

Breathing Easier

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THIS LESSON IS AIMED AT STUDENTS WITH AN INTERMEDIATE LEVEL OF ENGLISH.

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Listening

Listen and answer the questions.

1. What does Paul moan about?
 - a. TV
 - b. The fridge.
 - c. His wife.
 - d. None of these.

2. Can Paul change his wife's mind?
 - a. Yes, he can.
 - b. No, he can't.

3. Which appliance keeps air moist?
 - a. Humidifier
 - b. Air purifier
 - c. Vacuum cleaner
 - d. Gadgets.

4. What does the air purifier do?
 - a. Make air moist.
 - b. Clean the air of pollen.
 - c. Suck up carpet mites.
 - d. Cause hayfever.

5. Why is Paul's life better now?
 - a. His wife listens to his complaints.
 - b. He's not a grouch anymore.
 - c. He breathes easier and doesn't itch.
 - d. His sore throat has gone.

Listen again and try and fill in the blanks in the script below. If necessary repeat two or three times.

My wife **a.**[] I'm an old grouch. This is because I moan continuously about the various electrical appliances she keeps asking me to buy. I'm **b.**[] about the TV, fridge or hairdryer here, but all of the different machines I have to get to keep our environment comfortable.

There are **c.**[] good reasons for getting each of these as she patiently explains and no amount of objections from me will change her mind **d.**[], though she's kind enough to let me try. The first of these we bought in October. A large humidifier for the living room. In case you don't know what this is, it keeps the air in the room moist. When I **e.**[] why we needed one of these, she told me the air in Japan in the winter is very dry and reminded me that last winter all the colds and sore throats I got were **f.**[].

Next came the air purifier. Again, I wanted to know why on earth we needed one of these. The **g.**[], was to clean the air of pollen, which she pointed out, had caused my horrible hayfever of the previous spring.

The final straw came when she informed me we were buying an **h.**[] new vacuum cleaner. But we have one that works just fine I objected. True, she replied, but it doesn't suck up the 'dani' in the carpet. What are dani, I asked wearily and why do we need to suck them up? Dani are carpet mites. Do you remember the very itchy rash you got last summer? That was **i.**[] by dani biting you.

So I gave up and we now have a house full of gadgets. **j.**[] hand, I breathe a lot easier and I don't itch any more.

Words and Expressions

Read the sentences below and for the words in bold write in the meaning from the list a ~ j. The first has been done for you.

- [e] I strongly **object** to any change in the plans at this late date.
- [] That's an interesting little **gadget**. What's it for?
- [] John is such a **grouch**. He's always complaining.
- [] I get terrible **hayfever** in spring. I'm sneezing all the time.
- [] You **moan** all the time. Just lighten up, will you!
- [] I think you should see Mr. Brown, now. He's been waiting **patiently** for the past hour.
- [] Sorry I can't talk. I have a **sore throat**.
- [] I'd like a **moist** cloth to clean my hands, please.
- [] Bees take **pollen** from flowers and turn it into honey.
- [] When you think about what we are doing to the **environment**, it's a little scary.
- [] Doctor, I've got this **itchy** red **rash** on my arm. Is there anything you can do about it?

- a. Somebody who complains a lot.
- b. To complain about something.
- c. The place where you live.
- d. To do without complaining.
- e. To be against something.
- f. A little wet.
- g. When your throat hurts.
- h. A yellowish dust found in flowers and other plants.
- i. Symptoms caused by breathing in too much pollen.
- j. Little red bumps on the skin that are very ticklish.
- k. Machines, devices, objects.

- **No amount of ...** *An expression that means without limit and is often used to say that something can't be done. Examples are;*

No amount of apologizing will help now. The boss is too angry to forgive this.
It's too late for this plant. No amount of water is going to bring it back to life.

- **Why on earth ...** *Used to express exasperation and disbelief. For example;*

Why on earth did you tell her you'd take her to the party when you knew you had to work on that day?

Ben knew the forecast was for heavy rain today so why on earth he didn't take his umbrella I don't know.

- **Point out ...** *Used to make an explanation. Examples are;*

She pointed out that I'd been late three times this week and one more time would mean I'd be fired.

I'd just like to point out that we've now been here for three hours without coming to a decision.

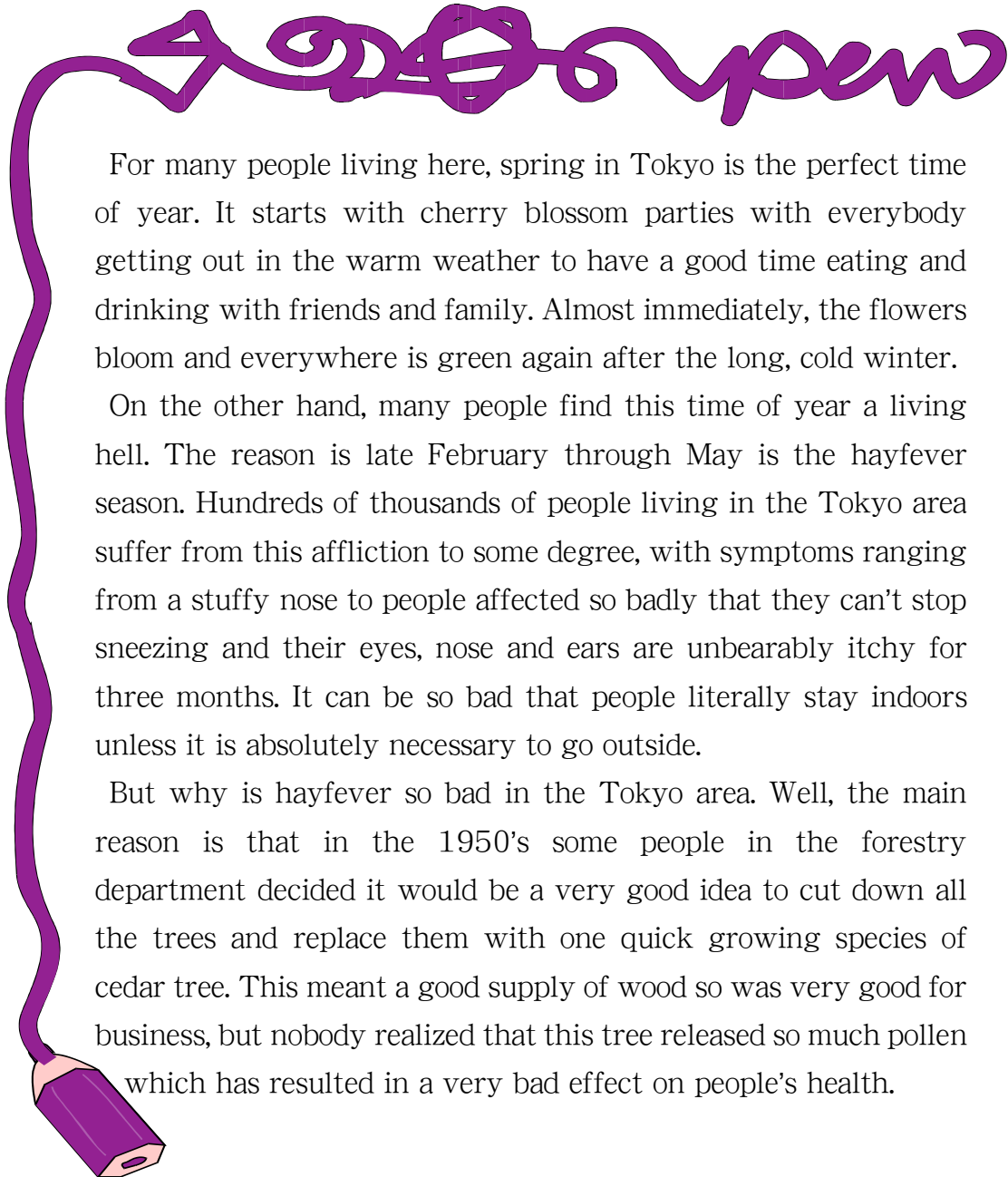
- **...the final straw...** *Used when you reach the end of your patience or a point which you won't go past. Examples are;*

Today has been terrible. The car broke down, the water pipe burst and flooded the kitchen, but the final straw was when I lost my key and couldn't get in.

That's the final straw. You two are grounded for breaking that window.

Reading

Read the section below and answer the questions.



For many people living here, spring in Tokyo is the perfect time of year. It starts with cherry blossom parties with everybody getting out in the warm weather to have a good time eating and drinking with friends and family. Almost immediately, the flowers bloom and everywhere is green again after the long, cold winter.

On the other hand, many people find this time of year a living hell. The reason is late February through May is the hayfever season. Hundreds of thousands of people living in the Tokyo area suffer from this affliction to some degree, with symptoms ranging from a stuffy nose to people affected so badly that they can't stop sneezing and their eyes, nose and ears are unbearably itchy for three months. It can be so bad that people literally stay indoors unless it is absolutely necessary to go outside.

But why is hayfever so bad in the Tokyo area. Well, the main reason is that in the 1950's some people in the forestry department decided it would be a very good idea to cut down all the trees and replace them with one quick growing species of cedar tree. This meant a good supply of wood so was very good for business, but nobody realized that this tree released so much pollen which has resulted in a very bad effect on people's health.

1. What does spring start with in Tokyo?
2. Does everybody like spring?
3. What are the worst symptoms of hayfever?
4. What sort of tree was planted in great numbers in the 1950's?
5. What causes the hayfever near Tokyo?

Writing

Do you suffer from hayfever or any other allergies. Write what happens and how you deal with the problem.

Transcript

For this transcript I have highlighted the words and expressions I think are difficult for this level. Students can look them up in a dictionary or review the lesson.

My wife thinks I'm an old **grouch**. This is because I **moan** continuously about the various electrical appliances she keeps asking me to buy. I'm not talking about the TV, fridge or hairdryer here, but all of the different machines I have to get to keep our **environment** comfortable.

There are always good reasons for getting each of these as she **patiently** explains and no amount of objections from me will change her mind one little bit, though she's kind enough to let me try. The first of these we bought in October. A large humidifier for the living room. In case you don't know what this is, it keeps the air in the room **moist**. When I asked why we needed one of these, she told me the air in Japan in the winter is very dry and reminded me that last winter all the colds and **sore throats** I got were because of this.

Next came the air purifier. Again, I wanted to know why on earth we needed one of these. The reply, was to clean the air of **pollen**, which she pointed out, had caused my horrible **hayfever** of the previous spring.

The final straw came when she informed me we were buying an expensive new **vacuum cleaner**. But we have one that works just fine I **objected**. True, she replied, but it doesn't **suck up** the 'dani' in the carpet. What are dani, I asked wearily and why do we need to suck them up? Dani are carpet **mites**. Do you remember the very **itchy rash** you got last summer? That was caused by dani biting you.

So I gave up and we now have a house full of **gadgets**. On the other hand, I breathe a lot easier and I don't itch any more.

Teacher Notes

You can find the answers to the exercises on this page with a few guidelines for teachers.

VIDEO AND LISTENING

- Play the video through once with sound off. Ask the students (in groups) to write down what they think the video is about and make a note of any words or expressions they think may appear in the script. Also, what do they think the narrator is saying? These can be discussed in class and will give the students a background from which to start the listening section. One exercise would be to get students to make their own narration for the video. If necessary, give students practice with the vocabulary and word sections before showing it.
- Play video again with sound on. Students are asked to answer the first set of questions 1~5.

Answers; d b a b c

- Listen again to the middle portion of the story. Fill in the gaps with the words you hear.

**Answers; a. thinks b. not talking c. very d. one little bit e. asked
f. because of this g. reply h. expensive i. caused
j. On the other**

WORDS AND EXPRESSIONS

- As well as the exercise here I might practice the words introduced in this section by use of short quizzes or vocabulary games. There are many.

Answers; e k a i b d g f h c j

READING

- The reading text expands the lesson to include cross culture experiences.

For my own classes, depending on the level, I ask the students to read the text first without a dictionary. They then answer the questions and then we will come back to the text and go through it again with the aid of a dictionary to cover any new words or expressions.

Answers;

- 1. Cherry blossom parties.**
- 2. No, they don't.**
- 3. Sneezing, itchy eyes, nose and ears.**
- 4. A kind of cedar tree.**
- 5. Cedar tree pollen.**

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