

Lesson 26: A Great Vacation

Kate has just returned from vacation, and Julia asks her about it. Listen and answer the comprehension questions:

- 1. Kate went to...**
 - a. the Netherlands
 - b. Norway
 - c. New Zealand
- 2. She went in the...**
 - a. summer
 - b. fall
 - c. winter
- 3. She highlights the beauty of the...**
 - a. architecture
 - b. culture
 - c. scenery
- 4. One disadvantage was...**
 - a. it was expensive
 - b. she had no friends there
 - c. the food wasn't good
- 5. Julia can't travel as much because of her...**
 - a. children
 - b. job
 - c. studies
- 6. She will travel next year because...**
 - a. she's going to a conference
 - b. she's getting married
 - c. she's studying abroad
- 7. Kate says that Paris is lovely because it's...**
 - a. inexpensive
 - b. old-fashioned
 - c. peaceful
- 8. Which place does she recommend for its people?**
 - a. Greece
 - b. Ireland
 - c. Italy

Conversation Text

Julia: Hey Kate, welcome back! How was your vacation?

Kate: It was wonderful! Norway is an amazing place. I saw some **breathtaking scenery** and I feel like I got to **recharge my batteries**.

Julia: How was the weather?

Kate: There's a Norwegian expression: We don't have summer, just two months of **crummy** ski conditions. So even though it was June, it was **chilly**. We were all **bundled up** in **fleeces** and winter hats.

Julia: Haha, and meanwhile here we've been having a **heat wave**! What was the country like?

Kate: Oh, the spectacular countryside **more than made up for** the cool weather. Norway has the rolling hills of Ireland and the **snow-capped** mountains of the Canadian Rockies. We explored these little water inlets where you could **spot** at least one waterfall from anywhere you stood.

Julia: That sounds incredible. How'd it **stack up against** all the other places you've been?

Kate: Well, it was the most expensive city in Europe I've been to, so that's one **downside**. We **splurged on** a nice hotel, so we didn't

Vocabulary

breathtaking scenery = views that are amazingly beautiful

recharge my batteries = relax and recover my energy

crummy = bad

chilly = rather cold

bundled up = dressed in warm clothing

fleeces = a type of jacket
[\(click here for a picture\)](#)

a heat wave = a sequence of many very hot days in a row

more than made up for = definitely compensated for

snow-capped = there is snow on top of the mountains

spot = see (informal)

stack up against = compare to

downside = disadvantage

splurged on = spent an extra amount of money on something luxurious

have much left over for food. Basically we ate brown bread and cheese the entire time. But I'd definitely go back, especially if I had a friend in the city that I could **crash with**.

Julia: You're lucky you can just take off and travel **whenever the impulse strikes**. I wish I could travel more, but my boss doesn't let me take much time off... she says I'm **indispensable**. I'm not sure if that's a blessing or a curse!

Kate: But you do have your **honeymoon** next year, right? Remind me where you're going again.

Julia: Um, our plans are still **up in the air**. Actually, I'd love to hear **your take**. Of all the places you've been, which one do you recommend most?

Kate: That's a really tough question. It all **hinges on** what you're looking for. If you want **classy** architecture in a romantic city, definitely go to Paris. It's well-preserved because France was quick to surrender during World War II, so it's like you're visiting a different time period. A lot of other cities still have old buildings of course, but they're mixed in with modern **skyscrapers** as well.

Julia: Good to know. Do you have any other **pointers**?

Kate: If you want a more traditional honeymoon atmosphere in a warm climate, try the Greek islands. All the **villages** are built into the rocky **cliff** face, and the houses are white, which is a

Vocabulary

crash with = stay at their house (informal)

whenever the impulse strikes = whenever you want to, spontaneously

indispensable = essential, impossible to be without

honeymoon = trip / vacation taken by married couples after their wedding

up in the air = not confirmed

your take = your opinion

hinges on = depends on

classy = elegant, refined

skyscrapers = very tall buildings

pointers = tips

villages = small communities

cliff = steep vertical rock wall

striking contrast to the **sparkling** blue ocean. For delicious food, a rich history, and friendly, **outgoing** people, check out Italy. And if you're looking for a **quaint** bed-and-breakfast type place in the countryside, I'd recommend Ireland.

Julia: I've gotta **jot this down!** All these places sound great, it seems impossible to choose just one.

Kate: Why not quit your job? Then you'd have **all the time in the world** to travel.

Julia: Sure. But then I couldn't afford to go anywhere.

Vocabulary

striking = describes something that grabs your attention and produces a strong impression on your sight or mind

sparkling = having little bits of light

outgoing = extroverted, enjoy socializing

quaint = old-fashioned and charming

jot this down = write this down (informal)

all the time in the world = a great deal of time; infinite time

Vocabulary Quiz

Complete each sentence with a word from the box. Three words are not used.

chilly	crummy	indispensable	pointers	striking
cliff	downside	jot down	sparkling	up in the air
crash with	hinges on	make up for	stack up against	village

1. Are you sure you want to wear shorts? It's warm now, but it'll be _____ when we go out on the boat.
2. The _____ of being famous is that you hardly ever have any peace or privacy.
3. He has dark skin and green eyes - it's a very _____ combination.
4. I bought a _____ pair of headphones at the dollar store. The sound quality's terrible.
5. My parents have a summer house in a little fishing _____ where the pace of life is slower.
6. So, how does your new job _____ your old one? Are you happier now?
7. Sure, I can recommend some good restaurants. Do you have a pen? I'll _____ their names for you.
8. The criminal's punishment _____ the judge's decision.
9. They're doing some repairs in my apartment. Can I _____ you for a couple of days?
10. Having good social skills is _____ to success at networking events.
11. My son's college plans are _____ until he finds out whether he got any scholarships.
12. I've never baked a cake before, but my mom gave me some _____ on how to do it.

Speaking Task

You have a choice today – pick one of these topics to talk about:

- a. Tell me about a memorable trip you have taken in the past. (It can be international, or within your own country). Describe what you did, what you saw, what you enjoyed.
- b. Give recommendations for a visitor to your country or city. Where should a tourist go, and what should they do?

Record your answer at www.speakpipe.com/espressoenglish or send the MP3 to homework@espressoenglish.net for feedback!

Answers

Comprehension Questions

1. b
2. a
3. c
4. a
5. b
6. b
7. b
8. c

Vocabulary Quiz

1. chilly
2. downside
3. striking
4. crummy
5. village
6. stack up against
7. jot down
8. hinges on
9. crash with
10. indispensable
11. up in the air
12. pointers