

Bad Habits

Pre-Reading

A. Warm-Up Questions

1. Work together as a class. How many examples of bad habits can you think of?
2. What is the difference between conscious and subconscious?
3. How can you break a bad habit?
4. Have you ever quit anything "cold turkey"?



B. Vocabulary Preview

Match up as many words and meanings as you can.

Check this exercise again after seeing the words in context on page 2.

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| ___ 1. twirl | a) fully aware, on purpose |
| ___ 2. subconscious | b) to stop (a habit) instantly and never do it again |
| ___ 3. fatigue | c) to successfully quit doing something that was bad for you |
| ___ 4. conscious | d) to keep track in a chart |
| ___ 5. admit | e) tiredness |
| ___ 6. once and for all | f) to go around and around |
| ___ 7. follow through | g) finally, without any chance of changing one's mind |
| ___ 8. quit cold turkey | h) an event or situation that prevents or delays a goal |
| ___ 9. setback | i) automatic, not based on thinking |
| ___ 10. inevitable | j) unable to be avoided |
| ___ 11. log | k) to stick to your plan |
| ___ 12. kick a habit | l) to tell the truth |

Reading

BAD HABITS

How can we break them?

1. Do you bite your nails or **twirl** your hair? Maybe you eat too quickly or check your email ten times an hour. Most of us have one bad habit or another. Habits are **subconscious**. This means we perform them automatically without thinking. Stress, boredom, and **fatigue** can cause our habits to worsen.
2. Experts say it takes three months to form a habit. How long does it take to break a habit? Unlike biting your nails, breaking this habit requires **conscious** effort. The first thing to do is to **admit** what your habit is. Next, decide **once and for all** that you are ready to break it. Come up with a plan and **follow through**. You don't have to **quit cold turkey**. Accept that there will be **setbacks**; they are **inevitable**. Don't beat yourself up when you have a setback. Think of the well-known saying: "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again."
3. Do you get any enjoyment out of your bad habit? It is a good idea to name the reasons why your habit is "bad." Does it embarrass you or others? Does it cost a lot of money? Tell other people your plan to break this habit. **Log** your progress and your setbacks. When you **kick your habit**, congratulate yourself! Now you have the tools to break the next one.

"We are what we repeatedly do."

—Aristotle, Greek philosopher

Punctuation Tip

SEMICOLON

Use a semicolon (;) to separate two complete thoughts that are short and related. Do not use a comma.

"Accept that there will be setbacks; they are inevitable."

Comprehension

Read the statements below. If the statement is true based on the reading, write T beside the sentence. If it is false, write F and correct the information in your notebook.

- _____ 1. Checking email many times an hour is an example of a bad habit.
- _____ 2. Extreme tiredness can cause a person to perform a bad habit.
- _____ 3. The best way to quit a bad habit is cold turkey.
- _____ 4. It usually takes three months to break a bad habit.
- _____ 5. People who are trying to break a bad habit should keep their plan to themselves.

Vocabulary Review

Circle the vocabulary error in the sentences below.
Rewrite the sentences correctly in your notebook.

1. I am fatigue when I get home from school.
2. It took me two years to quit smoking.
I can't believe you quit cold chicken!
3. I decided to quit biting my nails once and for many.
4. Inevitable you will have setbacks. You can't avoid them.
5. I will to log how many times I bite my nails each day.

Debate

Observe at least three members of your class as they debate this statement.

“Swearing is a bad habit that young people must quit before entering the workforce.”

1. What was the strongest argument?
2. Which point did the speakers disagree on?
3. What important point(s) did the speakers not discuss?

Discussion

1. Is it easier to form or break a bad habit?
2. What are the most common bad habits, and why?
3. Can you grow out of a bad habit subconsciously?
4. What's the difference between a bad habit and an addiction?

Listening

Fill in the blanks as you listen to the recording.

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2. Experts say it takes three months to form a habit. How long does it take to break a habit? Unlike biting your nails, breaking this habit requires _____ effort. The first thing to do is to admit what your habit is. Next, decide once and for all that you are ready to break it. Come up with a plan and _____. You don't have to quit cold turkey. Accept that there will be setbacks; they are _____. Don't beat yourself up when you have a setback. Think of the well-known saying: "If at first you don't succeed, try, try again."
3. Do you get any enjoyment out of your bad habit? It is a good idea to name the reasons why your habit is "bad." Does it _____ you or others? Does it cost a lot of money? Tell other people your plan to break this habit. _____ your progress and your setbacks. When you _____, congratulate yourself! Now you have the tools to break the next one.

Answer Key

LESSON DESCRIPTION:

In this lesson, students read about bad habits and discuss why they are difficult to beat.

TEACHING TIPS:

See *Discussion Starters Teaching Guide* (<https://esllibrary.com/courses/72/lessons/>) for a variety of ways to use the reading.

LEVEL: Int

TIME: 1.5–2 hours

TAGS: discussion, bad habits, habit

Pre-Reading

A. WARM-UP QUESTIONS

Have students work in small groups or as a class.

B. VOCABULARY PREVIEW

- | | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|-------|-------|
| 1. f | 3. e | 5. l | 7. k | 9. h | 11. d |
| 2. i | 4. a | 6. g | 8. b | 10. j | 12. c |

Reading (and/or Listening)

Read individually, in small groups, or as a class. Discuss the quote. You can also play the listening as your students read along. A gap-fill version of the reading is available on page 4. Help your students with vocabulary and expressions that they are unfamiliar with.

Comprehension

- T
- T
- F – The best way to quit a bad habit is to follow through with your plan but admit that there will be setbacks.
- F – It usually takes three months to form a bad habit.
- F – People who are trying to break a bad habit should tell others about their plan to break the habit.

Vocabulary Review

- I am **fatigued** when I get home from school.
- It took me two years to quit smoking.
I can't believe you quit cold **turkey**!
- I decided to quit biting my nails once and for **all**.
- It is inevitable** that you will have setbacks. You can't avoid them. / **Inevitably**, you will have setbacks.
- It will **log** how many times I bite my nails each day.

Debate

Choose at least three students to discuss the statement. If they all agree, have one student debate from the other side of the argument. Change the topic if you want. You can use the Discussion topics from this lesson.

Discussion

Answers will vary. Can be done individually or in small groups or pairs. Could also be used as an individual writing prompt.

Listening

- twirl, subconscious, fatigue
- conscious, follow through, inevitable
- embarrass, log, kick your habit