




Challenges

 Lesson code: A41F-SF6B-9RJL-F

UPPER INTERMEDIATE +

1 Warm-up

Talk about something you have always wanted to do or a country you have always wanted to visit.

2 Watching and listening

Matt Cutts is an engineer at Google. You are going to watch him talk about setting and achieving goals. Watch the talk and tick the goals he achieved during his 30-day challenges:

- | | | | |
|----------------------|--------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Take a picture a day | <input type="checkbox"/> | Go to the gym | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Cycle to work | <input type="checkbox"/> | Climb Mt Kilimanjaro | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Write a novel | <input type="checkbox"/> | Give up alcohol | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Run a marathon | <input type="checkbox"/> | Lose weight | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Give up sugar | <input type="checkbox"/> | Stop watching the news | <input type="checkbox"/> |

3 Vocabulary

Match the word/idiom with its correct meaning.

- | | |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. nerd (<i>n.</i>) | a. a socially awkward person |
| 2. give it a shot (<i>idiom</i>) | b. able to continue for a long time |
| 3. sleep-deprived (<i>adj.</i>) | c. bored |
| 4. sustainable (<i>adj.</i>) | d. not having enough sleep |
| 5. stuck in a rut (<i>idiom</i>) | e. try to do it |



Now complete the script below with the words/phrases:

A few years ago, I felt like I was _____¹, so I decided to follow in the footsteps of the great American philosopher, Morgan Spurlock, and try something new for 30 days. The idea is actually pretty simple. Think about something you've always wanted to add to your life and try it for the next 30 days. It turns out, 30 days is just about the right amount of time to add a new habit or subtract a habit -- like watching the news -- from your life.

There's a few things I learned while doing these 30-day challenges. The first was, instead of the months flying by, forgotten, the time was much more memorable. This was part of a challenge I did to take a picture every day for a month. And I remember exactly where I was and what I was doing that day. I also noticed that as I started to do more and harder 30-day challenges, my self-confidence grew. I went from desk-dwelling computer _____² to the kind of guy who bikes to work -- for fun. Even last year, I ended up hiking up Mt. Kilimanjaro, the highest mountain in Africa. I would never have been that adventurous before I started my 30-day challenges.

I also figured out that if you really want something badly enough, you can do anything for 30 days. Have you ever wanted to write a novel? Every November, tens of thousands of people try to write their own 50,000-word novel from scratch in 30 days. It turns out, all you have to do is write 1,667 words a day for a month. So I did. By the way, the secret is not to go to sleep until you've written your words for the day. You might be _____³, but you'll finish your novel. Now is my book the next great American novel? No. I wrote it in a month. It's awful. But for the rest of my life, if I meet John Hodgman at a TED party, I don't have to say, "I'm a computer scientist." No, no, if I want to, I can say, "I'm a novelist."

So here's one last thing I'd like to mention. I learned that when I made small, _____⁴ changes, things I could keep doing, they were more likely to stick. There's nothing wrong with big, crazy challenges. In fact, they're a ton of fun. But they're less likely to stick. When I gave up sugar for 30 days, day 31 looked like this.

So here's my question to you: What are you waiting for? I guarantee you the next 30 days are going to pass whether you like it or not, so why not think about something you have always wanted to try and _____⁵ for the next 30 days.



4 Describing challenges

Study the following adjectives/phrases. Put them in order from 1 (very easy) to 8 (impossible)

a piece of cake
formidable

achievable
tough

effortless
tricky

feasible
unattainable

Now describe the following 30-day challenges using the words from this exercise:

1. sail around the world
2. give up sugar
3. stop watching television
4. jog every morning
5. write a novel
6. take a picture every day

5 Talking point

Discuss any of the following questions:

1. What challenges would you set for yourself if you decided to take up a 30-day challenge?
2. Have you ever done something very challenging? How did you achieve it?

6 Self-study review

If you are subscribed to the Expemo review system, go to www.linguahouse.com, enter Lesson code: A41F-SF6B-9RJL-F, add the lesson to your knowledge collection and click 'Start My Review'. If you are not yet subscribed, go to www.linguahouse.com and click 'Join now'.

Remember to review your flashcards regularly if you want the lesson material to stay fresh in your memory. If you have a large knowledge collection, try to review them every day for at least 15-20 minutes.



2 Watching and listening

A few years ago, I felt like I was stuck in a rut, so I decided to follow in the footsteps of the great American philosopher, Morgan Spurlock, and try something new for 30 days. The idea is actually pretty simple. Think about something you've always wanted to add to your life and try it for the next 30 days. It turns out, 30 days is just about the right amount of time to add a new habit or subtract a habit -- like watching the news -- from your life.

There's a few things I learned while doing these 30-day challenges. The first was, instead of the months flying by, forgotten, the time was much more memorable. This was part of a challenge I did to take a picture every day for a month. And I remember exactly where I was and what I was doing that day. I also noticed that as I started to do more and harder 30-day challenges, my self-confidence grew. I went from desk-dwelling computer nerd to the kind of guy who bikes to work -- for fun. Even last year, I ended up hiking up Mt. Kilimanjaro, the highest mountain in Africa. I would never have been that adventurous before I started my 30-day challenges.

I also figured out that if you really want something badly enough, you can do anything for 30 days. Have you ever wanted to write a novel? Every November, tens of thousands of people try to write their own 50,000-word novel from scratch in 30 days. It turns out, all you have to do is write 1,667 words a day for a month. So I did. By the way, the secret is not to go to sleep until you've written your words for the day. You might be sleep-deprived, but you'll finish your novel. Now is my book the next great American novel? No. I wrote it in a month. It's awful. But for the rest of my life, if I meet John Hodgman at a TED party, I don't have to say, "I'm a computer scientist." No, no, if I want to, I can say, "I'm a novelist."

(Laughter)

So here's one last thing I'd like to mention. I learned that when I made small, sustainable changes, things I could keep doing, they were more likely to stick. There's nothing wrong with big, crazy challenges. In fact, they're a ton of fun. But they're less likely to stick. When I gave up sugar for 30 days, day 31 looked like this.

(Laughter)

So here's my question to you: What are you waiting for? I guarantee you the next 30 days are going to pass whether you like it or not, so why not think about something you have always wanted to try and give it a shot for the next 30 days.

Thanks.

(Applause)



2 Watching and listening

Take a picture a day
Cycle to work
Climb Mt Kilimanjaro
Write a novel
Give up sugar

*Note: Morgan Spurlock is an American documentary filmmaker best known for the documentary film 'Super Size Me'. In his reality TV Series '30 Days', Spurlock and his fiancée lived for 30 days in the Bottoms neighborhood of Columbus, Ohio, earning minimum wage, with no access to outside funds.
John Hodgman is an American author and actor.*

3 Vocabulary

1. a 2. e 3. d 4. b 5. c
1. stuck in a rut 2. nerd 3. sleep-deprived 4. sustainable 5. give it a shot

4 Describing challenges

a piece of cake (1), effortless (2), achievable (3), feasible (4), tricky (5), tough (6), formidable (7), unattainable (8)

Answers to the second part of the exercise are subjective.

