

Unit topic	Human and animal behaviour
3.1	
Listening	Non-exam T/F
Vocabulary	Idioms – order of words <i>Fairly, rather, quite</i>
Exam skills	Use of English Paper 3 Part 1
3.2	
Grammar	Conditional forms
3.3	
Summary skills	Reformulation Paper 3 Part 5
Word formation	Negative adjectives
Workbook contents	
1	Reading – Part 2
2	Grammar – conditionals
3, 4, 5	Vocabulary

3.1 SB pages 24–25

Lesson plan	
Speaking	5–10'
Listening	25–35'
Idiom spot	15–15'
<i>Fairly, rather, quite</i>	15–20'
Use of English	15–20'
SV	Omit Idiom spot; set 6 for homework.
LV	See Photocopiable tapescript activity and Extension activity in 2 and Extension activity in 4.

- The photograph is of a sunset to show 'red sky at night'. Discuss the sayings and elicit similar sayings from students' country or countries.
- Ask students to read through the questions and check they understand the vocabulary. A rain goose is a type of bird. Play the recording once and ask the class to compare answers with a partner. Play it again to check answers. The underlined parts of the tapescript confirm the answers.

Answers	
1 T	2 F
3 F	4 T
5 F	6 T
7 F	8 T
9 T	10 T

Tapescript

Sue: Good morning. Now, the huge growth of interest in environmental issues has led to a careful re-examination of all kinds of traditional lore. Today I have with me Peter Watkins, a lecturer in psychology at the Smithsonian Institute. He's just written a best-selling book, *The History of Weather Folklore*, which explains country sayings and the role of animals and birds in forecasting the weather. Sayings my granny used to come out with, like *Birds flying low, expect rain and a blow, which I've always felt rather sceptical about.*

Peter: Well, Sue, the way in which animals and birds can apparently predict changes in the weather before we can has always fascinated people and, for that matter, still does. If it didn't, the sayings wouldn't still be in current use, and of course, nowadays the weather is anxiously studied to see if the greenhouse effect is starting to bite.

Sue: But is there any truth in these old sayings? Given that there are so many, apparently 500 at the last count, and they've been around a while, presumably they should be fairly accurate?

Peter: Well, generally, there's a better chance of their being right for short-term weather forecasting rather than long-term. Of course, the most interesting natural weather forecasters are the birds, which is why there are so many sayings involving them. Birds depend on the right weather conditions for flying and, in particular, birds that fly very high like swifts and swallows stand very little chance of survival if they get caught in a bad storm. They are also insect feeders and when the weather is fine the insects are high and the birds will follow them. Insects have good reason to dive for cover if rain is imminent as they are covered with water-repellent hairs. It actually doesn't take much for them to get completely soaked, so they respond quite rapidly if there's a drop in temperature or a rise in humidity.

Sue: So, there is an element of truth in that one. Now, I used to live off the coast of Scotland and they had a saying on the islands about a bird called the red-throated diver. They used to call this bird the rain goose, and the saying went pretty much like this: *If the rain goose flies to the hill, you can put your boat where you will, but if she flies to the sea you must draw your boat and flee.* I must say

that I used to be rather puzzled by this saying, as I didn't understand why it would fly out to sea when the weather was getting worse. Anyway, one time when I was out in a boat the wind started to get up. We tuned in the radio and it said a gale was due from the north. We saw the geese everywhere flying around and heading out to sea. So despite common sense telling you otherwise, the saying of the local people seemed to be true.

Peter: Yes, and we still don't know the reason for its strange behaviour. But you know, not all weather lore is doom and gloom. Some birds can predict when things are about to brighten up. Certain geese set off for their breeding grounds in Iceland when the weather is fine – you just have to wait and watch and then plan your harvesting or house painting!

Sue: Not very practical! However, if there is some truth behind these weather sayings, do they ever have any practical use?

Peter: Obviously, weather lore had a very important application in the farmer's world. Farming and weather are intrinsically linked and the ability to predict, or at least think you could predict, was very important to them, although of course, they weren't the only ones with a vested interest in weather forecasting. One of the things about human beings is that we do not like to feel that things are happening with no purpose whatsoever. Weather lore makes a connection between something that is happening and something that is going to happen – we need to feel we're not simply the victims of chance and circumstance. Although it's very difficult to put dates on these sayings, many of them probably go back thousands of years. Some of them work and some of them don't, and some of them don't even make sense. Many actually negate each other.

Sue: Quite. So, how reliable are sayings which predict the year ahead, if we can't even rely on ones predicting the weather the next day?

Peter: Well, I find it very difficult to believe that you can tell the rest of the winter from the way birds are flying or how your cat behaves in the autumn. By putting our own interpretations on how nature works we can get it completely wrong. For our ancestors the weather was a life and death situation – not just an inconvenience, and I think that had they had anything more reliable, they wouldn't have had to base their predictions on this kind of thing. They were really clutching at straws when they observed animal and bird behaviour and linked it to the weather, but they really had no other choice.

Sue: My thanks to Peter Watkins. Next week we'll ...

Ask students to find the following words and expressions and explain their meaning from the context.

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|----------------------------|--|
| <i>to come out with</i> | <i>the wind started to get up</i> |
| <i>is starting to bite</i> | <i>are intrinsically linked</i> |
| <i>is imminent</i> | <i>many actually negate each other</i> |
| <i>an element of truth</i> | <i>clutching at straws</i> |

Suggested answers

- to come out with* – to say
- is starting to bite* – is starting to take effect
- is imminent* – is fast approaching
- an element of truth* – some truth
- the wind started to get up* – the wind started to get stronger
- are intrinsically linked* – are essentially/fundamentally linked
- many actually negate each other* – many contradict each other
- clutching at straws* – turning to something in desperation

Extension activity

Students should write out sentences of their own, showing how the vocabulary in the Photocopiable tapescript activity, above, is used.

Idiom spot

Ask students to work in pairs to first of all check the idioms are correct and then to complete the sentences with the correct idiom.

Answers

These were the idioms that needed correcting: time and again; fame and fortune; flesh and blood; touch and go; safe and sound; life and soul

- a thick and thin b sixes and sevens
- c fame and fortune d touch and go
- e First and foremost f Time and again
- g safe and sound h give and take i life and soul
- j flesh and blood k high and dry l black and white

- Quite, fairly* and *rather* are often confused. Refer students to the Grammar folder on SB pages 184–5 if they need more help.

Play the recording and ask the students to match the speaker to either a or b. Draw their attention to the note about gradable and ungradable adjectives.