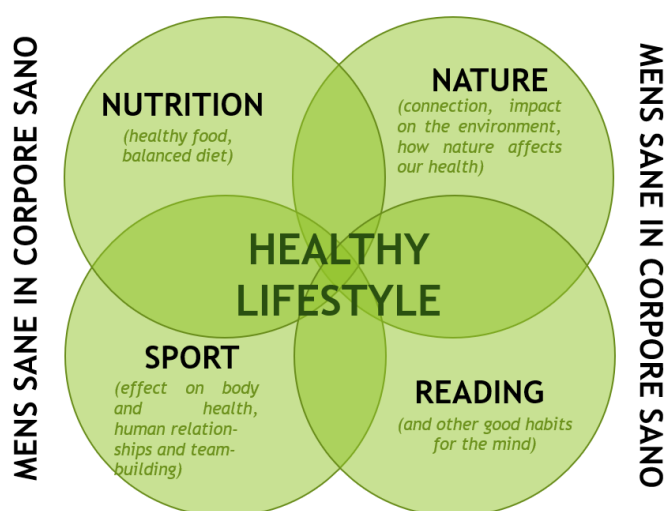




## ACTIVITY TO INCREASE STUDENTS SKILLS AND KNOWLEDGE ABOUT HEALTHY LIFESTYLE



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## 1. COURSE TIME, TARGET AND TOPIC

- **Age of target students:** 13-14
- **Teaching time:** 1 hour
- **Topic:** Mind&Body
- **Title:** My mind and its secrets

## 2. COURSE OBJECTIVES

### Skills promoted in this lesson:

- Provide reading and speaking practice around the topic of mindfulness
- Teach or review a set of mind-related activities, e.g. judging, paying attention. Expand students' ability to make comparisons with more advanced comparative and superlative structures.
- Know how can we change the exterior for having a healthy interior with sports, yoga, prayer, meditation, etc.

## 3. LEARNING – TEACHING PROCESSES

This lesson was devised to improve students' knowledge about mindfulness.

The lesson begins by looking at a definition of mindfulness and finding out what students already know. They then read a text about mindfulness, before focusing on vocabulary and grammar from the text. Finally, they carry out a mindfulness activity themselves and discuss the experience.

The text used in the student worksheet for this lesson is available with interactive exercises for learners on our Learn English website at <https://learnenglish.britishcouncil.org/magazine/mindfulness>

### Procedure

#### 1. Lead in (5 minutes)

- Exercise 1: Ask students to read the definition and discuss the questions.
- Briefly discuss and debate as a class.

#### 2. Reading (15 minutes)

- Exercise 2: Ask students to read the text and check their ideas. Let them discuss what they found in pairs.
- Exercise 3: Ask them to read the text again and make notes under the headings. Let them compare their ideas in pairs and then discuss as a class. Find out if any of them already practice mindfulness and, if so, ask them for their opinions or experience.



## Answers

- A. Examples of NOT being mindful: driving somewhere without remembering the journey, eating more biscuits than you intended, staying up late binge watching TV.
- B. Examples of being mindful: noticing a beautiful sunset, really listening to someone, being more aware of our own feelings.
- C. Reasons life is busier now: technology, multi-tasking, working longer hours.
- D. Benefits of mindfulness: reduces stress and depression, better concentration, memory and focus, managing pain better, even losing weight.

### 3. Vocabulary (5 minutes)

- Exercise 4: Ask students to try and match the activities to the definitions. Let them check in pairs, then check as a class.

#### Answers:

1. Judging – (B) having a bad opinion of something or someone.
2. Paying attention – (C) watching, listening or thinking about something carefully.
3. Worrying – (E) thinking about unpleasant things that might happen.
4. Binge-watching – (D) watching lots of TV episodes at once.
5. Multi-tasking – (A) doing two or three things at the same time.

Ask students which of these activities will make you feel more or less stressed (all of them except paying attention are likely to make you feel more stressed. Paying attention helps because you are focused on just one thing.)

[www.teachingenglish.org.uk](http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk)

### 4. Focus on comparative structures (20 minutes)

- Exercise 5

Ask the students to complete the sentences using the words in the box. They can use each word more than once. These are examples of more complex comparative and superlative sentences, which are used frequently in English, but not always taught. Let students check together and then check as a class.



**Answers:**

1. *Have you ever eaten far/many more biscuits than you meant to?* (we can't use much here because biscuits are countable. Far, much and many are all ways of adding emphasis to a comparative structure.)
2. *Have you stayed up much/far later than you planned?*
3. *When we live this way we are not as awake as we could be.*
4. *For most people life is getting busier and busier.* (using two comparatives in this way adds emphasis).
5. *The more we do the more stressed we feel.* (This is a set structure- The + comparative... the + comparative to compare two things with each other).

- **Exercise 6**

Ask students to rewrite the sentence using the words given in the second sentence. This is to give further practice in using the structures in exercise 5.

**Answers**

1. The more people practice mindfulness, the better they deal with problems.
2. Mindfulness isn't as difficult as many people think.
3. I have felt far less stressed since I started practising mindfulness.
4. He is getting more and more stressed every day.
5. The quieter it is the easier it is to concentrate.

**5 Mindfulness activity (10 minutes)**

- Exercise 7:

Ask students to close their eyes and just relax. You could ask them to take a few deep breaths. Then ask them to listen carefully and mentally note all the different sounds they hear. If any other thoughts come into their minds, they should just go back to focusing on counting the sounds. After 2-3 minutes, they can open their eyes and discuss what they heard with their partner.

- How did the exercise make them feel? Any calmer? Discuss as a class.



## 4. EVALUATION

**The students have to answer to fill the next sentences using their knowledge from the lesson:**

As people practise mindfulness more, they deal better with problems.

The more...

Mindfulness is easier than many people think.

Mindfulness isn't as.....

Since I started practising mindfulness, I haven't felt very stressed at all.

I have felt far...

Every day he gets more stressed.

He is getting more and.....

It's easier to concentrate when it's quiet.

The quieter...



# ANNEX 1: student worksheet

## Good mental health

**Exercise 1: Look at the definition of mindfulness and discuss the questions in pairs.**

“Mindfulness means paying attention to your thoughts, feelings, or something outside yourself, in a relaxed but very focused way.”

Have you heard of mindfulness before? What do you know about it, if anything?

Why do you think it has become so popular?

What do you think might be the benefits of mindfulness?

**Exercise 2: Read the article about mindfulness and check your ideas.**

### Mindfulness

Have you ever driven somewhere and realised when you arrived that you couldn't really remember anything about the journey? Or have you ever eaten far more biscuits than you meant to, almost without thinking about it? Or have you stayed up much later than you planned, or even all night, binge-watching 'just one more' episode of a TV series? All of these are examples of mindlessness. When we live this way, we are not as awake as we could be, and not fully living our lives.

#### What exactly is mindfulness?

When we are mindful, we are more conscious of our thoughts, our actions and what is happening around us. We might notice a beautiful sunset or really listen carefully to what a friend is saying, rather than planning what we're going to say next. We are also more aware of our own feelings and our thoughts. Jon Kabat Zinn, who has done a lot to make mindfulness popular, says mindfulness is: 'Paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, and without judging.'

So we are consciously deciding what to pay attention to, we are not worrying about the past or planning for the future and we are not trying to control or stop our thoughts or feelings – we're just noticing them.



### Why is mindfulness so popular now?

For most people life is getting busier and busier. Technology means that we always have something to do and there isn't much opportunity to just 'be'. People are often multi-tasking: texting while watching TV, or even looking at their phone while walking along the pavement. People are working longer hours and bringing work home. The more we do the more stressed we feel. Mindfulness can be a way of reducing this stress.

### What are the benefits of mindfulness?

Research shows that mindfulness reduces stress and depression. It can help you to concentrate, have a better memory and to think more clearly. It can also help people to manage pain better and to improve their sleep, and it can even help you lose weight because you won't eat that whole packet of biscuits without thinking!

**Exercise 3: Read the article again and make notes under the following headings. Compare what you find with a partner.**

Find at least three examples in the article of the following:

- A. examples of NOT being mindful.
- B. examples of being mindful.
- C. reasons life is getting busier.
- D. benefits of practising mindfulness.

**Exercise 4: Match the vocabulary from the article (1-5) with the definitions (A-E). Which of these actions are likely to make you feel more stressed? Why/why not?**

- |                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| 1. Judging          | A. Doing two or three things at the same time                 |
| 2. Paying attention | B. Having a bad opinion of something or someone.              |
| 3. Worrying         | C. Watching, listening or thinking about something carefully. |
| 4. Binge-watching   | D. Watching lots of TV episodes at once.                      |
| 5. Multi-tasking    | E. Thinking about unpleasant things that might happen.        |



**Exercise 5: Complete the comparative and superlative sentences using the words in the box. Check your answers by finding the sentences in the article.**

1. Have you ever eaten far \_\_\_\_ biscuits \_\_\_\_ you meant to?
2. Have you stayed up \_\_\_\_ later \_\_\_\_ you planned?
3. When we live this way, we are not \_\_\_\_ awake \_\_\_\_ we could be
4. For most people life is getting busier \_\_\_\_ busier.
5. The \_\_\_\_ we do the \_\_\_\_ stressed we feel.

**Exercise 6: Rewrite the sentences using the words given.**

As people practise mindfulness more, they deal better with problems.

The more...

Mindfulness is easier than many people think.

Mindfulness isn't as.....

Since I started practising mindfulness, I haven't felt very stressed at all.

I have felt far...

Every day he gets more stressed.

He is getting more and.....

It's easier to concentrate when it's quiet.

The quieter...





**Exercise 7: Now try a mindfulness activity. Close your eyes and listen carefully for two minutes. Count how many sounds you can hear. What are they?**

**Open your eyes and tell your partner about what you heard. How did you feel while doing the activity?**



## ANNEX 2

### Examples of activities linked to mindfulness

The team discuss about the activities and choose one or severals to do.

1. Going to church for confessing and communion during the Christmas fast
2. Singing Carols
3. Making trips outside the city, going to the mountains
4. Learning simple breathing exercises to calm the mind
5. Visiting interesting places such as museums, exhibitions, parks or gardens.
6. Reading contests
7. Tongue twisters
8. Reading and acting jokes
9. Social games