Breathing holes

Language level:	Intermediate (B1) +
Learner type:	Young learners; Teens; Adults; CLIL
Time:	50 minutes
Activity:	Organic gap fill; Videotelling
Topic:	A predator and prey relationship
Language:	Present narrative tenses; Collocations
Materials:	Video clip

Preparation, materials and equipment

For this activity, you will need a BBC Worldwide video titled: ***Polar bears hunt for seals in the Arctic***. To access the video on YouTube, click on the following link:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bA-jDk3-Mgs

Decide how you are going to display the clip in class. Possibilities include:

- Mobile device (For one-to-one situations)
- Laptop, desktop, tablet computer (For small groups)
- Computer, projector + screen (For larger classes)

Don't forget the loudspeakers.

If you don't have Internet access in class, you could download or 'capture' the video from YouTube. Use www.savevid.com or a similar site. Note, however, that in doing so, you will be breaching YouTube's Terms of Use.

Lesson plan

1. Tell students that they are going to hear about a special kind of relationship. Write the following on the board and ask students to guess what the missing letters are:

   A p _ _ _ _ _ _ _ -p _ _ _ relationship.

   (Answer = a predator-prey relationship)

2. Put students into pairs. Ask each pair to think of as many predator-prey relationships as they can and ask them to make a list. In order to give this a competitive edge, set a time limit and see which team can think of the most.

3. Ask for feedback.

4. Tell students that they are going to see a video clip from a nature documentary which involves a predator-prey relationship. Tell students that you are going to give them a number of phrases that the narrator uses. One by one, write the following phrases on the board in the order shown.

- right next to a breathing hole
- a very long wait
- worth the wait
- to listen out for
- as long as
- keep it going for a week
- no way of knowing
- in use at any one time
- strike lucky
- when the bear stops

After writing each phrase on the board, drill its pronunciation, ask students to copy it into their books, and ask if they can guess what the two animals are.

Note: The term 'breathing hole' will give them a clue. When students get to the last phrase, they find out that a bear is involved. Will they realise that it is a polar bear?

5. Tell students that the animals in question are a seal and a polar bear. Ask them if they can tell you where the story takes place (Answer = the Arctic).

6. Tell students that you are going to read them the video text from the nature clip. Tell them that this is a gap fill. When you pause, they will have to supply the correct phrase to fill the gap.

7. Read out the text contained on the **Teacher Script** (page 5). Each time you come to a ***phrase in bold***, pause and elicit the missing words.

Note: Manage students so that they don't all shout out at once. Encourage them to think about the grammar and logic of their answers. Nominate students when possible or ask students to put up their hands.

8. Clean the board and ask students to close their books. Repeat the reading and this time students will have to make use of their memory to fill the gaps.

9. Find out who wants the polar bear to catch the seal and who wants the seal to escape. Ask students to give reasons for their answers. Students could be put into pairs or groups to discuss this. See **Follow Up 2** below for additional discussion fuel.

10. Show the video clip.

Follow up 1

Ask students to reconstruct the text as accurately as they can remember it. In doing so, they should incorporate all of the phrases that were written on the board. You can give students some flexibility of structure (order of ideas, for example) but they should incorporate all of the phrases without changing them in any way. Once this has been done, invite students to be the narrator of the video - allow them to read out their texts as the clip plays with the sound down.

Follow up 2

Use this activity to introduce a project on the IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature) red list of threatened species. It divides threatened species into three categories according to their risk of extinction (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IUCN_Red_List)

CR	Critical endangered (most serious)
EN	Endangered
VU	Vulnerable

The polar bear is classified as a vulnerable species. The ringed seal (which features in the video clip) is listed in the (sometimes) ambiguous Least Concern category (see below). If a species is listed as Low Concern, it means that it has been evaluated but doesn't belong to any of the other categories. It does not necessarily mean that it is thriving.

Other abbreviations used:

EX	Extinct
EW	Extinct in the wild
NT	Near threatened
LC	Least concern

Teacher script

Underwater, there is a certain sound that the seal needs ***to listen out for****.*

At this stage, walk across the room and say "*pad - pad - pad - pad - pad - pad.*" Ask students if they can identify what is making the sound. (Answer = the polar bear)

The seal is safe ***as long as*** *the bear keeps moving.*

Ask students what the bear is walking on (Answer = ice.)

The problem starts ***when the bear stops****.*

Ask students why this could be a problem (Answer = the seal needs to surface in order to breath and the polar bear might be waiting for it.)

The problem for the seal is that the bear could be standing ***right next to a breathing hole****.*

The seal has ***no way of knowing****.*

The seal can have as many as 12 breathing holes ***in use at any one time****. But which is the dangerous one?*

The bear's best strategy is simply to choose a hole and be prepared for what could be ***a very long wait****.*

But it is ***worth the wait****. The fat from one seal will* ***keep it going for a week****. And every week or so, it will* ***strike lucky****.*

Before it surfaces, the seal has one last check for danger because once it begins the ascent it is it committed. It is too buoyant to change direction at the last minute.

Ask students if they can explain the term 'buoyant' (Answer = wanting to float.)