

Differently able

Language

Idioms and collocations, vocabulary about disability and achievement, comparison and contrast

Level

Intermediate (equivalent to CEF level B2)

Comment

This eLesson is about two individuals who have achieved international success despite having a disability. It should provide thought-provoking skills practice, while highlighting a number of common idioms, collocations and the use of *like / unlike* for comparison and contrast.

How to use the lesson

- 1 If any of your students have seen the film, 'The King's Speech', you can ask them to tell other students about the story. In feedback, elicit the fact that the King had a disability (he stuttered / stammered), but that through determination and by learning useful strategies, he was able to speak in public. Alternatively, give an example that your students will know of a successful disabled person – and see if the students can think of any more (perhaps even people they know personally).
- 2 Give out the worksheet. Students read the text to complete exercise 1. Encourage them to read quickly to improve their skimming skills and also to use their imagination to complete the information in the table. In feedback, you could ask students if they know any other percussion instruments, including perhaps traditional ones from their country. You could ask students if they ever listen to 'solo' percussion, ie without any other kinds of instruments.
- 3 Exercise 2 gives students detailed reading practice. You may want to clarify that *40 +* means 'more than 40'.
- 4 Exercise 3 highlights the common use of *Like / Unlike* for comparison and contrast. Ask students to highlight the example sentences (about Evelyn). Point out that the second half of the sentence should say something new and interesting about the person. So, for instance, sentences such as *Unlike Oscar, Evelyn is Scottish* are not acceptable. In order to make these sentences, they'll need to read at a deeper level and also use their imagination in writing.
- 5 Exercise 4 highlights common collocations and idioms. The verbs (1–12) are in the order in which they appear in the article, which should help students to complete the task. In feedback, you could point out that we say *pursue a career* when it's a more difficult or competitive one. *Come out on top* is when someone managed to win, despite starting off at a disadvantage.
- 6 Exercise 5 consolidates students' knowledge of six of the expressions from exercise 4. Remind them they may need to change the tense to match the question.

- 7 Exercise 6 gives the students personalised speaking practice in which they have further consolidation of the new vocabulary. As with any personalisation questionnaire, it's a good idea to remind students of phrases they can use if they prefer not to answer, such as *To be honest, I'd rather not say*. Encourage students to respond naturally to answers, using phrases such as *Really?* etc, and to ask relevant follow-up questions, such as *Why do you say that?* It may be a good idea to demonstrate by asking students to ask you some of the questions.
- 7 Ask the students to discuss these questions in small groups. Even though the second question is rather like the pre-reading idea, the students may now have more to say on the subject. In order to imagine how we might all be 'differently able', you could give simple examples of how, for example, taller and shorter people will have different advantages and disadvantages and will need to find different ways of doing the same things.
- 8 For homework, students could write about another 'differently able' person, either a public figure or someone they know personally, using some of the vocabulary from this lesson.

Answer key

1

Name	Nationality	Disability	Profession
Oscar Pistorius	South African	Amputated lower legs	Athlete
Evelyn Glennie	Scottish / British	Deaf	Musician / Percussionist

2

1 80 +	3 100+	5 17
2 27	4 60	6 40 +

- 3 There are many possible sentences. Examples could include:
Like Oscar, Evelyn has found different ways to do ordinary activities.
Unlike most people, Evelyn uses her whole body to hear.
Like Evelyn, Oscar has become successful in an able-bodied environment.

4

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

5

1 set	3 taken up	5 have
2 restrict yourself	4 give	6 competed in

Related websites

The following websites might be useful, for either yourself or your students.

<http://oscarpistorius.com/> (Oscar Pistorius Homepage)

<http://www.evelyn.co.uk/> (Evelyn Glennie's Homepage)