

# 1

# Creativity



Street painter, Florence, Italy



# TEDTALKS

**SIR KEN ROBINSON** is an English educationalist, writer and former Professor of Arts Education at Warwick University (UK). In 1998 he led an inquiry for a British government advisory committee into the significance of creativity in the educational system and the economy. He was knighted for his achievements in this area in 2003. He believes passionately in the innate talents of each individual and that the current western education system is not structured in a way that makes the most of these talents.

Ken Robinson's idea worth spreading is that we radically need to rethink the way education works so that we can foster rather than stifle creativity.



## BACKGROUND

- 1 You are going to watch an edited version of a TED Talk by Sir Ken Robinson called *Do schools kill creativity?* Read the text about the speaker and the talk. Then work in pairs and discuss the questions.

- 1 What has been Ken Robinson's focus in education?
- 2 What do you think the phrase 'stifle creativity' means?
- 3 What do you think is meant by 'creativity' in education? What subjects or activities at your school were not creative, in your opinion?

## KEY WORDS

- 2 Read the sentences (1–6). The words in bold are used in the TED Talk. First guess the meaning of the words. Then match the words with their definitions (a–f).

- 1 In the past, **ADHD** in children was not really a recognized condition. Now children are given help with it.
- 2 The Minister of Education's **contention** is that history lessons should focus on the country's own history.
- 3 Fewer university students study **humanities** than sciences.
- 4 Society tends to **stigmatize** those who fail in education and business.
- 5 His advice was **benign**, but it made me feel more stressed.
- 6 In the Nativity story, three kings come with gifts of gold, **frankincense** and myrrh for the new baby.

- a a claim or argument
- b academic subjects concerned with human culture, e.g. philosophy, history, languages
- c kind, intending to do good or be helpful
- d an aromatic resin from a tree used in perfumes
- e an abbreviation for Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
- f to label or mark something out as bad or disgraceful

## AUTHENTIC LISTENING SKILLS Rhythm and stress

English is a stress-timed language. Rather than giving each word and syllable equal stress and length, the rhythm of English varies and speakers tend to stress the most important (content) words. (For multi-syllable words, only certain syllables are stressed, not the whole word.) The less important words are not stressed and are crowded into a shorter space.

When listening to fast native speech you won't hear every word. But you will hear the content words (or the stressed syllables in them) and from these you will be able to construct the meaning of the sentence. For example:

*You won't hear every word. But you will hear the content words or the stressed syllables in them.*

- 3a Look at the Authentic listening skills box. Look at the extract from Ken Robinson's talk. Listen and underline the words and syllables that are stressed.

'What these things have in common, you see, is that kids will take a chance. If they don't know, they'll have a go. Am I right? They're not frightened of being wrong.'

- 3b Work in pairs. Practise saying the extract in Exercise 3a with the same stress.

- 3c Listen to the next part of the talk. Complete the extract with the content words.

I <sup>1</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ mean to <sup>2</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ that being  
<sup>3</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ is the <sup>4</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ thing as being  
<sup>5</sup> \_\_\_\_\_. What we <sup>6</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ know is,  
 if you're <sup>7</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ <sup>8</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ to be  
<sup>9</sup> \_\_\_\_\_, you'll <sup>10</sup> \_\_\_\_\_ come up with  
 anything <sup>11</sup> \_\_\_\_\_.




Edited with the demo version of  
Infix Pro PDF Editor

To remove this notice, visit:  
[www.iceni.com/unlock.htm](http://www.iceni.com/unlock.htm)




# 1.1 Do schools kill creativity?

## TED TALKS Watch at home


**1**  **1.1** Watch the first part (0.00–5.25) of the edited version of the TED Talk. Complete the sentences using one word per space.

- 1 Ken Robinson believes creativity in education is as important as \_\_\_\_\_.
- 2 The little girl never paid attention, but in this \_\_\_\_\_ she did.
- 3 The little boy in the play didn't say 'I bring you Frankincense.' He said 'Frank \_\_\_\_\_ this.'
- 4 Children are not \_\_\_\_\_ of being wrong.
- 5 Both companies and education systems \_\_\_\_\_ mistakes.
- 6 We grow out of \_\_\_\_\_ as we are educated and get older.
- 7 We don't think of Shakespeare being a \_\_\_\_\_, but he was in someone's \_\_\_\_\_ class.
- 8 His son didn't want to move to Los Angeles away from his \_\_\_\_\_. Ken Robinson and his wife were quite \_\_\_\_\_ about it.

**2** Work in pairs. Ken Robinson mixes serious points with jokes and anecdotes. Which points (1–8) in Exercise 1 are serious points (S) and which are jokes / anecdotes (J / A)?

**3**  **1.1** Watch the second part (5.25–7.31) of the talk. Answer the questions.

- 1 According to Ken Robinson, what is the same about education systems around the world?
- 2 Which subjects are a) at the top and b) at the bottom?
- 3 What does Ken Robinson think about this hierarchy or order of subjects?
- 4 According to Ken Robinson, what does the aim of university education seem to be?
- 5 Where do university professors live, according to Ken Robinson? What do you think he means by this?

**4**  **1.1** Watch the third part (7.31–9.18) of the talk. Choose the correct option to complete the sentences.

- 1 19th-century public education systems were designed to meet the needs of *industrialism* / *the government*.
- 2 People were steered away from subjects like *history* / *music* that wouldn't directly result in a job.
- 3 Ken Robinson says that the result of this is that many talented people feel they are not *talented* / *employable*.
- 4 In the past, if you had a degree, you had *status* / *a job*. Now, Ken Robinson says degrees aren't worth anything.
- 5 There is a process of academic *evolution* / *inflation*. Each job requires a higher degree.



- 5 ▶ 1.1 Watch the fourth part (9.18–10.00) of the talk. Complete the three adjectives Ken Robinson uses to describe intelligence. Then match the adjectives with the definitions (a–c).

- 1 d \_\_\_\_\_  
2 d \_\_\_\_\_  
3 d \_\_\_\_\_

- a The brain is not divided into compartments. Intelligence comes about through the interaction of different parts of the brain.  
b Each person is intelligent in an individual way.  
c We think about the world in the different ways we experience it – visually, in sound, in movement.

- 6 ▶ 1.1 Watch the fifth part (10.00 to the end) of the talk. Complete the notes about Gillian Lynne. The first letter of each word is given for you.

**Name:** Gillian Lynne

**Profession now:** Choreographer (work includes <sup>1</sup> C \_\_\_\_\_ and *Phantom of the Opera*)

**School life:** Couldn't <sup>2</sup> c \_\_\_\_\_; had

<sup>3</sup> A \_\_\_\_\_; went to see a <sup>4</sup> s \_\_\_\_\_

**At the doctor's:** <sup>5</sup> S \_\_\_\_\_ on her hands; doctor left her in the room with a <sup>6</sup> r \_\_\_\_\_ on; Gillian started <sup>7</sup> d \_\_\_\_\_

**After the doctor's:** Went to a dance school with others who 'had to move to <sup>8</sup> t \_\_\_\_\_'

**Career:** Went to <sup>9</sup> R \_\_\_\_\_ Ballet School;

<sup>10</sup> f \_\_\_\_\_ her own company; met Andrew Lloyd Webber; became a <sup>11</sup> m \_\_\_\_\_

**Conclusion:** Another person might have put Gillian on medication and told her to <sup>12</sup> c \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>13</sup> d \_\_\_\_\_

## VOCABULARY IN CONTEXT

- 7 ▶ 1.2 Watch the clips from the TED Talk. Choose the correct meaning of the words and phrases.
- 8 ▶ 1.3 Watch the clips from the talk. Complete the collocations. Then discuss your answers.
- 9 Work in pairs. Complete the sentences in your own words.
- I had never ... before, but I had a go.
  - What strikes most visitors to my country is ...
  - Anyone who thinks that ... is profoundly mistaken.
  - ... is quite a protracted process.

## CRITICAL THINKING The speaker's aims

- 10 Work in pairs. In his talk, do you think Ken Robinson's main purpose was to entertain, persuade, inform or something else?

- 11 Read these comments\* about the TED Talk. Do you agree with the viewers' comments? Were their opinions the same as yours?

### Viewers' comments

**K** Kris – Ken Robinson is right when he says that most education systems don't value individual talent. They just seem intent on producing people in the same mould. That's actually quite depressing, but the way he presented it kept me engaged. His humour shows the absurdity of the current education system.

**Y** Yuki – Sir Ken Robinson made us laugh but at the same time made us reflect: we must all ignore the rat race of the school/college system and follow our real dreams.

\*The comments were created for this activity.

## PRESENTATION SKILLS Using humour

- 12 Work in pairs. What are the benefits of using humour in a talk? What could be the dangers?
- 13 Look at the Presentation tips box. Compare your ideas from Exercise 12 with the points in the box.

### TIPS

People use humour in presentations for the same reason they use stories or strong images – as a way to connect and to help their audience relate to their argument. You don't have to use humour, but if you do use it, remember these points:

- Its purpose is to relax people. If you feel unnatural or nervous using it, then it probably won't be relaxing.
- It should illustrate your point and not distract from it.
- It should not offend any group or individual.
- It helps if the humour is based on a personal anecdote which others can easily relate to.
- It's a good idea to test any jokes on friends or colleagues before your presentation.

- 14 ▶ 1.4 Watch the clip from the TED Talk. Which of the points in the Presentation tips box do you think are true of the joke Ken Robinson tells?
- 15 You are going to talk about an aspect of your school life. Choose one of the topics below or think of your own idea. Make some brief notes about the point you want to make. Then think of a (funny) story that illustrates the point.
- the way you were taught
  - the way children behaved
  - school rules
  - sports activities
- 16 Work in small groups. Take turns to present your point. Did your audience relate to the story you told? Did telling the story help you to connect with your audience?