**THE BOY WITH THE PAST**

**THE ACTIVITY**

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**A learning sequence for ESL learners**

**Secondary 5**

**Karen Lyons**

**CSMV**

**François Hudon**

**Service national du RÉCIT, Domaine des langues**

**CSMV**

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**Overview of the learning sequence**

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**Description of the activity**

Students will listen to a podcast about a teenage boy who gave his twin babies up for adoption when he was fifteen years old. Years later, unable to stop thinking about his son and daughter, he searches and finally is able to get their names and finds them on Facebook. He writes the twins a long letter explaining his choices from long ago. To this day, they have yet to answer him.

**Period 1**

**Pre-listening (30 min)**

* In small groups, have students react to Handout 1: Myth vs reality. The answer to the items can be found here on page 5: <http://casexprime.gouv.qc.ca/en/magazine/numero/2/>.
* Conduct a group discussion on Handout 1
* Read the title of the podcast to students (The Boy With A Past). Ask them to predict what the podcast will be about.
* Students read the two introductory paragraphs to the podcast on CBC’s website: <http://www.cbc.ca/thecurrent/episode/2012/02/09/the-boy-with-the-past-documentary/>
* Ask them if their prediction was right.

**Listening (15 min)**

* The podcast should be separated into three parts.
* Have students listen to **Part 1** (from 0:00 to 10:56).
* [**The Boy With a Past - The Podcast**](http://www.cbc.ca/thecurrent/episode/2012/02/09/the-boy-with-the-past-documentary/)
* As they listen, they answer comprehension questions (Handout 2).

**After listening (30 min)**

* Go over students’ answers and have them share their slogans.
* Optional: ask students to vote for the best three slogans.

**Period 2**

**Pre-listening**

* Ask students to discuss the following questions in groups of 4. This is a good opportunity to evaluate C1.

**Discussion questions**

- How would you react if you or your girlfriend were pregnant?

- Would you consider keeping the baby? Would you want to give the baby up for adoption?

- What is the ideal age to have a baby?

- Do you know any teenager mom/dad/parents?

- How would your life be different if you had a baby?

- Do you agree that teenage dads are often ignored, shunned, and shamed?

**Listening**

* Have students listen to Part 2: 10:57- 20:16
* As they listen, they answer comprehension questions (Handout4 )

**After listening**

* Go over the questions with students.
* Students prepare a debate about adoption. Using the blackboard or an IWB,ask students to find as many arguments for and against as they can. Another option would be to use Google Drive.
* You can then hold a live debate or ask students to choose a side and write their response in the form of a blog.
* Optional
* Post the following scenarios on the board and ask students to discuss in groups of 4. This is a good opportunity to evaluate C1.

**SCENARIO 1[[1]](#footnote-1):** Caroline has the unfortunate habit of forgetting to take the pill when she falls in love.

Subjects to discuss: In your opinion, why does Caroline forget to take the pill? Does the fact that she is in love affect her contraceptive behaviour? What would you say to her to encourage her to take her pill properly? What tips would you give her? How could her boyfriend get involved?

**SCENARIO 2:** Because Martin’s girlfriend fears that he will leave her, she has decided to stop taking the pill (without telling him) and so become pregnant and be sure of keeping him.

Questions to discuss: What do you think of this situation? What can boys do to make sure that such a situation does not occur?

**Period 3**

**Pre-listening**

* Elicit students’ answers by asking them what they remember from parts 1 and 2 of the podcast.

**Listening**

* Have students listen to Part 3: 20:17- 27:29
* As they listen, they answer comprehension questions (Handout 5 )

**After listening**

* Go over the comprehension questions with the students.
* Have students team up with a partner. Using [handout 6](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1V3WkAVaRVpgwmAOw1MNz9lnQMGmzyPJt9PJp80lQQiw/edit?usp=sharing), they fill-in the timeline together. They must order the 19 events chronologically.
* Answer key: Chris meets his girlfriend at the school dance- 6-12-14-11-4-Birth of twins-10-8-2-16-13-5-9-3-15-11-7-Chris wonders why the twins do not write back.
* Students will then pretend they are one of Chris’s twins and write him a letter in response to his.
* Using handout 7A (competency 3) or 7B (competency 2 and 3), students plan the letter.

**Period 4**

Students write their letter using handout 8.

Handout 1: Myth vs Reality[[2]](#footnote-2)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Statements** | **Myth or Reality?****Please provide an explanation** |
| The girl cannot become pregnant during her first sexual encounter. |  |
| The girl cannot become pregnant if she has not yet begun to menstruate. |  |
| It is impossible to become pregnant while menstruating. |  |
| If the boy pulls out before ejaculating, there is no risk of getting the girl pregnant. |  |
| Pregnancy cannot occur if the sexual encounter occurs standing up, or with the woman on top. |  |
| Birth control pills make you put on weight. |  |
| Birth control pills cause cancer. |  |
| Birth control pills protect against STIs. |  |
| Birth control pills begin to be effective **at the first dose.** |  |

Handout 2: Introduction to the Podcast

1. You will listen to a podcast entitled “**The Boy with the Past”.** What do you think this podcast is about?

2. Read the following paragraphs that introduce the podcast[[3]](#footnote-3).

He was 16 years old when his twins were born. A teenage father who'd agreed with his 15 year old girlfriend that the babies would be better off adopted by another couple. But that didn't make it easy. No one ever talks about the teenage Dad. He is often ignored, shunned or shamed. Aziza Sindhu brings us the story of one man and the children he does not know and cannot forget.

**The Boy with the Past**

Most people who live through the teenage years can remember what a challenge it was; far too challenging to throw parenthood into the mix. But many teens do become parents long before they become adults.

Teen moms get a lot of sympathy and if they're lucky, they'll get a lot of help. Teen dads typically don't get much of either. But they can feel just as overwhelmed, just as lonely and just as lost as any teen mother. Knowing you're too young to raise a family doesn't make it any easier to give one up. Today, we bring you Aziza Sindhu's documentary, *The Boy with a Past.*

**Was your prediction about the podcast right? What is the podcast about?**

**Handout 3: Questions for Part 1 (from 0:00 to 10:56)**

**1.** What did Chris think about when he got back on the bus?

2. What was the conclusion of the discussion between the parents ?

3. What did they find out with the ultrasound ?

4. How was Chris treated in school by the other students?

 5. How would your parents react if you were in a similar situation?

 6. What do you think will happen next?

7. Imagine that you are responsible for promoting a pregnancy prevention program. Write a slogan that you could use to raise awareness about the importance of this issue.

**Handout 4: Questions for Part 2 (10:57-20:16)**

You will now listen to part two of the podcast The Boy with the Past. As you listen, answer the following questions:

1. How much time did they have to say goodbye to the twins?

2. Where does Chris search for the twins?

3. What happens to Chris’ reputation?

5. Why does Chris feel empty?

6. How do you think your friends would react to your fatherhood/motherhood?

**Handout 5: Questions for section 3 (20:17-27:29)**

You will now listen to part three of the podcast The Boy with the Past. As you listen, answer the following questions:

1. What are names of the twins?

3. Where do Chris and his wife live?

4. How does Chris find the twins?

5. What does he say in the letter he writes to the twins?

6. Why do you think the twins never wrote back?

7. Would you have written back to Chris? Why/Why not?

**Handout 7A (C3 version): Writing a letter to Chris - Planning Phase**

1. You will now pretend that you are one of Chris’s twins. Write him a letter in response to his.

**Your letter must include the following elements:**

- Greeting

- How it made you feel to read Chris’s letter

- How you felt growing up without knowing your real parents

- Why you waited all this time to write back

- Your occupation and where you live.

- If you would like to meet

- Salutation

My text will be in the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ tense.

**Handout 7B (C2+C3 version): Writing the story from a different perspective - Planning Phase**

1. You will now pretend that you are one of the following person:

* Chris’ dad
* Chris’ mom
* One of the adoptive parents

Write the story from this character’s point of view. Below are the text requirements depending on the person you choose.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Character chosen** | **Requirements** |
| * Chris’ dad
* Chris’ mom
 | - how you felt when you learned about the pregnancy and how you reacted to it- what you did to influence (or not) the decision to give away the twins for adoption - how you felt when the babies were given away for adoption - talk about Chris’ problems at school- how you supported Chris after the adoption |
| * One of the adoptive parents
 | - talk about the adoption process that you went through- how you felt when you took the babies at the hospital- about the pictures+letter you sent- why you stopped writing to the biological parents- how you felt when the new law was passed |

My text will be in the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ tense.

**Handout 8: Your letter to Chris**

1. Source of scenarios: <http://publications.msss.gouv.qc.ca/acrobat/f/documentation/2005/05-314-05A.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Adapted from : <http://publications.msss.gouv.qc.ca/acrobat/f/documentation/2005/05-314-05A.pdf>, page 5. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Taken from CBC’s website: <http://www.cbc.ca/thecurrent/episode/2012/02/09/the-boy-with-the-past-documentary/> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)