------------|
| 1. surge | 8. perseverance | 16. consecutive |
| 2. foraging | 9. welfare | 17. benevolence |
| 3. to enhance | 10. robust | 18. in-depth |
| 4. to facilitate | 11. to reverse | 19. to ensure |
| 5. insight | 12. to foster | 20. underscore |
| 6. comprehensive | 13. notably | |
| 7. cohesive | 14. to contribute to | |
| | 15. persist | |

Gapped text

- | | | |
|---------|----------|----------|
| 1. for | 6. not | 12. to |
| 2. to | 7. to | 13. its |
| 3. with | 8. both | 14. by |
| 4. to | 9. as | 15. even |
| 5. has | 10. into | 16. can |
| | 11. such | 17. for |



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