

Volunteering

Pre-Reading

A. Warm-Up Questions

1. What does it mean to “volunteer”?
2. What are some reasons people volunteer?
3. What types of organizations need volunteers?
4. Do you know anyone who volunteers? If so, who? What do they do?



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. estimated | a) to give to a good cause |
| ___ 2. charity | b) required |
| ___ 3. welfare | c) to finish school with a diploma or degree |
| ___ 4. conservation | d) the protection and safekeeping of nature |
| ___ 5. tutor | e) a strong effect |
| ___ 6. donate | f) a sudden event in nature, such as a flood, an earthquake, or a tsunami, that causes great damage |
| ___ 7. impact | g) abroad, in a foreign country |
| ___ 8. natural disaster | h) a feeling of anger or bitterness |
| ___ 9. overseas | i) a condition of having good health |
| ___ 10. mandatory | j) an organization that helps people (or animals) in need |
| ___ 11. graduate | k) to help someone learn something outside of school |
| ___ 12. resentment | l) approximate |

Reading

VOLUNTEERING

Changing the world one step at a time

1. Have you ever given your free time to help others or your community? If so, you're not alone.
2. An **estimated** one billion people around the world participate in volunteer work. In addition to helping those in need and making the world a better place to live, volunteering can be a great way to learn useful skills, reduce stress, and make new friends.
3. Many people find volunteer opportunities through local **charities**, including organizations that provide food and shelter for the homeless and groups that promote animal **welfare**. Some people give back to their community by working on local **conservation** projects, **tutoring** disadvantaged students, or coaching youth sports teams. Other people choose to **donate** their time at large cultural events such as music festivals and athletic competitions.
4. Skills-based volunteering, or SBV, is a type of volunteering that allows professionals to use their talent and experience to make an **impact**. For example, volunteer doctors and nurses often help out after a **natural disaster**. In the same way, a web designer may create a website for a nonprofit at no charge. Some companies even have their own SBV programs and give their employees paid time off to take part in them.
5. Volunteering **overseas** is another option for those who want to make a difference. Volunteer travel organizations offer people the chance to support communities around the world in many areas, including education, health care, and construction. While making meaningful contributions to communities abroad, volunteers also gain the benefits of an international experience.
6. In some parts of the world, volunteering is a **mandatory** part of schooling. For example, in some US states and Canadian provinces, high school students must complete a certain number of volunteer hours before they can **graduate**. Many educators argue that mandatory volunteering helps students to understand the needs of people in their community. However, some people feel that teenagers shouldn't be forced to volunteer as it causes anxiety and **resentment**. What do you think? Do the pros of required volunteerism outweigh the cons?

"The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others."

—Mahatma Gandhi

Comprehension

Discuss these questions in pairs and then write the answers in your notebook.

1. What does the term “volunteering” mean?
2. Approximately how many volunteers are there worldwide?
3. What are some of the benefits of volunteering?
4. What kinds of charities does the article mention?
5. Elsa is an accountant. Every spring, she helps the local youth club with their taxes. She doesn't charge them for her services. What type of volunteering is this an example of?

Vocabulary Review

A. Matching

Match the words on the left with the correct sentences on the right that illustrate their meanings.

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| _____ 1. estimated | a) The hurricane destroyed many homes. |
| _____ 2. charity | b) All cars must have a license plate. |
| _____ 3. natural disaster | c) Approximately 1 in 4 Americans volunteer. |
| _____ 4. mandatory | d) Josie was angry that her parents spent more time with her sister than with her. |
| _____ 5. resentment | e) That organization distributes coats to needy children every winter. |

B. Complete the Sentences

Complete the sentences with vocabulary from page 1. You may need to change the word forms.

1. Marta _____ students in math on Tuesday and Thursday evenings.
2. Ben has owned his own business since he _____ from university in 2002.
3. Clara's speech had a powerful _____ on the people in the audience.
4. If you want to work _____, you will need to find out about visa requirements.
5. The World Wildlife Fund has been working on land _____ since the 1960s.
6. I _____ \$10 a month to two different charities.

Oxymorons

PHRASES MADE WITH CONTRADICTORY TERMS

A. Reference

An **oxymoron** is a combination of two contradictory terms. Example:

- When something is **mandatory**, you must do it. You have no choice.
- When you **volunteer**, you do so by choice. It is **not mandatory**.
- **“Mandatory volunteering”** is an oxymoron.

B. Practice

Here are some more oxymorons that are used in English. Discuss their meaning with a partner. What makes them oxymorons?

- Their relationship is an **open secret**.
- You will need to show an **original copy** of your passport to get a visa.
- The **only choice** available in the bakery was chocolate pie.
- Here comes the police! Just **act naturally**.

Pair Work

Read the final paragraph of the article again. Add one idea to each column of the chart that is mentioned in the text.

Add more advantages and disadvantages of mandatory volunteering to the chart, based on your own views.

Share your ideas with a partner. Overall, do you feel that mandatory volunteering is a good idea? Why or why not?

Advantages of Mandatory Volunteering	Disadvantages of Mandatory Volunteering

Discussion

1. What volunteering opportunities are available in your local area?
Would you consider getting involved in them?
2. How might volunteering help you to find paid work?
3. If you could volunteer at any large event (e.g., a music festival or athletic competition), which one would you choose? Why?
4. What do you think is better, giving up your time to volunteer or giving up some of your money to support nonprofit organizations? Why?
5. “Everyone should give something back to their community.”
To what extent do you agree with this statement?

Critical Thinking

“I might do some volunteering. I think it will look good on my resume.”

- To what extent is this a good reason to do volunteering?

Listening

Fill in the blanks as you listen to the recording.

VOLUNTEERING

Changing the world one step at a time

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2. An _____ one billion people around the world participate in volunteer work. In addition to helping those in need and making the world a better place to live, volunteering can be a great way to learn useful skills, reduce stress, and make new friends.
3. Many people find volunteer opportunities through local _____, including organizations that provide food and shelter for the homeless and groups that promote animal _____. Some people give back to their community by working on local _____ projects, _____ disadvantaged students, or coaching youth sports teams. Other people choose to _____ their time at large cultural events such as music festivals and athletic competitions.
4. Skills-based volunteering, or SBV, is a type of volunteering that allows professionals to use their talent and experience to make an _____. For example, volunteer doctors and nurses often help out after a _____. In the same way, a web designer may create a website for a nonprofit at no charge. Some companies even have their own SBV programs and give their employees paid time off to take part in them.
5. Volunteering _____ is another option for those who want to make a difference. Volunteer travel organizations offer people the chance to support communities around the world in many areas, including education, health care, and construction. While making meaningful contributions to communities abroad, volunteers also gain the benefits of an international experience.
6. In some parts of the world, volunteering is a _____ part of schooling. For example, in some US states and Canadian provinces, high school students must complete a certain number of volunteer hours before they can _____. Many educators argue that mandatory volunteering helps students to understand the needs of people in their community. However, some people feel that teenagers shouldn't be forced to volunteer as it causes anxiety and _____. What do you think? Do the pros of required volunteerism outweigh the cons?

Answer Key

LESSON DESCRIPTION:

In this lesson, students read about different ways that people give back to the community. They discuss personal motivations for giving up free time to help others as well as the advantages and disadvantages of mandatory volunteering.

LEVEL: High Int

TIME: 1.5–2 hours

TAGS: discussion, volunteering, work, skills-based volunteering, SBV, mandatory volunteering, charities, oxymorons

Pre-Reading

A. WARM-UP QUESTIONS

Have students work in small groups or as a class.

B. VOCABULARY PREVIEW

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

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 6. Help your students with vocabulary and expressions that they're unfamiliar with.

Comprehension

1. "Volunteering" means to give your free time to help others or your community.
2. There are approximately one billion volunteers worldwide.
3. Volunteering is a great way to learn useful skills, reduce stress, and make new friends.
4. The article mentions charities that provide food and shelter to the homeless and ones that promote animal welfare.
5. This is an example of skills-based volunteering, or SBV.

Vocabulary Review

A. MATCHING

- | | | | | |
|------|------|------|------|------|
| 1. c | 2. e | 3. a | 4. b | 5. d |
|------|------|------|------|------|

B. COMPLETE THE SENTENCES

- | | |
|--------------|-----------------|
| 1. tutors | 4. overseas |
| 2. graduated | 5. conservation |
| 3. impact | 6. donate |

(continued on the next page...)

Answer Key cont.

Oxymorons

Explain to students that phrases made up of contradictory terms are often used in literature or for dramatic effect.

Ask students if similar techniques are used in their own language(s).

Answers will vary. Possible answers:

- An **open secret** is something that is intended to be private, but is known by many. For example, two people may be in a romantic relationship, but have not announced it publicly. While the relationship may still be “a secret,” it is evident to those around the couple. This is an oxymoron because “secrets” are private, but “open” information is available to all.
- When applying for a visa or a job, you are sometimes requested to show an **original copy** of a passport or a diploma. You must show the original documents, not photocopies. In this phrase, “copy” refers to the original, not to a duplicate. However, the two words together, “original” and “copy” seem to mean opposite things.
- An **only choice** does not involve choosing. If there is only one thing available, there is no choice. It is also common to hear the phrase “only option.”
- We say the phrase **act naturally** when we don’t want people to notice something. In the example, the people might have committed a crime and they don’t want the police to know they did it. The phrase is an oxymoron because acting is fake, so it is in opposition to being natural.

Pair Work

Have students re-read the final paragraph of the article and identify the advantage and disadvantage of mandatory volunteering that are mentioned.

Advantage: helps young people to understand the needs of people in their community

Disadvantage: can cause anxiety and resentment

With a partner, have students think of more pros and cons of mandatory volunteering. Then have pairs share their ideas with the class.

Discussion

Answers will vary.

Can be done in small groups or pairs.

Critical Thinking

Answers will vary.

Can be done in small groups or pairs.

Listening

2. estimated
3. charities, welfare, conservation, tutoring, donate
4. impact, natural disaster
5. overseas
6. mandatory, graduate, resentment

SPELLING NOTE:

This lesson shows the American spelling of the word *License*. Most other English-speaking countries spell it this way: *Licence*. Make it a challenge for your students to find this word in the lesson and see if they know the alternate spelling.