

## The Happiness Graph – Oral pair work activity to practise describing graphs

**Introduction** Get students to produce and then describe to a partner their “Happiness Graph” which displays their level of personal happiness during the last 7 days up to the day of your lesson. It's an activity that normally works quite well probably because the students basically like to talk about their own experiences and it makes a change from describing the usual economy or finance graphs (haven't you had enough of those!)

**The aim** To practise using graph language (covered in a previous lesson) and the past tense to describe a trend and past events e.g. my level of happiness reached a peak, hit a low point for the week, levelled off, bounced back up again, plummeted, increased dramatically etc etc

**Student Preparation (15 – 20 min)** Without showing their partner, each student draws two axes on an A4 sheet of paper (landscape page setup) and plots a line graph of their level of happiness during the week. As an example prepare an overhead of your own week up to the day of your lesson with some funny anecdotes that explain any dramatic changes – it also usually goes down well if your graph finishes with a high (for teaching the students in front of you!). You could also have fun by plotting some lows for when you taught their colleagues' classes.

*For the vertical axis you could use the scale:*

+2 Over the moon, +1 Reasonably happy, 0 Could be worse, -1 Fairly unhappy, -2 Fetch the Prozac

*And for the horizontal axis:*

Use 14 points for the scale showing the days of the week split into AM (morning) and PM (afternoon and evening) for each day up to the day of your lesson.

**Oral pair work (30 – 45 min)** Student A then describes his/her graph to student B, who draws it on top of his/her own plot using a different colour (for comparison later). As many expressions as possible should be used to describe the trend line and not just the points on the graph. Student B can also ask questions about student A's week, such as “Why were you so happy on Wednesday afternoon? □What was wrong on Friday morning? What happened on Saturday!?” etc and student A must answer. (Students really get into this). It's then the turn of student B to describe their happiness curve to student A who draws it over his/her own graph.

*Possible follow up activity:*

Get the students in pairs to discuss the combined graph comparing each of their levels of happiness and the reasons behind any variations in the trend. (Good for practising comparisons of trends)

### Example:

