



English mania

Lesson code: NRU1-92RB-8HE2-7

UPPER INTERMEDIATE +

1 Warm-up

Study the definition below. Do you think the word is approving or disapproving?

mania (*noun*): a very strong interest in something which uses up all your time and energy; a powerful obsession

How do 'maniacs' behave? Match the descriptions and terms on the left to the manias on the right:

- | | |
|---|--------------------|
| 1. hysterical teenagers | a. Beatle mania |
| 2. deafening crowds, chanting, cheering, booing | b. exercise mania |
| 3. rapture, weeping, visions | c. political mania |
| 4. compulsive over-exercising | d. religious mania |
| 5. screaming slogans, waving flags | e. sports mania |

2 Watching and listening

Jay Walker, an entrepreneur and inventor, is going to give a talk on the world's 'English mania'. Watch the introduction to his talk. Which of the manias in Exercise 1 does he mention or refer to?

Guess the correct answer for each question below. Watch the rest of the talk and check your answers.

- How many people are trying to learn English worldwide?
a. 500 million b. 1 billion c. 2 billion
- Which country will become the largest English-speaking country in the world?
a. the USA b. China c. India
- In which school year do Chinese school children start learning English by law?
a. third grade (8-9 yrs) b. fifth grade (10-11) c. sixth grade (11-12)
- How long does China's 'Gaokao' school-leaving examination last?
a. 3 hours b. 12 hours c. 3 days
- How many Chinese high school students have taken the Gaokao?
a. 10 million b. 40 million c. 80 million



3 Checking understanding

Put 'T' (True) or 'F' (False) next to the statements below:

1. The speaker thinks that English mania is an unhealthy obsession.
2. According to the speaker, learning English represents opportunity for a better life.
3. The speaker believes that English will replace all other languages in the future.
4. The speaker believes that knowing English will enable people to become involved in global discussions.
5. The speaker believes that learning English is popular because of America.

4 Vocabulary development

Study the words below using a dictionary, then complete the sentences from Jay's talk. Check your answers by watching the video again or reading the transcript.

alarming gruelling harnessing tsunami unimaginable

1. Manias can be good. Manias can be _____. Or manias can be deadly.
2. 80 million high school Chinese students have already taken this _____ test.
3. The intensity to learn English is almost _____.
4. Is English a _____, washing away other languages?
5. Like the _____ of electricity in our cities or the fall of the Berlin Wall, English represents hope for a better future.

5 The UK/US education system

Study the table below.

Age range	British English	American English
2-5	nursery school / kindergarten	preschool
5-11	primary school	kindergarten (5-6) elementary school (5-11)
11-18	secondary school	junior high school (11-14) high school (14-18)
18+	university	college/university

Describe the education system in your country using British or American English.



What else do you know about the British and American education systems? Complete the sentences below:

A levels
public

comprehensive
revise

majors
school

principal
sit

1. The term '_____ school' has opposite meanings in the UK and US. In the UK, it refers to a private independent school. In the US, it means a school that is funded by the state.
2. In the UK, a _____ school refers to a typical state secondary school.
3. In the UK, the school-leaving exams are known as _____ .
4. In the US, the person in charge of a high school is a _____. In the UK, it is a *headteacher* or *headmaster/headmistress*.
5. At an American university, a student studies or _____ in a subject.
6. When preparing for an exam, students in the UK _____ what they have studied. In the US, they *review* for an exam.
7. In the UK and US, students *take* exams. However, in the UK they can also _____ exams.
8. In the US, Americans can use the expression 'go to _____' even if they are at university.

6 Talking point

Discuss any of the following questions:

1. What do you think of the English learning methods shown in the presentation?
2. How important is learning English in your country?
3. How would you describe the quality of your country's education system?
4. Has 'English mania' influenced your native language?



2 Watching and listening

Jay Walker: Let's talk about manias. Let's start with Beatle mania: hysterical teenagers, crying, screaming, pandemonium. Sports mania: deafening crowds, all for one idea -- get the ball in the net. Okay, religious mania: there's rapture, there's weeping, there's visions. Manias can be good. Manias can be alarming. Or manias can be deadly.

The world has a new mania. A mania for learning English. Listen as Chinese students practice their English by screaming it.

Teacher: ... change my life!

Students: I will change my life.

Teacher: I don't want to let my parents down.

Students: I don't want to let my parents down.

Teacher: I don't ever want to let my country down.

Students: I don't ever want to let my country down.

Teacher: Most importantly ...

Students: Most importantly ...

Teacher: I don't want to let myself down.

Students: I don't want to let myself down.

Jay Walker: How many people are trying to learn English worldwide? Two billion of them.

Students: A t-shirt. A dress.

Jay Walker: In Latin America, in India, in Southeast Asia, and most of all in China. If you are a Chinese student you start learning English in the third grade, by law. That's why this year China will become the world's largest English-speaking country. Why English? In a single word: Opportunity. Opportunity for a better life, a job, to be able to pay for school, or put better food on the table. Imagine a student taking a giant test for three full days. Her score on this one test literally determines her future. She studies 12 hours a day for three years to prepare. 25 percent of her grade is based on English. It's called the Gaokao, and 80 million high school Chinese students have already taken this gruelling test. The intensity to learn English is almost unimaginable, unless you witness it.

Teacher: Perfect!

Students: Perfect!

Teacher: Perfect!

Students: Perfect!

Teacher: I want to speak perfect English.

Students: I want to speak perfect English.

Teacher: I want to speak ...

Students: I want to speak ...

Teacher: ... perfect English.

Students: perfect English.

Teacher: I want to change my life!

Students: I want to change my life!



Jay Walker: So is English mania good or bad? Is English a tsunami, washing away other languages? Not likely. English is the world's second language. Your native language is your life. But with English you can become part of a wider conversation: a global conversation about global problems, like climate change or poverty, or hunger or disease. The world has other universal languages. Mathematics is the language of science. Music is the language of emotions. And now English is becoming the language of problem-solving. Not because America is pushing it, but because the world is pulling it. So English mania is a turning point. Like the harnessing of electricity in our cities or the fall of the Berlin Wall, English represents hope for a better future ... a future where the world has a common language to solve its common problems.

Jay Walker: Thank you very much.



1 Warm-up

'Mania' is generally a disapproving word. Go through the terms with the students: 'hysterical' -- unable to control yourself because you are extremely angry, frightened or excited; 'deafening' -- extremely loud; 'chanting' -- repeating a word, song or phrase continuously; 'rapture' -- extreme pleasure or excitement; 'weeping' -- crying; 'compulsive' -- doing something a lot, without being able to control it; 'screaming' -- crying or shouting loudly

Note: 'Beatle mania' or 'Beatlemania' is a term that refers to the intense obsession with the band The Beatles among their fans during the group's early years of success in the 1960s.

1. a 2. e 3. d 4. b 5. c

2 Watching and listening

Play the video. Pause at 01:00. The speaker refers to Beatle mania, sports mania, religious mania and political mania.

Play the rest of the video (from 01:00).

1. c 2. b 3. a 4. c 5. c

3 Checking understanding

1. F 2. T 3. F 4. T 5. F

4 Vocabulary development

Definitions: 'alarming' -- extremely worrying; 'gruelling' -- extremely tiring and difficult; 'harnessing' -- controlling something in order to use its power; 'tsunami' -- an extremely large wave cause by an earthquake under the sea; 'unimaginable' -- very difficult to imagine

Play the video again with English subtitles enabled or hand out a copy of the transcript.

1. alarming 2. gruelling 3. unimaginable 4. tsunami 5. harnessing

5 The UK/US education system

1. public 2. comprehensive 3. A levels 4. principal
 5. majors 6. revise 7. sit 8. school

