

## Speak now 4

### 1: Veganism (speak now 4a/ lecture and writing 1)

- **Read this text and prepare yourself for class lecture**
- **It is necessary to write a text possibly related to the present topic at the end of each lecture.**

Vegans argue that animal farming is not only cruel but also bad for the environment. World Vegan Day, on 1 November, puts the focus on the vegan way of life.

#### **What is veganism and what do vegans do?**

Vegans try to live, as much as possible, in a way that avoids exploiting and being cruel to animals. This means following a plant-based diet. Vegans do not eat animals or animal-based products like meat, fish, seafood, eggs, honey and dairy products such as cheese. For many vegans, living a committed vegan lifestyle means not wearing clothes made from animal skins and avoiding any products which have been tested on animals.

#### **How are vegans different from vegetarians?**

Vegetarians don't eat meat or fish but they can eat eggs, honey and dairy products, but vegans don't eat any animal-based food products. Vegans argue that suffering is caused in the production of these foods, for example they say that, on some dairy farms, male calves are killed because they are too expensive to keep, and on some farms, cows are killed when they get older and produce less milk. Similarly, on some egg farms, male chicks are killed because they do not produce eggs. As for honey, vegans say that bees make honey for bees, not for humans, and that bees' health can suffer when humans take the honey from them. Vegans believe that the products they use and consume should be free from not just cruelty but any exploitation of animals.

#### **When did veganism start?**

The Vegan Society was founded in 1944, but there is evidence of people deciding not to consume animal products over 2,000 years ago. The sixth-century BC Greek mathematician and philosopher Pythagoras was in favor of kindness to all species, and his diet could be described as vegetarian. There was a tradition of vegetarianism in the Indus Valley, Babylonian and ancient Egyptian civilizations even earlier. The Vegan Society points out that in 1806, the famous romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley was one of the first people to publicly object to eating eggs and dairy products on moral grounds.

## **Why do many people decide to become vegan?**

For many people, the main reason for going vegan is probably that they believe that animals and all other sentient beings should have the right to life and freedom. However, there are other reasons. Vegans argue that the production of meat and other animal products is very bad for the environment. They point out that a huge quantity of water is needed to grow grain to feed animals in the meat industry. The enormous amount of grain which the meat industry needs often leads to forests being cut down and habitats being lost. In contrast, much lower quantities of grain and water are needed to sustain a vegan diet. In addition, many vegans say that all the nutrients our bodies need are contained in a carefully planned vegan diet and that this type of diet helps prevent some diseases.

## **What is World Vegan Day?**

On 1 November every year, vegans all over the world celebrate their way of life. There are workshops, exhibitions and public debates on World Vegan Day, and it is a wonderful opportunity for anybody thinking of becoming a vegan to learn more about the subject.



## **2: World Mental Health Day (speak now 4a/ lecture and writing 2)**

- **Read this text and prepare yourself for class lecture**
- **It is necessary to write a text possibly related to the present topic at the end of each lecture.**

World Mental Health Day, on 10 October, is a day to raise awareness of the effects mental illness has on millions of people's lives across the world, and to help educate and inform us all.

Around the world, one in four people will have some kind of mental illness during their lifetime. Around 450 million people are living with a mental health problem right now, making it one of the biggest health issues in the world. Yet people rarely talk about any mental health problems they have because there is still a lot of stigma.

### **World Mental Health Day**

World Mental Health (WMH) Day was first celebrated in 1992. It was created to raise awareness of just how common mental health issues are, fight against stigma and campaign for better conditions and treatment for people who have a mental health problem. The number of people and organizations involved in celebrating WMH Day has grown and grown, and now many countries, such as Australia, actually have a Mental Health Week, which includes WMH Day on 10 October. Each year there is a different theme. For example, in 2017 the theme was mental health in the workplace.

### **Mental health in the workplace**

Employers should create an environment which supports good mental health. This also helps to reduce the number of days employees take off work. Employers should help employees to achieve a good work-life balance by encouraging them to take breaks and holidays and discouraging them from working at home in the evenings and at weekends. Employees should also feel that they can talk to their managers about any problems they might have, and employers should be supportive.

### **Get some exercise**

Of course, we also need to look after our own mental health. Most people know that exercise is good for your body, but did you also know how good it is for your mental health? Regular exercise can really help you deal with anxiety and depression. Spending time in nature can also make people more relaxed and reduce stress. So why not get your exercise by going for a walk in a park or the countryside?

## **Eat well**

Your diet can also change your mood. If you eat crisps, cake, chocolate, etc., your blood sugar will rise and fall, making you feel cross and tired. Make sure you are eating enough vegetables and fruit or you may be missing some nutrients you need to feel good. It's also important to drink enough water – being thirsty can make it difficult to think clearly.

## **Spend time with family and friends**

Everyone needs some time alone, but it's also good for us to spend time with other people. If you feel lonely, try volunteering. It's a good way of meeting new people, and you will feel good for helping others. One survey showed that 48 per cent of people who volunteered for more than two years said they felt less depressed as a result. If you do have close friends and family, try talking to them more about how you feel and asking them to support you. Every time someone speaks to someone else about mental illness, it helps to reduce the stigma.

## **What to do on World Mental Health Day**

World Mental Health Day encourages us to be more aware of both our own mental health and other people's. As well as looking after yourself, think about how you could support other people. For example, you could find out more about common issues such as anxiety and depression, so you will understand friends' and colleagues' problems better. You could also encourage your workplace to start a wellness program that would benefit everyone – they might offer free exercise classes or encourage employees to take walks at lunchtime. Companies with wellness programs have found employees take 28 per cent less time off for sickness.

Anything you do on WMH Day, even just talking to people about it, will help us all to understand and support people better.



### **3: World Tourism Day (speak now 4a/ lecture and writing 3)**

- **Read this text and prepare yourself for class lecture**
- **It is necessary to write a text possibly related to the present topic at the end of each lecture.**

World Tourism Day on 27 September is about deciding the tourism we want for the future. That means thinking not just about the economy but also about the impact on people and the planet.

Every year on 27 September the United Nations World Tourism Day is celebrated. It began in 1980, and the event is hosted by a different country or group of countries every year. On World Tourism Day, the United Nations calls for investments in people and the planet, not just economic productivity.

#### **Why do we need World Tourism Day?**

It may seem curious that tourism has its own special day, but maybe it's not so surprising when you think of the enormous number of people employed in this sector. Tourism and travel is one of the world's biggest industries. According to 2019 research, over 333 million people – that's about one in ten working people worldwide – were employed in tourism and travel. Now, this huge global industry is growing again after the pandemic, creating serious issues for people and the planet.

#### **How does tourism affect local people?**

With mass tourism, fascinating places are becoming overwhelmed by millions of tourists. Enormous tour buses block roads and make getting to school or work difficult for residents. International chains take over from local businesses, tourist apartments take over from ordinary housing, and rising prices force local people out of their homes.

Barcelona in Spain and Venice in Italy are two examples of places where the local population have demanded that tourism is controlled more tightly. In Barcelona, regulations related to short-term rental accommodation were introduced to help local people have access to flats. In Venice, the number of large cruise liners entering the port is now controlled to protect the historic city and its natural environment from further damage. Locals also complained about the huge crowds of cruise passengers, who were putting pressure on the city's resources but contributing little to the economy. Maybe tourism in the 21st century will continue to be regulated to protect people and local environments.

## **How does tourism affect the environment?**

Mass tourism is bad news for our planet too. The industry destroys natural habitats to build tourist facilities and consumes large amounts of energy and natural resources, such as land, soil and water. Pollution is also a negative consequence of travel and tourism, including solid waste and sewage pollution, noise pollution and air pollution. Carbon emissions from tourism are more than five per cent of global emissions, and this figure is going up. The tourism and travel industry continues to contribute to the climate crisis.

## **Can we be responsible tourists?**

In the words of Bruce Poon Tip, producer of the documentary *The Last Tourist*, 'travel is a privilege, not a right'. *The Last Tourist* encourages us to be 'conscious consumers' when deciding where and how to travel. As tourists, we need to think more carefully about the impact of our choices. If we decide to stay at a beautiful resort, who is going to benefit from our money? Is the hotel owned by people from the local community? And how can we minimize our contribution to pollution and climate change? To protect the beautiful places we love to visit, and the people who live in them, we need to rethink tourism and act responsibly.



**Writing 3**

- Write about the effect of tourism on countries economy.

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**Teachers' notes and assessments:**

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**Approximate score out of 10:** .....

**The most repeated errors**

## **4: The International Day of Peace (speak now 4a/ lecture and writing 4)**

- **Read this text and prepare yourself for class lecture**
- **It is necessary to write a text possibly related to the present topic at the end of each lecture.**

The International Day of Peace is on 21 September. It's a day that aims to reduce violence and to strengthen the ideals of peace around the world.

With so many people around the world suffering as a result of war and violence, the International Day of Peace is as important as ever. This special day, which was declared by the United Nations in 1981, is observed on 21 September every year.

### **The International Day of Peace at the United Nations**

On International Peace Day, the United Nations asks for a 24-hour ceasefire of all hostilities around the world. It also asks people to observe one minute of silence at noon to honor victims of war and violence. The day begins with the Peace Bell Ceremony at the United Nations headquarters. The Peace Bell was donated by the United Nations Association of Japan in June 1954 and is made of metal that includes coins contributed by people from 65 member countries. The bell is a symbol of hope for peace and is rung several times a year, including on International Peace Day. After the bell has been rung, the UN Secretary-General delivers a message.

### **The purpose of the International Day of Peace**

The International Day of Peace is for 'commemorating and strengthening the ideals of peace within and among all nations and peoples'. Put simply, it aims to build a more peaceful world for everyone who lives in it. Peace affects almost every aspect of our lives. Each year, the United Nations chooses a different theme for this special day, for example 'End racism: build peace' or 'Climate action for peace'. This helps us to see that true peace can only be achieved when all people are treated equally, or that we must combat the climate emergency, which threatens all of our lives.

### **International Day of Peace events**

As well as taking part in a one-minute silence at midday (local time), people in cities, towns and villages worldwide can get involved in many different events on this special day. This could be in the field of the arts, with photography, film, music or dance. It could be sports activities such as a football match for peace. Or it could be yoga, meditation and prayer. Children and teenagers

also take part in a wide range of activities related to peace and unity, often focusing on preventing school violence and bullying.

### **International Day of Peace online**

With the internet and social media, there is a lot more awareness of International Peace Day than back in 1981. Social media posts sharing information, ideas and peace messages reach millions of people all over the globe. There are many online events which people can register for on the day, such as live shows, conferences and workshops.

### **What we can all do for peace**

The International Day of Peace isn't just about ending international conflicts. It is also about changing our behavior towards each other and our environment. For example, we can try to bring peace to our personal lives by saying sorry and making peace with someone we know. Individual actions add up to great things when they are multiplied by millions of people all over the planet, and we can all contribute to making the world a more peaceful place.



## Speak now 4b

### 1: UN International Literacy Day (speak now 4b/ lecture and writing 1)

- **Read this text and prepare yourself for class lecture**
- **It is necessary to write a text possibly related to the present topic at the end of each lecture.**

Knowing how to read and write is a very important factor in most people's lives. But some people never learn these skills. How can we make sure that everybody gets the opportunity to become literate?

Have you ever travelled to a country with a language that you don't speak? If so, perhaps you had trouble understanding the most basic things: signs, instructions, documents, packaging. Maybe you felt quite powerless. This is just a simple example that gives us a small idea of how hard life must be for a person who is unable to read. Illiteracy is a major problem around the world. To acknowledge the huge efforts of people working in this field, the United Nations celebrates International Literacy Day every 8 September.

#### **What is UN International Literacy Day?**

Since 1967, this annual celebration has brought attention to people in the world who don't know how to read or write. It highlights ways to combat this problem and the huge progress that has been made. Every 8 September, UNESCO holds an awards ceremony in Paris in which prizes are given to individuals and organizations who work hard to increase literacy around the world.

#### **How big is the problem?**

It is estimated that around 14 per cent of the global population is illiterate. Within that statistic, there is some good news and some bad news. On a positive note, the levels of illiteracy have fallen a lot in recent decades (in just 1980, world illiteracy was at 43 per cent!). However, there are still enormous differences between regions. In sub-Saharan Africa and southern Asia, illiteracy remains around 30 per cent.

#### **What are the consequences of illiteracy?**

There is a strong connection between illiteracy and poverty. People who can read and write have an enormous advantage over those who can't when it comes to studying and training. This means that literate people generally earn more money and even enjoy better health. The UN also reports more negative attitudes towards women in societies with lower literacy levels.

## **What is the situation for women and girls?**

A study by the UN showed that almost 83 per cent of women and girls are able to read and write. However, two-thirds of all illiterate people in the world are female. This problem is due to factors such as insufficient educational opportunities for girls or the tradition in some countries for girls to get married at a young age. Many organizations work to try to empower women and girls by teaching them literacy skills.

## **What is the situation for men and boys?**

The same UN study showed that, internationally, 90 per cent of men and boys are able to read and write. However, in many Western countries, girls generally show better literacy than boys. Experts suggest that this is due to education techniques which don't always suit boys, as well as the opinion among some boys that reading and writing are 'girly' things to do.

## **How is technology changing things?**

In the digital era, learning to read and write has become more accessible, with the internet and the popularity of devices like computers and smartphones. UNESCO suggests that literacy has become more important than ever as the world changes towards 'knowledge-based societies' which depend on communication rather than creating physical products.

## **What is the future of literacy?**

Some experts argue that we need to change our idea of literacy. These days, knowing how to read is a limited skill if the same person doesn't know how to use a computer or smartphone. Some suggest that we need to expand the idea of literacy to include skills such as knowing how to use a web browser, create a document on a computer or even send a text message by phone.

## **How can I participate?**

Many libraries and universities organize events to celebrate International Literacy Day, often inviting famous writers to participate. Check out #Literacy Day on social media to see what's happening in your region.

**Writing 1**

- What is the role of literacy and being educated in 21 century?

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**Teachers' notes and assessments:**

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**Approximate score out of 10:** .....

**The most repeated errors**

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## **2: World Day against Trafficking in Persons (speak now 4b/lecture and writing 2)**

- **Read this text and prepare yourself for class lecture**
- **It is necessary to write a text possibly related to the present topic at the end of each lecture.**

The horrific crime of human trafficking may be closer to you than you realise. Read more about the UN's World Day against Trafficking in Persons.

### **The crime**

According to current research, up to forty million people are living as slaves today, and of those, ten million are minors. While some people have been born into slave-like conditions, most are victims of human trafficking, legally known as the crime of Trafficking in Persons, or TIP for short. This illegal trade in human beings is estimated to generate over US\$150 billion per year.

### **Is trafficking in persons the same as smuggling?**

The word ‘trafficking’ might suggest travel. However, the crime can exist even when no transportation of a victim happens. Someone can be a victim of human trafficking in their own country – even in their own street. If they are forced to do things they do not want to do and another person is profiting financially – this is Trafficking in Persons. Human trafficking is a crime based on exploitation and it is often confused with human smuggling. But human smuggling is a different crime based on transportation and requires the illegal crossing of an international or state border.

### **The victims**

Anybody can become a victim of trafficking. However, traffickers usually target people who are desperate and vulnerable. Poverty, unemployment, little or no education, war and natural disasters, such as earthquakes or floods, can all cause extreme vulnerability. Human traffickers also target people who are emotionally vulnerable, especially teenagers and children who feel lonely and unloved and are desperate to feel ‘special’.

### **Methods used to recruit victims**

Traffickers use different strategies during the recruitment process, but deception is generally involved. Fake job advertisements, false promises of economic opportunity and a better life are typical lies that traffickers will use to deceive people that a bright, happy future is waiting for them. Also, the ‘lover boy’ method of recruitment is often used, with promises of true love and a



romantic adventure. Sadly, this adventure is likely to be violent exploitation with traumatic consequences. But the traffickers will make a profit from the sale of their victims, and that is their main goal. Despite what films show, traffickers do not usually abduct victims.

## **Forms of exploitation**

Different forms of exploitation include forced labor, especially in the construction industry and mining, fishing and agriculture. Domestic servitude, commercial sexual exploitation, child soldiers, child brides and forced marriage are also forms of human trafficking. We often believe that trafficking is a crime that happens far away, in another country, but think again. The office building we work in or sports stadium we go to may have been built by modern-day slaves. Daily products, such as fruit and vegetables, seafood, clothing, chocolate and the minerals used in electronics, might also include slave labor at some point in the production process.

## **Ways to take action**

Go online to find out the national anti-trafficking hotline number and to discover which anti-trafficking groups are in your local community. Be alert. If you hear about someone, especially a young person, who has been offered employment in another city or country that seems ‘too good to be true’, help them check that the job really exists. It is strongly advised that you do not try to rescue someone who appears to be a victim. This could endanger yourself and the victim. Instead, call the hotline or police emergency number. Also, think before you shop! As a consumer, find out about the backstory to the products you buy. Try to buy items that are produced ethically so that your money does not support companies that use trafficking victims.

## **And the good news is ...**

Thousands of people around the world, from corporate leaders, academics to artists, are using their skills, resources and passion to fight trafficking. One such organization is The NO Project, an award-winning, global educational campaign that specifically targets youth awareness of the crime through music, art, dance, film, theatre, poetry, journalism and social media. Around the world, students and educators donate their time and talent to this campaign. As the founder of The NO Project says, ‘Youth are the agents of change. Only through a well-informed, pro-active, realistic understanding of this crime can the next generation effectively confront slavery and trafficking.’

**Writing 2**

- What is the worst crime in your idea? Discuss about it.

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**Teachers' notes and assessments:**

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**Approximate score out of 10:** .....

**The most repeated errors**

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### **3: Yoga (speak now 4b/ lecture and writing 3)**

- **Read this text and prepare yourself for class lecture**
- **It is necessary to write a text possibly related to the present topic at the end of each lecture.**

Yoga is becoming more and more popular around the world. What exactly is it, where did it come from and what are the health benefits of doing yoga?

#### **What is yoga?**

Most people know yoga as a kind of exercise which aims at developing strength and flexibility. To practice yoga, you learn a series of ‘postures’, where you put your body into different positions. The correct breathing is also important. However, yoga is really about more than just exercise. In 2014, the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi, asked the United Nations to create an International Day of Yoga, saying that yoga ‘is not about exercise but to discover the sense of oneness with you, the world and nature’. He felt that yoga could not just help people to be healthier but also help connect people to each other and to nature. The United Nations agreed, and International Yoga Day is now celebrated on 21 June.

#### **Where did yoga come from?**

The history of yoga goes back at least 5,000 years, and some people claim it is nearer 10,000 years ago. It was first developed in Northern India and at this stage was a spiritual as well as a physical form of exercise, connected with both Hinduism and Buddhism. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, yoga was introduced to the Western world when Swami Vivekananda travelled to the United States to talk about yoga at a conference in Chicago in 1893. Others followed in the 1920s and 1930s, and by the 1960s yoga had become a very popular form of exercise in the United States and in Europe. Most people who practice yoga today do not do it for spiritual reasons.

#### **What are the benefits of yoga?**

Yoga is good for the mind and body. Regular practice of yoga helps people to improve their balance and stamina. Although you won’t really get out of breath, like you might playing football or running, it does help to keep your heart healthy and you can lose weight. It can also help with back pain.

The breathing taught in yoga can help people to reduce stress and anxiety. There are lots of different possible breathing patterns you can do. Yoga also improves concentration and helps people to sleep better, so it’s great for anyone who’s under pressure at work or in their studies.

## **Different types of yoga**

There are lots of different types of yoga, so you can choose what suits you best. Hatha Yoga is often good for beginners, because you hold each position for a few breaths. In Vinyasa Yoga you change position much more quickly and you might get out of breath. It's quite challenging if you haven't done much yoga before. Bikram Yoga is sometimes called 'hot yoga', because the room must be heated to around 40 degrees. As well as these and other more traditional forms of yoga, there are also some more unusual modern forms of yoga. For example, you might enjoy 'laughter yoga', where people do breathing exercises and laugh about nothing in particular – laughing is very good for your health. Or what about 'Aeroyoga', where you do yoga while you are hanging from the ceiling? It's supposed to be very good for your back. Or 'Doga', where you do yoga together with your pet dog?

Whatever kind of yoga you choose, there are definitely some health benefits, and you should have fun too.

**Writing 3**

- What activities empower your mind and soul?

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**Teachers' notes and assessments:**

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**Approximate score out of 10:** .....

**The most repeated errors**

## **4: World Environment Day (speak now 4b/ lecture and writing 4)**

- **Read this text and prepare yourself for class lecture**
- **It is necessary to write a text possibly related to the present topic at the end of each lecture.**

On World Environment Day people from countries all around the world come together to take action to defend our planet. Find out about some of the things people are doing to celebrate this special day.

People celebrate World Environment Day (WED) in many different ways all over the world: planting trees, cleaning up local beaches, organizing meetings, joining online protests. Each year the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) chooses a particular issue to focus on. One year it might be forests, another year it might be wildlife. And each year there is a new host; a city which is the center point for all the celebrations.

### **How it first started**

The United Nations (UN) named 5 June as international World Environment Day at the Stockholm Conference on the Human Environment in 1972. The idea was to draw attention to the many problems that are facing our environment. They wanted to include as many people, organizations and governments, both local and national, as possible. They wanted to show that positive change is possible when people work together to fight for a common cause.

### **The first World Environment Day**

The first WED was celebrated in 1974 in the city of Spokane in the USA. The slogan for that first year was 'Only One Earth' and it was celebrated with the world's first world fair to be dedicated to the environment. The exhibition lasted for six months.

### **The hosts**

Since 1974 the WED has been hosted by 34 different cities in 25 different countries around the world, from Cuba to Korea, from Belgium to Brazil. Some countries have hosted the main celebrations two or more times, including Bangladesh, Canada and China. But that doesn't mean that all the celebrations take place in the host country. Every year people from all over the world take part in a huge number of different events to draw attention to the main issue.

## **The issues**

Each year the celebrations focus on a particular problem. Over the last ten years key issues have included wildlife, forests and plastic waste, among other things. Each issue has a slogan. Past slogans include ‘Think. Eat. Save.’ which asked people to think about the issue of food waste, and ‘Raise your voice, not the sea level’, to focus on the effect that global warming is having on small island nations around the world. As well as slogans, hash tags have become important for the campaigns too. In a recent campaign the hash tag #WildforLife became a strong symbol for the fight against all kinds of illegal trading in plants and animals.

## **What you can do**

If you want to take part in the celebrations, or support this year’s special cause, here are some things that you can do. You can visit the [official website](#) to find out what this year’s slogan is. You can search for the slogan online to find organizations and events in your area or online. You can share information about the cause and the events on social media or form a local action group of your own and organize an event in your community. Whatever you do, you won’t be alone. Millions of people all around the world will be joining the celebrations and fighting for a better future for our planet.

**Writing 4**

- Name some environmental disasters and their effects.**

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**Teachers’ notes and assessments:**

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**Approximate score out of 10:** .....

**The most repeated errors**