**BLUE MONDAY1**

1. **Warm up**
2. **What activities are you usually doing at these times of year? How do you usually feel at these times of year?  
   Take notes.**

### **January:** My birthday is in January, so I feel pretty pleasent during the whole month. I also associate January with stress because of the many tests.

* **March:** I would say I feel kind of refreshed in March, because of the general weather change caused by the winter-spring transition. Happiness appears with the disappearance of the typical winter-greyness.
* **May:** The last bits of the “winter-depressions” have disappeared. I am starting to enjoy the full bloom of spring and participate in outdoor activities like barbecues or other outdoor events.
* **July:** The vacation season has started and the weather is better than before. During July I am enjoying peak summer activities like going to the beach and all in all the longer days.
* **September:** September is school begin so the feelings are limited to that situation, but all in all the school begin feels not that stressful. Trying to get back into work routines/school activity is a major activity of the month.
* **December: “**Celebrations and warm feelings coming up” is the best way to describe December. The Christmas season begins that means buying gifts for others becomes the major December-activity.

### **What feelings do you associate with these kinds of weather?**

### **Rain:** sadness, melancholy

* **Fog:** mystery, uncertainty, anxiety
* **snow:** playfulness, coldness, isolation
* c**lear blue sky and sunshine:** happiness, optimism, clarity, energy
* **cold days:** discomfort, coziness
* **windy days:** excitement, unease feelings

1. **Vocab**
2. **Match the vocabulary to the correct deﬁnition.**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **1** | hemisphere | **A** | anything which stops the negative eﬀects of something |
| **2** | anxiety | **B** | eat all of something very quickly, usually because of being very hungry |
| **3** | devour | **C** | feeling particularly worried that something bad is going to happen |
| **4** | to trivialise | **D** | getting annoyed or angry quickly and easily |
| **5** | suicidal | **E** | having feelings of wanting to kill yourself |
| **6** | irritable | **F** | having no useful qualities or skills |
| **7** | worthless | **G** | make something seem smaller or less important than it actually is |
| **8** | antidote | **H** | one half of the earth. Often the half above or below the equator |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** | **6** | **7** | **8** |
| H | C | B | G | E | D | F | A |

1 source: adapted (Linguahouse.com. Photocopiable and licensed for use in Christina Kodre's lessons)

1. **Now put the vocabulary from Part A into the correct gaps in the following sentences.**
2. I’m going to stop drinking coﬀee. It doesn’t help me feel awake anymore. It just makes me feel tense and irritable.
3. I’m ﬂying to Argentina next month on business. I’m really excited. It’ll actually be my ﬁrst trip to the southern hermisphere.
4. He hoped to sell his car, but then his son hit a tree. Now it’s practically **worthless** He is so angry!
5. I ﬁnd meditation to be the perfect **antidote** to the stress of modern life.
6. She was up late revising again last night. I’m worried because I think her exams are causing her a lot of **anxiety**.
7. I swear the ﬁrst thing I’m going to do when this diet we’re doing is over, is to go and **devour** a cheeseburger!
8. If you’re dealing with depression or having **suicidal** thoughts, there are people you can talk to. Please don’t suﬀer in silence.
9. Telling her to smile and cheer up doesn’t help at all. You’ll just **trivialize** her depression. She needs to be listened to.
10. **Now answer the following questions.**
11. What kind of food are you most likely to **devour**?
    * + I am most likely to devour a pizza “Diavolo Speziale”.
12. Do you own anything that is really important to you, but **worthless** in terms of what it could be sold for? What is it? Why is it important to you?
    * I would say a few family pictures and do-it-yourself prototypes that are basically worthless because of the self-made character. The importance for me of these items consists really of the memories and effort associated with them.
13. If you live in the northern hemisphere, where would you like to visit in the southern **hemisphere**?   
    And vice versa?
    * Australia would be a really great place to visit because of the stunning landscape, the wonderful beaches and the exotic animals like kangarooos.
14. What do you do as an **antidote** to feeling unhappy or down?
    * I do the usual stuff I do every day. Just because of feeling those feelings the earth does not stop rotating, so I just try to avoid thinking about it.
15. What situations cause, or have caused, you **anxiety**?
    * The anxiety reaches its maximum in the break before getting the maths test back and waiting for the teacher to arrive.
16. What would you say to someone who was feeling **suicidal**?
    * “Does it really matter?”
17. Has anyone **trivialised** anything you’ve done? What happened?
    * Every sprint review grading in ITP follows a highly trivial system of inconsistency and a handful of unfairness. Looking at the input/output relations compared to other projects, it is clear that some gradings follow this highly trivialized system mentioned above.
18. What do other people do that makes you feel **irritable**?
    * Really just a “me-problem” but while eating I can not stand looking at people which are slurping, eating noisily or gobbling their food and spitting the half of it out.
19. **Reading**

Read the text; then do the tasks below.

**Blue Monday – the Saddest Day of the Year?**

**1.** Blue Monday, supposedly the saddest day of the year, takes place on the third Monday in January. Why is it so sad? Well, there are several factors involved.

**2.** Firstly, for a large part of the world, the holiday season is officially over. The lights have gone, the decorations are down and, for many of those in the northern hemisphere, they are replaced with cold, damp, grey weather.

**3.** To add to the gloom, following the increase in spending for the end of year celebrations, levels of debt are most likely to be up at this time. This means you may be having to tighten your belt around a waist that is likely to be a little more wobbly than usual.

**4.** In addition, many people who have made New Year’s resolutions will, statistically, have broken them by this point. The hope that began the year has, for many, been overwhelmed by feelings of anxiety and frustration as they helplessly devour the last of the ’festive’ chocolate biscuits while, once again, not going to the gym.

**5.** However, since its inception in 2004 by psychologist Cliﬀ Arnall, ’Blue Monday’ has been met with a certain amount of backlash from mental healthcare professionals. Clinical depression is a serious illness that will likely aﬀect around one person out of every six. Many feel that designating a day in January, where everyone feels depressed, trivialises an issue that severely impacts a signiﬁcant number of people in all aspects of their lives all year. Those who experience depression may have suicidal thoughts, problems with sleeping, and a deep-seated feeling of being disconnected from others.

**6.** There are also a substantial number of people who suﬀer from S.A.D, or Seasonal Aﬀective Disorder. This largely aﬀects people during the months when lack of sunlight is more likely, leaving them depressed, irritable and feeling worthless.

**7.** Again, symptoms of this adversely aﬀect millions around the world each year for many months, so the implication that we can just feel down for one day and get over it, is upsetting to many. Not least because some companies have used it as an excuse to sell their products as an antidote to the blues.

**8.** Arnall himself has since publicly apologised for coining the term and done much work to ensure positive work is done year-round. Nonetheless, the idea has stuck.

**9.** On a positive note, it is a good chance to acknowledge and discuss mental health more openly. It is often an issue, due to its very nature, that people struggle with in private.

*Sources: BBC, The Independent, Mental Health Foundation, National Today*



1. **Scan through the text and ﬁnd synonyms or phrases that mean the same as the following.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **1** | unhappiness (paragr. 3) | **depression** |
| **2** | spend less money (paragr. 3) | **tighten on your belt** |
| **3** | beginning (paragr. 5) | **inception** |
| **4** | labelling (paragr. 5) | **designation** |
| **5** | subconscious (paragr. 5) | **clinical depression** |
| **6** | negatively (paragr. 7) | **adversely** |
| **7** | sadness (paragr. 7) | **feeling down** |
| **8** | inventing (paragr. 8) | **coining** |

## Complete the following sentences with no more than three words from the text.

### One of the reasons for Blue Monday, is that by the third Monday in January, the holiday season has ended and so has the joy that goes with it.

1. Not only that, but the lack of exercise and the over-eating may be showing in your waistline.
2. Often, by this point in January, the optimism they felt at the beginning of the year will have been replaced by cold weather and broken resolutions.
3. Some mental healthcare professionals have objected to Blue Monday, saying that it reduces the importance of clinical depression which is a very serious issue for many.
4. Those who suﬀer from depression may experience thoughts of suicide, a sense of disconnection from others and anxiety.
5. Seasonal Aﬀective Disorder often aﬀects people during the darker months and can cause depression, feelings of worthlessness and a tendency to feel irritable.
6. With Blue Monday comes the implication that depression and S.A.D are something that people can get over in a day, which doesn’t help.
7. Cliﬀ Arnall, the creator of the Blue Monday concept, has distanced himself from it and apologised, but the idea has persisted nonetheless.
8. **State your own opinion. Take notes.**
9. What situations or events do you think are most likely to cause depression or anxiety in people?

I would personally state that generally failing in any manner, under-appreciation of work and any other negative situation which impacts the human psyche are the main causes of depression and anxiety. Looking at the fact that human beings are described as a social species, loneliness would definitely cause these kinds of problems.

1. What advice can be given to people who suffer from depression?
   * 1. I am highly concerned about the fact that people think that depression as such is a real problem, which needs to be treated by overpriced medical professionals. In my opinion depression is like happiness and other feeling, just a temporary state made up by the human mind as a reaction to a current negative situation, the human body is in, which can be solved by trying to adjust or to change different unhealthy aspects of your life. All in all my answer would be to fix your life before getting professional consultation.
2. What do you personally do in order to stay in a healthy state of mind?
   * 1. Personally I try to live a healthy life such as having a healthy diet, socializing with different people and keeping my life ordered generally. I read books and listen to podcasts by “Dr. Jordan B Peterson” a lot, who answers questions like these and provides tips solutions for a generally healthier life.