**11th Grade**

**Listening Comprehension**

**Presenter:** We all know it’s important to defy stereotypes. I don’t need to point out that stereotyping can have negative consequences – the pigeonholing of people or the promoting deep-rooted discrimination. The disappointing fact, however, is our brains do seem more prone to accepting negative stereotypes than positive ones.

Researchers have long known that we characterize groups of people as ‘like us and good’ or ‘not like us and not good’, often unconsciously. Whatever social group we call our own, we assume it’s the best. We start doing so at an early age, possibly to help us cope with the world around us. Once we’ve done that, it’s tough to undo the assumptions we’ve made.

In one study, volunteers were given information about two fictitious groups, being told that one (the Pellums) was ‘good’ and the other (the Kitils) should be frowned upon. They were fed information, with examples like, ‘a Kitil person kicked a cat!’ or ‘a Pellum member gave their mother some flowers’. Meanwhile, volunteers’ brains were scanned. Interestingly, when they heard any type of information about the Pellums, there was relatively little brain activity. However, brains lit up on hearing negative stories about the Kitils, seemingly making an effort to store these as new stereotypes. There was also stronger activity when volunteers heard positive information about the Kitils, as this would have come as more of a shock and brains had to work harder to process it.

This poses the question of what happens when we see stories in the news about particular groups of people. The research implies that our brains are attracted to and quickly learn negative stereotypes, which strengthen over time. What’s important is to become aware that this is happening and work against the process. Luckily, as I’ll now summarize, we do have the ability to train ourselves in this regard.

**Task 1**

**Listen to the text and decide whether the following statements are True (T) or False (F), according to the presenter. Write TRUE or FALSE next to each statement.**

1. The speaker believes that rejecting stereotypes is essential for society’s well-being.
2. According to the presenter, people’s brains tend to adopt positive stereotypes more easily than negative ones.
3. Humans often divide others into categories similar to “us versus them” without realizing it.
4. Our preference for our own group usually develops later in life as a result of social pressure.
5. The study involved two imaginary groups, one described favourably and the other negatively.
6. When hearing stories about the “good” group, participants’ brains showed intense activity.
7. The researchers noticed that hearing negative stories about the “bad” group activated certain areas of the brain.
8. Positive information about the disliked group was processed quickly and effortlessly by the brain.
9. The findings suggest that experiencing negative stereotypes can reinforce them over time.
10. The lecturer claims there is nothing we can do to reduce the influence of stereotypes on our thinking.

**Task 2**

**Listen to the text and choose the best option (A, B, or C) to complete the sentences below.**

**11. Despite the obvious effects of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_, we are naturally much more likely to accept them.**  
A. negative labelling and prejudice   
B. positive thinking and cooperation  
C. communication and teamwork

**12. When we are young, we often make the instinctive decision that the\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is better than others.**  
A. community we identify ourselves with  
B. social group we avoid  
C.  the first social group we learn about

**13. Research has shown that there is comparatively \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ when people hear new information about a group they view positively.**  
A. rapid emotional response  
B. little neural response   
C. increased memory formation

**14. However, the brain seems to treat good news about a “bad group” as a \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ that has to be dealt with.**  
A. minor distraction  
B. usual emotional reaction  
C. surprising piece of information

**15. It seems our brains are hard-wired to seek out and learn information which supports our view of groups of people we don’t like, and this \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.**  
A. intensifies gradually over time  
B. disappears with enough evidence  
C. immediately changes our mindset

**11th Grade Reading**

**Text 1**

**FITNESS ON THE GO**

**Read the text. For paragraphs 1–5, choose from the sentences (A–H). Three sentences do not match any paragraph.**

**1** Summer is a terrific time for fun and relaxation, but I’m definitely less active during this time, and when autumn comes around, I notice it. I was in great shape at the end of last term, having played basketball all season, even winning a tournament. But things had changed. With a busy school schedule ahead of me, I wasn’t able to pick up my old hobby and I needed to make some adjustments. I had never been much of a gym person, so the likelihood of me joining one remained slim. I needed a programme that I could do on my own, and one that didn’t interfere with an intense amount of studying.

**2** I was searching for some ideas online when I stumbled across an article on HIIT – high intensity interval training. The basic idea is that you do really intense workouts for a very short period of time, which can be from three to twenty minutes three times a week. The intensity puts a bit of healthy stress on your body, causing your heart rate to rise for some time and encouraging your body to renew itself. But twenty minutes for a workout? I was used to playing basketball for two hours a day, so I was rather sceptical of HIIT’s benefits. But given my course load this term I really had no choice but to give it a try.

**3** There were several different options for HIIT workouts, but the one that appealed to me the most was called the seven-minute workout challenge. What intrigued me was that users gave rave reviews of its results. One said his long work commute made getting to the gym nearly impossible, and another was a busy business traveller. Not only were they able to fit it into their daily schedule, but they claimed to have lost weight and gained more energy. Some remarked that it beat their traditional hour-long workout.

**4** The routine consists of twelve different exercises targeting all the body’s major muscle groups: the chest, the back, the arms, the legs and so on. I would need to do each exercise for thirty seconds, and I was allowed to rest for only ten seconds between exercises. I won’t list all the exercises here, but just to give you an idea, the first exercise was jumping jacks, where you jump up and down and clap your hands above your head. That really gets your heart rate going. Another was push-ups, where you get down on the floor and push your body up with your arms. To be honest, each exercise was fairly simple, common and well-known. I didn’t have to learn a bunch of new moves, but I simply had to do each one quite fast.

**5** So, what’s my final verdict on this routine? Having done it consistently for three weeks now, I can definitely say that it suits my needs just fine. I miss the competitiveness of sport, because HIIT is a lonely experience unless you do it with a friend. But I would definitely recommend this workout if you want to incorporate something easy and free into your week. I wouldn’t replace a longer, more fulfilling exercise experience with HIIT, but there’s no harm in adding it to what you already do.

**Which paragraph...**

A describes what specific exercises the routine included.

B discusses how the writer struggled to keep fit while studying.

C describes the benefits of working out with friends.

D mentions what others said about a short workout routine.

E explains how the writer discovered a new way to exercise.

F gives the writer’s opinion after completing the routine.

G mentions how the writer felt after the first workout.

H describes how the writer sets goals for future training.

**11th Grade Reading**

**Text 2**

**WHO INVENTED CHEWING GUM?**

**Read the text below. For questions 6-10, choose the best answer (A, B, C, or D) based on the information provided in the passage.**

Humans have been chewing on something since the dawn of history, usually sap (resin) from various trees or wax. In 1848, John Curtis made the first gum in the United States when he cooked resin from a spruce tree on his wood-burning stove. In 1869, the first patent issued for chewing gum was given to William Semple, a dentist in Ohio, who invented a gum to exercise the jaws and stimulate the gums. It never sold, probably because it was made primarily of rubber.

The invention of gum, as we know it today, came about because of the friendship of two men, Thomas Adams, a photographer, and Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, who had defeated the Texans at the Alamo. When Santa Anna was exiled from Mexico, he lived with Adams on Staten Island, New York. Adams had tried different schemes to make money but all had failed. Santa Anna told him of an idea that could make Adams wealthy. He told him of a gummy substance that people in Mexico had been chewing for thousands of years. It was called chicle, the milky sap from the sapodilla tree that grows in the tropical rain forests of Central America. But gum was not on either's mind. The plan was to blend chicle and rubber together to make cheaper tires, toys, and rainboots.

Santa Anna had his friends in Mexico ship a ton of chicle to Adams. Although he laboured for about a year, every one of his experiments failed. He had not been able to blend chicle and rubber. A vast amount of useless chicle was stored in his warehouse and Adams decided to throw it all into the river.

By sheer luck, Adams happened to go into a drugstore and saw a little girl buy some paraffin wax chewing gum. He remembered that Santa Anna had told him that Mexicans chewed chicle. Inspired, Adams started making unflavored pure chicle gum. It sold extremely well and Adams built a thriving business.

Some years later, John Colgan, a drugstore owner in Louisville, Kentucky, was selling a gum he made from balsam tree sap and flavored with powdered sugar. He had heard of how successful Thomas Adams was, so he ordered 100 pounds of chicle. He started making Taffy Tolu Chewing Gum, which was so successful that he sold his drugstore and devoted his time to manufacturing chewing gum.

A breakthrough in gum manufacture occurred when a popcorn salesman, William J. White, started experimenting with a barrel of chicle a friend had given him. He discovered how to flavor gum. Chicle does not absorb flavors, but sugar does. He combined flavors, such as peppermint, with corn syrup and then blended the mixture with the chicle.

In 1899, the major gum manufacturers united to become the American Chicle Company. William White was president and Thomas Adams, Jr., was chairman of the board. You might see some of their brands today, such as Black Jack and Beeman's.

People have been chewing gum ever since.

**6. Which of the following is NOT stated in paragraph 1?**

A W. Semple was never able to sell his gum.

В People used to chew a substance made by bees.

C The first patent for gum belongs to a doctor.

D Curtis invented chewing gum while cooking food.

**7. According to the passage Thomas Adams ........... .**

A took photos of Santa Anna

В was going to produce rubber things

C bought a ship from his Mexican friends

D was developing chewing gum for a year

**8. Which of the following is TRUE of Santa Anna?**

A He was forced to leave Mexico.

В He defended the people of Texas.

C He knew the South Americans' habits well.

D He made a lot of money selling gum.

**9. The chewing gum as we know it today ........... .**

A was made in a drugstore

В appeared due to a chance

C was a result of a 50-year research

D would have been impossible without Beeman

**10. Gum got extremely popular when ........... .**

A balsams were added to chicle

В it was sold together with popcorn

C its taste was variegated by W. White

D chicle was combined with paraffin wax

**11th Grade Reading**

**Text 3**

**Read the text below. Six sentences have been removed from the text. Choose from the sentences A-H the one which fits each gap (11-15). There is one example (0). Note that there are two extra sentences which you do not need to use.**

**THE USE OF COLOUR**

For a long time, scientists have been trying to prove that the way people use colour shows something about their personalities. Researchers began to do studies into colour preference in the early 1900s. Max Pfister, a Swiss psychologist, was one of the first. He created The Colour Pyramid Test. **0** \_**С\_** People who took the test were given 24 small squares of different shades of red, green, blue, purple, yellow, orange, brown, black, white and grey. They were also given six charts, which were named. A couple of these names were ‘Pretty as you can’ and ‘Ugly as you can’. Then they were asked to arrange the squares on the charts.

Researchers then interpreted the ways the people arranged the variety of colours on the charts. **11**\_\_\_\_\_ For example, they believed that those who chose a lot of red acted in a bold way without thinking. A strong preference for yellow showed that a person was sensible, rather than emotional. A person with a creative imagination and good self-control would probably prefer green. However, a preference for green sometimes seemed to indicate possible psychological problems. Since then many other similar tests have been developed, including the possibilities of testing people who are colour-blind.

Some scientists are also looking at colour from another angle. They are looking into the ways colours can be used to heal the body and mind. Today, colour therapists are using lamps fitted with special filters which can produce different coloured light. **12** \_\_\_\_\_ They say blue light is useful in treating drug addiction and depression. They also claim red light can be used to treat migraine headaches and even cancer. However, more scientific research into the healing effects of light is needed.

Perhaps one of the most common and accepted uses of colour therapy is for the treatment of Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). **13** \_\_\_\_\_ To treat SAD, doctors ask their patients to sit in front of an extremely bright white light every day. Researchers at over fifteen medical clinics in different countries have reported success with this therapy. **14** \_\_\_\_\_ However, their symptoms usually return very soon after the light therapy stops. The good news is that many patients only need the treatment from November to April. When spring arrives, the depression disappears. **15** \_\_\_\_\_ The power of light is truly amazing and highly recommended!

**A** They have reported some very interesting results.  
**B** Over time, these early experiments laid the foundation for modern colour psychology.    
**C** It was used to reveal personality characteristics.  
**D** People with this problem become very depressed during the long dark days of winter.  
**E** Most patients improve a lot within a week.  
**F** They found that people who favoured certain colours had a lot in common.  
**G** There is enough natural light for sufferers to feel happier and more energetic.

**H** Some experts, however, argue that cultural background can strongly influence colour preferences.