

Дорогие друзья, в ходе **международного конкурса "Ask Luke Thompson"**, проходившего на нашем портале,

<http://tea4er.ru/forum/341---ask-luke-thompson>

, Люк Томпсон получил большое количество вопросов. Большое ему спасибо за, что он нашел время для наших читателей и ответил на большое количество вопросов.

А вот и ответы Люка. Надо отметить, что мы не меняли (намеренно!) ни слова из текста автора. Поэтому некоторые имена кажутся не совсем типичными для русского языка. Но если призадуматься о порядке слова в английском языке, все станет понятно. А для ребят Люк не просто ответил на вопрос, но и преподнес хороший урок английского языка. Подробности - ниже:) Вопросы участников конкурсов выделены красным цветом.

Dear readers of Tea4er.ru,

Earlier this year I was invited to write a post on this website describing my teaching career and my reasons for starting my own podcast for learners of English. I told you my personal story, and then you were invited to contribute questions as part of a competition. I could then choose some questions to respond to.

I was delighted to see over the weeks after posting my interview here that there were about 20 pages of questions from users of this website. It's amazing to see how many responses there were, including interesting thoughts and ideas so many bright minded people. I was asked to choose about 5 questions, but in the end I found it really hard to choose just 5 so I've written answers to many more than that! I hope that you enjoy reading my responses, and I'm sorry if your question is not included.

Would you like to listen to me answering your questions in a podcast episode? You could hear me give my answers orally. I may use your questions and my responses as the basis for a new episode of my podcast soon, so if you'd like to listen to that, check out my podcast over the next couple of weeks. I will probably upload the episode soon.

Click here for more information www.teacherluke.co.uk

I hope you like reading my answers to your questions, and thanks for reading!

All the best,

Luke Thompson

Tatiana

Hello! I am very pleased to ask you a question.

I'm Spiridonova Tatiana Ivanovna, a teacher, Tavricheskaya school № 1, Tavricheskoe, Omsk region.

If you were on a desert island you would have the right to have only three things. What would they be?

Thank you.

Good luck! I wish you success.

Hi Tatiana,

Assuming I'm only allowed to have objects rather than abstract or intangible things (like hope, fortitude, good luck, knowledge of bushcraft) I would choose tools that could help me survive. The main thing would be a really good knife or machete. I've seen lots of survival shows on TV and the machete seems to be really important. I'd also want some really good rope. Can I have a boat, a helicopter or a laptop with remote internet access? No? Ok, for the third thing I'd like a drum kit, so I can just make loads of noise and beat out the rhythm of the universe on the beach at night under the stars alone. Music is almost as important to me as food and water. Thanks for your question!

I am Savisko Ksenia, a pupil, Tavrisheskaya school № 1, Tavrisheskoe, Omsk region.

Hello Luke!

I suppose you are keen on medicine. What do you think when any person is too ill. He sneezes very often. Can his eyes dash out during his sneezing?

Thank you!

Hi Savisko,

If a person sneezes a lot, will his eyes pop out? Is that your question?

I've heard people say that if you sneeze with your eyes open, that your eyes will pop out. I always assumed it was just a myth, and watching this video confirmed it to me <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6D5fJYHbK7k>.

But who knows, if you sneeze hard enough, maybe it's possible! Thanks for your question Savisko!

I am Vlasova Marina, a pupil, Tavricheskaya school № 1, Tavricheskoe, Omsk region.

Hello Luke!

One day I was walking down the street. Suddenly a black cat jumped out in front of me. At first I did not pay attention to it. But after an hour or two, I lost my phone. And then I remembered about the superstition which is connected with black cat. I have never believed in omens, but after the accident I started to believe in them. Do you believe in superstitions?

Thank you!

Hi Vlasova,

Interesting question and I've been preparing a podcast episode about superstitions which I plan to publish soon. So, do I believe in superstitions like this? Not really, no. Let's look at the example of your phone and the black cat. Do you really believe that the black cat caused you to

lose your phone? What evidence is there that the cat is the direct cause of the loss of the phone. Surely it's just a coincidence. What about all the other bad things that have happened to you when there was no black cat involved. Surely you're making a false connection. What's happened is something called 'confirmation bias', which means the tendency to interpret events in a way that supports beliefs or theories. I mean, you're interpreting the events to support the idea that black cats cause bad luck. Why are you doing this? I'm not sure but maybe you need to explain the mystery of why you lost your phone - perhaps you're even avoiding the fact that it was your fault (but I don't mean to be rude). I would hypothesise that there is no connection between the cat and the loss of your phone. I think you're creating the connection between the cat and the phone. Can it really be true that cats possess magic powers? What form does this magic take? I believe what happened is that you saw a cat, then later you lost your phone. There's no connection between the two events, but because superstitions offer us an answer to events we don't really understand or have control over (like the unexpected loss of something valuable) you make a connection between the two things that isn't there. So, unless you can provide me with reliable evidence of the power of cats over phones, I don't believe it! Superstitions are our brain's way of answering unanswered questions, like - why do bad things happen for no reason, or what happens after we die? We don't know the answers to these questions, but as humans we need to answer them, and so superstitions fill that gap in knowledge, and that's all we need to go on living a happy life! I personally believe in living with my eyes open, even if that means tolerating the fact that we live in a chaotic and unexplained universe.

Thanks for your question!

I am Shibitov Artem, a pupil, Tavricheskaya school № 1, Tavricheskoe, Omsk region.

Hello Luke!

If you had a time machine where would you go?

Thank you.

Hi Shibitov,

I would stay in exactly the same position, but at a different time.

In fact, if I did travel through time, even by just a few minutes, I would probably end up floating in space because the time machine would simply deposit me at the same position in the universe but at a different time, and because the planets and stars in the universe are constantly moving, the earth would be in a different position and I would end up lost in space, dead. So, a time machine is no good. You need a machine that travels through both time and space simultaneously, like the TARDIS from the TV show DOCTOR WHO. That would allow you to travel into the past or future, but make sure you travelled to the right position in space so that you arrive safely on earth.

Thanks for your question!

I am Zimmer Edik, a pupil, Tavricheskaya school № 1, Tavricheskoe, Omsk region.

Hello Luke!

Have you watched the film "The Star Wars"? If yes, did you like it? What episode impressed you most of all?

Thank you!

Hi Zimmer,

I'm a massive Star Wars fan. I've seen the original film (episode 4) at least 100 times. I was mildly obsessed by it when I was a child. I did a podcast episode all about Star Wars not long ago, and I talked about the subject for about 90 minutes. You can listen to that episode here <http://teacherluke.co.uk/2014/12/02/241-star-wars/>.

Thanks for the question!

I am Danil Mahno, a pupil, Tavricheskaya school № 1, Tavricheskoe, Omsk region.

Hello Luke!

Would you like to be a book which is opened by people every day?

Thank you.

Hi Danil,

If I was a book, I would like to be opened by people every day because that would probably mean I was an interesting book full of worthwhile things to read and think about. However, if I was opened every day that might mean my pages would start falling out after some time! I'm not sure I'd like that. It's also an interesting question for me because I would very much like to write

a book one day and then I certainly hope it would be opened by people every day. Thanks for the question!

Hello Luke!

I'm teacher of English and Spanish and I'd like to ask for advice. The thing is that while teaching we learn our students to use web sites and English blogs, but some of them start just surfing the Net and forget the purpose of switching the computer on. How can I limit them in the Net and make them only study?

Hi! (I'm not sure who answered this question)

I totally understand the problem of our students surfing the web during classes, or being distracted by their phones, or Facebook. It's a tricky area because these days young people live their lives in constant interaction with the internet. Some of my colleagues ban laptops, phones and tablets from their classroom. I think that's a fine choice as long as you're prepared to act like a police officer in class, as well as a teacher. I personally attempt to capture the interest of my students in every class I teach, so that they choose not to go online but rather engage with what's happening in the classroom. I'm not always successful - some students still end up going online during my classes, which frustrates me a lot. Firstly, it's rude for them to not be listening or taking part, secondly it means that they might be finding my class boring (which is almost an unbearable thought, but is nevertheless a reality) and thirdly it means that the whole class slows down and becomes less effective because some people are just not following what you're saying. Still, I think we have to accept a certain amount of multitasking in our classrooms these days. Using the internet while also performing other tasks is a normal part of daily life these days, so we should be willing to let it happen in our English classes to an extent, in order to make classroom interactions more realistic. Nevertheless, it's totally unproductive and damaging if students are just being distracted by social networks, especially if it's in their native language and not English. So, here are a few options: 1. Ban computers in class completely. 2. Allow computers but ban social networks and other stuff that is not related to the lesson. 3. Accept that a certain amount of internet browsing is a normal part of any student's problem solving process and encourage them to use the internet to help them learn. In all cases, I think it

helps if the students are really engaged and interested in what you're doing in class. It's also a question of constantly trying to involve them, and maintaining levels of respect. I'd imagine that if your classes are really great, the students won't want to spend time on the internet. That's our challenge as teachers today, in my opinion. Thanks for your question.

I am Arthur Borisov, a pupil, Tavricheskaya school number 1

Hello, Luke!

If you had super abilities in what sphere would you use them?

Thank you.

Hi Arthur,

I suppose it depends on what kind of super abilities I have. If I was strong and able to fly or go really fast I'd probably end up fighting crime or rescuing people, like Superman and Spiderman do. If I was able to read people's minds or affect their thoughts I'd be tempted to help people recover from mental illnesses or neuroses, or simply to make them feel confident enough to do anything they want. I think I'd probably use my powers to get rich too, but I'd try to help people at the same time. As we know from Spiderman, "With great power comes great responsibility" so I think that if I had super abilities I think I would also be obliged to use them carefully and with some sense of social justice. Thanks for your question. I love superhero films.

I am Anastasia Gofman, a pupil, Tavricheskaya school № 1, Tavricheskoe, Omsk region.

Hello Luke!

They say that there are aliens between us and some of them are working in the government of some countries. If it is true would you like to fly on the UFO?

Thank you.

Hi Anastasia,

I love the way that your question focuses more on the possibility of a UFO ride than on the ramifications of aliens working in the government! Anyway, I've heard lots of conspiracy theories which state that the world is run by shapeshifting lizard aliens from another planet. I'm sceptical about that to be honest. I think it's quite mad, in fact, to believe it. There isn't any good evidence for it, although I do believe it's quite possible that the world is basically run by a few very powerful individuals - heads of corporations, leaders of influential societies, that kind of thing. But, aliens in the government? Hmm, I think there may be alien life in the universe, but I'm not convinced that they're here on earth or in fact working for the government, although I sometimes wonder about David Cameron (joke). But, if there were aliens on earth, and I met them and they offered me a ride on the UFO of course I would love to try that. It would be absolutely fascinating to see their technology and to experience a totally new kind of travelling. The thing is, I'd be afraid that they'd abduct me and stick an probe into an uncomfortable part of my body somehow. I hope that answers your question!

Hello Luke!

I know that you are a lecturer. And, just imagine, you have a choice to make: all your students will become responsible and begin always to listen to you attentively, or you will receive one million dollars. Which will you choose?

Thanks in advance.

Hello (sorry, I don't know who wrote this)

Well, I think that the first option is perhaps impossible - I can't imagine a situation in which absolutely 100% of the people in the room are listening to me 100% of the time. There's always someone who is drifting off, thinking about something else, and I don't mind that too much as long as most people are listening. In fact, if everyone was 100% attentive, that might not be so great. For example, if I made one mistake, everyone would notice it! Also, I quite like the feeling that my students have independent minds and I don't necessarily want to rob them of their free thought. I'd like them to listen to me because they find me interesting, not because I've cast a spell on them to make them attentive. That sounds a bit like mind control. So, I'll gladly take the one million dollars please! Thanks for the question.

Marina Bulakhova

Municipal Educational Institution "Ramenskaya Gymnasia"

Moscow Region

Hello Luke! Don't you find that the profession of a teacher is very deforming? I mean, it has a great influence on a personality, which will, certainly, show itself especially at old age. "He/she has been teaching for a long time", - it sounds like a diagnosis, which presupposes moralizing, excessive strictness, and other negative manifestations. Isn't it really so to your mind?

Hi Marina,

I think this is particularly true for those who teach children because it can be very demanding and forces you to be stricter than normal. I suppose this can take its toll. I think that doing any job will have an effect on you, so this kind of thing comes with the territory. As a teacher of adults mainly, I would say that it's involves less strictness, but more openness, imagination, patience, creativity and the ability to listen. I hope that as I get older I will just have enough energy to keep up! Thanks for the question.

Roman Linskiy

Municipal Educational Institution "Ramenskaya Gymnasia"

Moscow Region

Hello, Luke!

What difficulties have you had with your students and colleges? If any at all? How have you tried to settle them since you became a famous teacher?

Thank you!

Hi Roman,

I've had plenty of difficulties with my students - mostly as part of the challenge of helping them improve their English. A lot of it is about motivation. It might be necessary to work with people's individual problems and approaches to learning. That's a normal part of the process. Sometimes you find trouble with students in that their personalities come into play. Normally this is really great because most people are interesting and basically good people. Every now and then you come across someone who likes to make life difficult for others, or who simply can't operate within a group of others, with some level of intimacy as part of the learning process. Sometimes personalities flare up and you might find friction between students in a class or even with the teacher. I've had few problems with colleagues because for the most part English teachers get on with each other. We're all sharing the same situation so there tends to be some camaraderie in the teachers' room. I did a couple of podcasts about the challenges I've faced as a teacher. You can listen to them here <http://teacherluke.co.uk/2013/09/02/145-nightmare-teaching-experiences-part-1/>

Thanks for your message!

Babikov Gleb

Municipal Educational Institution "Ramenskaya Gymnasia" Moscow Region

Greetings, Luke! Nowadays almost every educator in Russia teaches English using textbooks and common school programs. Don't you think that teachers should develop more effective ways of teaching students?

Hi Babikov,

I think teachers should always be looking for new ways to develop their teaching. We constantly have to come up with engaging and effective teaching methods and that means understanding how people think, the cultural reference points and so on. It's often necessary to make your own materials which are adapted from authentic sources, and which are more specifically suited to that group of students. So, thinking outside the box, focusing specifically on the needs of the students, and coming up with new materials regularly are all important ways to develop our teaching skills. Thanks for the question.

Pikalenko Roman

Municipal Educational Institution "Ramenskaya Gymnasia"

Moscow Region

Hi, Luke!

To my mind, every man should be a gentleman. And I would like to know your opinion. Is it essential for a young man to be a gentleman?

Thanks!

Hi Roman,

If by being a gentleman you mean being polite, respectful and considerate then yes I think young men should be like gentlemen. They can act like gentlemen, but not necessarily look or sound like the classic image of the British gentleman. To be honest I hope everyone lived like gentlemen if it meant treating other people with respect. The cliché of the gentleman in a suit and hat is only something you see in movies these days. Thanks for the question. I did a podcast episode about this recently. You can listen to it [here](#) 260. Kingsman: The Secret Service

Strebkov Sergey

Municipal Educational Institution "Ramenskaya Gymnasia"

Moscow Region

Hello, Luke.

I'd like to ask you a question: have you been scared when you started to make blogs? Were there any negative comments?

Thanks.

Hi Sergey,

Generally the feedback I get from my podcast is positive. I'm very aware that the internet is a

place where people can be strongly criticised and you get aggressive users or trolls who might write very harsh comments about you online, but generally comments on my website are from really enthusiastic English learners so everything's nice. I'm really conscious of the fact that I'm revealing a lot about myself in my episodes, so that is something I think about a lot. Thanks for the question.

Stepnova Alina

Municipal Educational Institution "Ramenskaya Gymnasia"

Moscow Region

Hello,Luke!

Why did you decide to become a teacher?

What attracted you to work in Japan?

Do the Japanese students wear school uniform? How do you think whether Russian students wear school uniform?

School uniform lets students be equal. Without school uniform complexes and envy may arise among students. Don't you agree with it?

Thanks! I believe you will answer me.

Hi Stepnova,

You believed correctly, because I am answering you.

I did a podcast episode about living in Japan. You can listen to it here <http://teacherluke.co.uk/2012/10/17/118-sick-in-japan/>

I talk about my reasons for going there and some of the experiences I had. About school uniforms, I don't know about Russian students and school uniforms but in the UK I had to wear uniforms in all the schools I went to. I don't think there's anything wrong with it, and it probably does give the students more equal status and may encourage a closer sense of community. Also, there's a certain discipline in having to prepare specific clothes for your day every morning. I didn't mind wearing a uniform most of the time, and I rarely thought of the idea of it being banned. I think you're right, kids might find it more difficult if they are judged on their clothes, so uniforms help to let them blend in with everyone else. Thanks for the question.

Trusova Dasha

Municipal Educational Institution "Ramenskaya Gymnasia"

Moscow Region

Hello Luke!

I know, you are active in social networks. Is it difficult to combine teacher's and blogger's activities?

Thank you.

Hi Trusova,

It's not hard to combine my teaching and my online work. Generally, they don't affect each other and I keep them separate. I don't use my episodes in class, or extracts from them, and in fact I rarely tell my students about my website until the end of the course. This is because I don't want them to feel pressured to listen to it, and also because I don't necessarily want them to hear certain things (like the more crazy episodes or personal stories) at the beginning of the course because I am attempting to present a more serious and business like impression. Sometimes my students already know who I am. Others only realise who I am after a while. Once I was teaching in London and at the end of the course I told them about my podcast. One girl in my class gasped! She was a regular listener to my podcast and after 2 weeks in my class she hadn't realised it was me. She nearly fell off her chair. It was hilarious.

So mainly, I'm concerned about the image my students will have of me if they listen to my podcast. Thanks for the question.

Badalyan Tsogik

Municipal Educational Institution "Ramenskaya Gymnasia"

Moscow Region

Hello, Luke!

If you could live the same day over and over again, what would you prefer to do on this day?

Thank you.

Hi Badalyan,

You mean, like the film Groundhog Day? If I had to live the same day over and over again I would probably do lots of different things every day to make it feel like I was actually living a life. Then I would learn how to do things really well, like in the film. I'd learn how to be an amazing pianist or something. I'd try and enjoy myself. Thanks for the question!

Ludmila Guseva

Municipal Educational Institution "Ramenskaya Gymnasia"

Moscow Region

Luke!

To be or not to be... What does it mean for you???

Thanks a lot in advance for your answer.

Hi Ludmilla,

You mean, the existential questions that Hamlet asks himself when contemplating suicide? I guess we're talking about the meaning of existence. What's the meaning of life for me? I'm really not sure what this is all about. In fact, I have a feeling that the whole of the universe is not united in one single purpose and that in fact it's pretty random. Either that, or we just have no ability to understand the complexity of existence. There may even be parallel worlds or just things we can't even see. Physics and astrophysics are fascinating to me because they really could learn about what the universe is really doing and how it works. Does it mean anything though? I'm not sure. On a personal level I think we all have a choice to make life run how we want it. We can choose to be positive and take some control over our lives. It doesn't necessarily have to mean anything more than just making yourself happy and trying to increase the happiness of those around you. Thanks for the question.

Andrey Kirianov

Municipal Educational Institution "Ramenskaya Gymnasia"

Moscow Region

Hi, Luke!

What should be done to avoid racism in the world?

Thank you!

Hi Andrey,

I think travelling and meeting people is important. That tends to make you realise that people around the world are not that different and they're all entitled to the same treatment as everyone else. It doesn't help when racism is used by leaders to claim power over their own people. That's a common way to get power. Blame all the problems on foreign people and use the fear of foreigners to whip up nationalist sentiment and support for the present government. To battle it we need to make sure we have a fully free press, and to educate children against racist attitudes. I think simply allowing people to know more about other cultures, means that they're less likely to be racist against them. Also, we should have an open mind.

Thanks for your question.

Ludmila Guseva

Municipal Educational Institution "Ramenskaya Gymnasia"

Moscow Region

Luke!

Which is better: to teach or to learn? Or to learn while teaching? Will you share your ideas & experience?

Thanks in advance.

Hi Ludmila,

I've certainly learned a lot from teaching. If I want to get to know a subject really well, I teach it. It forces you to really know the subject. As a learner I find it harder to get the motivation to do research. As a teacher I do it incredibly quickly and effectively.

Thanks for the question.

Badalyan Tsogik

Municipal Educational Institution "Ramenskaya Gymnasia"

Moscow Region

Hello,Luke!

If you were given a book with the story of your life, would you read it to the end?

Thank you!

Hi Badalyan,

No, I wouldn't read it! I don't want to know yet. Everything at its right time. I prefer to discover my life story as it happens. I also don't want to be constantly expecting the end scene to arrive. Innocence is bliss! Thanks for the question.

Ivanova Evgenia

Municipal Educational Institution "Ramenskaya Gymnasia"

Moscow Region

Hello, Luke!

I know that you are a teacher.

If you had a chance to return to the past, would you tell about the future to the people there?

Thanks

Hi Evgenia,

If I could return to the past I think I wouldn't tell them about the future. In the past people didn't react very well to strange looking people babbling about visions of the future. They might catch me and burn me as a witch! Instead I would travel to the past and then tell the people of the present all about it. I think a good first-hand account of history would help us know the right thing to do now, so that our future is kept safe. The past is something to learn from.

Thanks for the question!

Bezborodova Anna

Municipal Educational Institution "Ramenskaya Gymnasia"

Moscow Region

Hello, Luke!

I'd like to ask you a question:

How much time does it take you to make your podcasts? Is it difficult?

Thank you.

Hi Anna,

Actually, it takes me a lot of time to make my podcasts. It depends on the episode, because I prepare some episodes more than others. But preparing and recording a podcast, completing all the notes on the website, uploading it and then sharing it via social networks can take from 3 to 10 hours. Some episodes are really easy because I don't prepare them and they just flow out of my mouth, but others prove to be harder to manage, either because of the subject matter or because of the need to edit the content. It can take a lot of energy to do my podcast, but I like it a lot and I hope to eventually be rewarded for my work in some way.

Thanks for the question.

Gorbunov Nikita

Municipal Educational Institution "Ramenskaya Gymnasia"

Moscow Region

Hello, Luke!

How do you think, is music a necessary part of our life? Do you often listen to music? What musical styles do you prefer? Do you believe that music helps us to feel better?

Thank you for the answer!

Hi Nikita,

I think music is absolutely vital to my life. I constantly have music in my head or playing through speakers. I also need to play music myself. It's a great way to de-stress while also achieving something. Music is really mysterious. It's something innate that we all share. The language of music is written into us when we're born and it's all about the way humans are able to hear certain sounds in a particular scale. Why it causes such strong emotional responses in us is a total mystery and one of the wonders of the universe! Thanks for the question!

I'm Lera Kuvshinkina, Umyotskaya school, Tambov Region

Luke!

You know that there are many kinds of subcultures. If you were a teenage, what subculture you would like to belong to?

Thank you!

Hi Lera,

I'm well aware of subcultures in the UK and it's one of my favourite subjects. I did that at university in Liverpool. When I was a teenager I didn't belong to a particular subculture but I was somewhere between: indie, casual, mod and retro 70s. Those are rather specific styles, but there are other more well-known subcultures in the UK like skinheads and punks. I used to know skin-heads and punks in Birmingham (I was in a punk band for a while when I was a teenager) and they were all really nice and funny blokes. I love the different subcultures in the UK and their clothing/musical associations. Thanks for the question!

Zhalialova Liliya

Municipal Educational Institution "Ramenskaya Gymnasia"

Moscow Region

Hello, Luke!

Is it possible to save warm relations being in different cities far away from your sweetheart?
How to save this fragile spiritual link from your point of view?

Thanks!

Hi Liliya,

I think it is possible to keep love alive when you live in different cities but it requires communication and a long term plan to be together. You can use Skype and other networks to keep in touch easily, and if you know that you're going to eventually be together it makes it easier. Also, make the most of the moments when you see each other. The airport greetings and so on. It can be madly romantic and exciting and a period that you will always treasure when you look back on it. Thanks for the question!

Matvey Lakeev

Municipal Educational Institution "Ramenskaya Gymnasia"

Moscow Region

Hello, Luke!

What do you think on the problem of environmental pollution?

Thanks in advance. Your opinion is very important for me!

Hi,

I think pollution is a big problem for us. I live in Paris and it's a very polluted place. It makes me feel bad that the air is poisonous. I think we need to look for ways to reduce this or it could seriously affect our health. We know that global warming is real and that it is accelerated by our pollution. I think we all need to feel responsible for keeping it under control. The thing is, as individuals it is so easy for us to say "ah I'm not the one who has to change". In fact, we are all responsible for changing lots of little things, like the amount of energy you use at home, the plastic bags from the supermarket that you don't need, the amount of driving you do and so on. Thanks for the question!

Edvard Torosyan

Municipal Educational Institution "Ramenskaya Gymnasia"

Moscow Region

Hello, Luke!

I think, just like every man, you should know much about cars. What cars do you like? What characteristic of a vehicle is the most important for you?

Thanks.

Hi Edvard,

I love cars, despite the fact that they produce a lot of pollution. I don't have a car myself because I don't really need one. I really love old cars, like ones from the 70s or 80s. I also like some modern ones, but not ridiculous cars like Ferraris. I prefer cars with some understated charm. I like the Mini a lot. I'd like to have one. I think the new Mini Cooper is the perfect car for Paris. It's small enough to find a parking space, it's cool enough, it's comfortable enough and it's quick enough for all kinds of driving in and out of the city. The only thing is it doesn't have much room for luggage but I like to travel light! Thanks for the question. By the way I did a podcast episode about driving. I drove a Mini all around Paris while recording a podcast at the same time. You can listen to it here <http://teacherluke.co.uk/2013/07/09/139-hard-driving/>

Leonid Sklyarinsky

Municipal Educational Institution "Ramenskaya Gymnasia"

Moscow Region

Hello, Luke!

In Russia people live in various regions and speak various dialects. Do English people also have dialects? What is the most difficult dialect?

Thanks

Hi Leonid,

Yes in the UK we have loads of different accents. It's amazing how many there are in such a small place. For example, Liverpool and Manchester are very close to each other but the accents are really different. I love the variety of accents we have all over the UK. You can tell a lot about people from their accents, and they are attached to many old communities and history. I did an episode about accents here <http://teacherluke.co.uk/2011/10/12/british-accent-and-dialects/>

Thanks for the question.

Trusova Dasha

Municipal Educational Institution "Ramenskaya Gymnasia"

Moscow Region

Hello, Luke!

What of are you proud most of all in your profession?

Thank you for the answer!

Hi Dasha,

I think I'm most proud of teachers who come up with really interesting and engaging ways of helping their students to learn English. I think we're all pushing into new areas of insight and methodology, and the standards of English teaching seem to be rising all the time. So, I'm proud of our teachers who put a lot into what they do. Thanks for the question!

Saribekyan Anna

Municipal Educational Institution "Ramenskaya Gymnasia"

Moscow Region

Hello!

How do you think, who is better: Agatha Crieistie's Poirot or Sherlock Holms by Arthur Conan Doyle, why?

Thank for your answer!

Hi Anna,

I'm a big Conan Doyle fan, so naturally I prefer Sherlock Holmes to Poirot. In fact, I've read all the Sherlock Holmes stories and they're some of my favourite things to read. I also love the film versions with Robert Downey Jr and the television shows with Benedict Cumberbatch and Johnny Lee Miller. For me Poirot is something that was on TV during the day when I was a

student. I used to drink lots of cups of tea and avoid doing work. Poirot was often on in the afternoon, but I would always be extra pleased if an episode of Sherlock Holmes came on the telly. Thanks for the question.

Hello. Krylov Vadim,

a pupil,

gymnasium 12,

Volgograd.

My question: Can we learn English at advanced level in a month?

Hi Vadim,

It's a good question, especially since a lot of schools offer 1 month courses. It depends on your level when you start, but can you go from nothing to advanced in 1 month? I doubt it. I'm convinced it's possible to learn a lot and to make a big improvement, but to become advanced means taking lots of time, hours of input, hours of practice and so on. Rather than focusing on the arbitrary 1 month target it's more important to look at ways of improving your study technique, using mnemonic devices and other methods. That will give you the tools to learn more quickly, but not necessarily to advanced level in a month. I hope that answers your question.

Hello, Luke

My name is Olga.

If you were a film director what topic for the film would you choose and what would it be about?

Thank you in advance for your reply

Hi Olga,

I'd love to direct my own film. I'd like to make a movie about a language school. I'd like to make it look like a documentary, but in fact it would be a comedy. It would focus on the lives of people working in a language school over a period of a few months. It would follow a teacher, and also a student, and their lives would cross over during the film in some amusing ways. It would also include lots of classroom scenes in which the teacher attempts to deal with typical funny situations from the EFL classroom. I've spent lots of time in classrooms with learners of English from around the world, and I've seen many funny situations in which either I make a fool of myself or my students say funny things as they try to improve their English. I'd love to capture those moments in a film. In my mind it would be like the British version of The Office. Who knows, maybe I'll make that film one day and you can watch it.

Thanks for the question.

Tatyana Zimina

English teacher

Lyceum № 5

Mtsensk, Oryol region

Dear Luke,

In my opinion, the most important part of the lesson is the beginning. Well begun is half done. If we manage to involve our students into the learning process from the first minutes of the lesson they will be active and interested learners up to the end of the lesson.

What are the most effective beginnings of your lessons? Share your experience, please.

Thanks in advance for your answer.

Best wishes,

Tatyana

Hi Tatyana,

Yes I agree, the beginning of a lesson is really important. It's vital to make the students feel like the subject you are teaching is relevant and important to them, and to make them feel personally involved in the class. Usually at the beginning of the class I'll say something about why the lesson is important to them, mentioning specific needs they have and so on. I'll also attempt to raise their level of interest by perhaps sharing something personal or asking them to respond to a few quick questions from a personal point of view. This should involve everyone both as learners of English and human beings. I think it's vital for the students to be personally involved in what they're learning as it helps in the acquisition of language and also makes the class so much more enjoyable and interesting for everyone. After all, I think a good lesson is like a collaboration and the students have just as much responsibility for it being a success as the teacher. I simply encourage my students to take an interest in the class, by giving them the opportunity to do so.

I hope that answers your question!

Anna Zvereva

English teacher

Polkownikowo

Altay Region

Dear, Luke!

It's important to create a positive atmosphere at the lesson.

When do pupils feel comfortable at the English lessons?

Thanks in advance for your answer.

Best wishes,

Anna

Hi Anna,

I agree, it's really important to establish a positive atmosphere in lessons. This helps everyone relax and that's good for learning. It's hard to learn a language when you feel stressed, guarded or embarrassed. In my opinion students feel comfortable in a lesson when they know the teacher is confident and has an aim for the class. If the teacher knows what he/she is doing then the students tend to relax and feel more comfortable. I also encourage my students to be themselves, take a few risks and share a bit of personal information (but not too much). To encourage them, and show them that they won't be judged, I sometimes take some risks and share some personal information too, like a story from my life or some detail of my family. This tends to make everyone else feel that they can do it too, and that helps them to talk and to be themselves while communicating. Please remember that I'm talking about teaching English to adults, not children. I also use humour sometimes - not telling jokes exactly, but just adopting a humorous attitude that allows everyone to see the funny side of things. Laughter is a good way to bond as a group and reduce stress. I hope that answers your question.

Ludmila Guseva

Municipal Educational Institution "Ramenskaya Gymnasia"

Moscow Region

Dear Luke!

Of course, any creator has some professional secrets of his own...

But, nevertheless, how do you generate your ideas?

What is your favorite topic? What topic will you never touch upon, if any at all? Why?

Thanks in advance.

Hi Ludmila,

Often I generate ideas by thinking about previous classes I've taught that weren't a big success. I might look back at classes that were boring or useless and think about exactly why they failed. Then I can fix the problems and make sure future classes are much better. Ultimately, I just want to give classes (or podcasts) that people really enjoy and find useful. That's the ultimate goal. In fact, I'd be delighted if my students or listeners were more than just happy about their classes. I want them to be genuinely excited about them. That's quite hard, because learning English is quite difficult and it doesn't usually inspire excitement, and as a result I often see students in my classes who are definitely not excited. But anyway, I think I come up with ideas just because I want to do my job really well. I don't know why I think this is important - I think it's something I inherited from my parents, who come from pragmatic and public service oriented

backgrounds. It's been instilled into me that if a job is worth doing it's worth doing well. I wish I could live up to this idea all the time! So, that's one of the reasons I come up with ideas - I'm just trying to do a good job. I need to do a good job in order to feel like I'm a valuable person, and necessity is the mother of invention.

Also, I just love creating things. I think that's a large part of it too. There is something magical and wonderful about creating something of your own and then sending it out into the world for people to enjoy and use. This is immensely satisfying and quite addictive. I also love the freedom of creating my own work. It gives me a chance to realise ideas and share them. It's a simple, wonderful pleasure and it makes me feel mentally free, especially when I'm improvising stories which people find funny.

Thanks for the question!

Sofya Sim

Municipal Educational Institution "Ramenskaya Gymnasia"

Moscow Region

Hello, Luke

Have you ever had a choice: to have one student, who wants to learn English perfectly (you have already been working with him for a long time), or to take two greeners, who have never learnt English? Which will you choose?

Thanks.

Hi Sofya,

That's a difficult question. With the student who I've been working with for a long time I expect we'd have a good relationship as student and teacher, and hopefully that would be very satisfying. I imagine this student has a good level at this point, so the lessons may be more stimulating with interesting topics and advanced language. However, I know that it's very hard to reach a level of 'perfection' in a foreign language. What is perfection anyway? Does anyone speak 'perfect' English? That's rather a subjective idea I think. I would say there is no such thing as perfection, and instead we just have to try to be as good as possible. I expect that my ambitious student wouldn't be too satisfied with this answer though, because all motivated learners have specific goals, and perhaps by arguing against this idea of perfection I would be destroying his/her goal. So, I think I would choose the two beginners who have never learnt English. As long as they are motivated, it can be very satisfying both for student and teacher to see the rapid progress that is possible when first learning a language. It would be great fun to see the learners improving quite quickly. There's definitely more room for progress at a low level, so I'd choose those learners.

Thanks for the question!

Sofya Sim

Municipal Educational Institution "Ramenskaya Gymnasia"

Moscow Region

Hello, Luke

When you were a child, did you like school? What subjects were your favourite?

Thanks for you answer.

Hi Sofya,

Actually I recorded a podcast about this topic a couple of years ago. You can listen to it here <http://teacherluke.co.uk/2011/10/14/childhood-growing-up-school-days-phrasal-verbs-and-expressions/>.

Thanks for the question.

Bezborodova Anna

Municipal Educational Institution "Ramenskaya Gymnasia"

Moscow Region

Hello, Luke!

Would you like to be engaged in teaching for the rest of your life or would you like to realize yourself in any other activities?

Thank you.

Hi Anna,

I already am engaged in other activities besides teaching. I do stand-up comedy and music, but neither of them are earning me enough money to make a living at the moment. I love teaching, but I would be quite happy to move on and do something else in the future. That's not because I don't enjoy teaching, I do, but it's quite exhausting sometimes and can be a bit repetitive. I'm interested in developing my website and online activities by perhaps publishing my own online course, writing an ebook and doing other web-related projects. This allows me to continue teaching while also expanding my work into other areas. I think my podcast and website allow me to combine teaching with my other interests like comedy and journalism.

Thanks for the question!

Ivanova Evgenia

Municipal Educational Institution "Ramenskaya Gymnasia"

Moscow Region

Hello, Luke!

I know that you are a teacher.

What music do you prefer? Do you use music while teaching your students?

Thanks in advance.

Hi Evgenia,

I like all sorts of music. Right now I am listening to ambient music by Brian Eno. It's really calming and peaceful. Sometimes I use that in my lessons to help create a certain atmosphere. I also love upbeat music, particularly funk music from the 1970s scene in the USA. People like James Brown or Roy Ayers. That's the kind of music that makes me want to get up and dance, or just get into a good mood.

About using music in the classroom, I don't do it very often. With adults I find that people's tastes are so different that when I play music in class there's always someone who is not happy or who finds it distracting. However, in my kids classes I often play songs because the children love them and find them instantly fascinating. It's a great way to make them focus on the language. I find it hard to get children in my classes to focus on language, particularly when I'm speaking! But if I play them a song, they're always really keen to follow the words. So, music works well with children. Recently I used the song "Happy" by Pharell Williams. The students had to complete gaps in the lyrics (it's not an original exercise) and I was amazed at how keen they were to listen closely to the song while attempting to complete the task. We listened to the song over and over, without anyone getting bored (except perhaps me). The result was that the kids were exposed to loads of comprehensible input of English and in the end we were all dancing and singing the song in the classroom.

I hope that answers your question.

Tatyana Zimina

English teacher

Lyceum № 5

Mtsensk, Oryol region

Dear Luke,

Some years ago I've read the book « Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus» of John Gray which illustrates psychological differences between the genders. Could you share your opinion, if a teacher should pay attention to whom he/she explains the language material – to boys or to girls? Should there be different examples when a teacher explains grammar rules or lexical peculiarities to schoolchildren of different genders? And what about a mixed group?

Sure, it will be very interesting if you devote one of your future podcast's episodes to the theme of psychological differences between the genders.

Thanks in advance for your answer.

Best wishes,

Tatyana

Hi Tatyana,

I did an episode about men & women, and that book you mentioned. You can listen to it here <http://teacherluke.co.uk/2009/10/19/episode-9-men-vs-women/>

Regarding your question of whether we should teach differently to men and women, I think the only things we need to consider are that men and women might be interested in slightly different subjects, or might relate to slightly different subjects. It's important to bring grammar and vocabulary to life by using colourful and personalised examples. If all those examples are based around a male point of view the women might find it more difficult to relate to what you're saying. I think men and women probably learn languages in roughly the same way, but they might be motivated by different topics. It's worth listening to and observing your students to make sure you're speaking to them all, not just the men or women.

Thanks for the question.

Egor Yudin

Municipal Educational Institution "Ramenskaya Gymnasia"

Moscow Region

Hello, Luke!

Sherlock Holmes is a fictional character created by a Scottish author and physician Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. From my point of view, detective stories about Sherlock Holmes are the best stories in the world.

Do you like detective stories?

Aren't you going to write detective story?

Thank you!

Hi Egor,

As I said in a previous answer, I love detective stories, and I think people are interested in them because ultimately we are surrounded by mysteries in our lives, in the form of things we don't understand or have control over. So, we are all slightly fascinated in the structure of a mystery story. We like the sense of challenge in trying to understand something that seems unexplainable, and then reading about an extraordinary detective such as Sherlock Holmes who can explain the mystery to us, bringing us back to a feeling of security. In the end, we are just as fascinated by the detective as the crimes that he is solving. It's a wonderful storytelling medium and I always enjoy it. I think there is an art and a craft in being able to write a good mystery story with all the correct ingredients. I had a go at doing it in one of my podcast episodes some time ago. I wrote a short mystery story in two parts. They both involved two of my favourite fictional characters, The Doctor (from Doctor Who) and Sherlock Holmes. You can listen to it here <http://teacherluke.co.uk/2009/11/14/the-mystery-continues/>. I hope you like it.

Egor Yudin

Municipal Educational Institution "Ramenskaya Gymnasia"

Moscow Region

Hello, Luke!

Nowadays, there are a lot of accessories for men suits. As for me, bowties are the coolest things in the world.

Do you like bowties?

Do you use any suit accessories?

Thank you!

Hi Egor,

I quite like bow ties but I only wear them when I'm in a tuxedo (so not very often). I like to wear ties and I prefer the woollen style - straight, knitted and with a straight bottom. I also wear cotton oxford style shirts with a button down collar. I find them comfortable and stylish. Other than that I don't have many accessories like braces, a tie clip, cuff links or anything. I prefer to keep it simple.

Thanks for the question.

Nadezhda Krasnova

Municipal Educational Institution "Ramenskaya Gymnasia"

Moscow Region

Hello, Luke!

Nowadays euthanasia is becoming more popular. I don't understand it. In my opinion, it's inhuman. Could you explain this tendency to me? I wonder, what is your point of view on this problem?

Thanks a lot in advance for your answer.

Hi Nadezhda,

That's a really big question and I think it's a huge debate with lots of moral complexity. Personally I think people should have the right to choose to end their lives if they are facing a long and drawn out certain death with lots of pain and loss of dignity. I don't see any overriding reason why they shouldn't be allowed to end it sooner if they choose. There have been plenty of societies and cultures in the past that did the same thing. I think it's an extremely personal choice and I would like people to have that options. However, I think it is dangerous to introduce euthanasia into the system as a service for profit making private healthcare firms, or even into the public healthcare system. I think these kinds of systems are inherently impersonal and

there's always the potential for euthanasia to be abused in some way - particularly if the family are the ones taking the decision, not the patient himself/herself. There would have to be very stringent controls to make sure that the decision was taken by the patient and that it's exactly what he/she wants. So, because of the difficulty in preventing abuses or errors in the system I'm not mad-keen for it to be introduced into public life yet. It's certainly a complex area, and as an English teacher I'm not necessarily the one to decide, but as a member of society, that's my opinion. I hope I answered your question.

Ekaterina Vasilenko

Municipal Educational Institution "Ramenskaya Gymnasia"

Moscow Region

Hello Luke!

Have you ever met impudent fellows [disrespectful people] in your life? How do you deal with them?

Thank you!

Hi Ekaterina,

Of course I come across lots of kinds of disrespect every single day. It seems there's always

someone disrespecting me! Either it's a man on the bus who bumps into me without apologising, or it's a student in my class who is very rude, or it's the marketing department of a company that decides to patronise me in their advertising which pervades so much of the public spaces that I spend time in. When I meet disrespectful people, I sometimes just ignore them because I don't want to validate their behaviour with any kind of attention, and sometimes I will speak to them in a reasonable manner to show them that their actions are disrespectful. I try not to disrespect them in return because I think that doesn't help too much. Still, I get really frustrated and saddened by people's lack of respect. I wish people were more respectful of each other generally. That would make the world a better place.

Thanks for the question.

Thank you again for your questions, it's been a pleasure to respond to you all. If you'd like to follow my podcast then just visit www.teacherluke.co.uk. Thank you for reading.

Вот таким получилось интервью с Люком Томпсоном. Мы надеемся, что авторам вопросов было приятно читать ответы.