



## Background information on topics

### Module 2 – Unit 5

*Julius Caesar* re-established Cleopatra and as his mistress she bore him a son and went with him to Rome. When Caesar died in 44 BC, she returned to Egypt, later falling in love with Mark Antony. This was unpopular in Rome and provoked a war. Antony and Cleopatra were defeated at the battle of Actium (31 BC). Antony thought that Cleopatra was dead and killed himself. She then committed suicide, allegedly by a snake bite.

In 1492 *Christopher Colobus* set sail with three ships, the Santa Maria, the Niña and the Pinta. He reached Dominica and Cuba and called them the West Indies, thinking that they were part of Asia.

On 4th November 1605, *Guy Fawkes* was discovered in the cellar with the gunpowder that was to be set alight the following day. He was arrested and condemned to death, and after severe torture revealed the names of his fellow conspirators. The Gunpowder Plot is commemorated in Britain each year on 5th November, when effigies of Guy Fawkes are burnt.

### Module 3 – Unit 7

Today, Scouts across the world are involved in projects as diverse as peace education, drug abuse prevention, clean water and sanitation, literacy, renewable energies and environmental conservation. The movement involves both girls and boys, from 6 to 25. Scouting is currently active in 216 countries and territories with a global membership of over 30 million. Two thirds of the international membership are in developing countries.

### Module 3 – Unit 8

The sentence builder in this lesson looks at word order with multi-part verbs. This is quite a complex area and the builder does not go into the grammatical details. With phrasal verbs which have adverbial particles (e.g. turn something off), the object can come before the particle and pronouns *must* come before the particle. With prepositional verbs (e.g. look after) or phrasal/prepositional verbs (e.g. get on with) the object can never go before the preposition.

Students can find out how different verbs behave by looking at the Word Bank. Intransitive verbs are shown with no object (*get up, come along* etc.). Transitive verbs where the object can go before the particle are shown (*turn something up, give something away* etc.). The position of the object with prepositional verbs or phrasal/prepositional verbs is also shown (e.g. *look after somebody/something, put up with something*).

### Module 3 – Across Cultures 2

The Scottish clans - After the union of Scotland and England (1707), the highland clans were persecuted because many of them supported the Jacobite (and catholic) pretenders to the thrones of England and Scotland. Tartans were banned and many of the highlanders were sent off to America. In the mid-nineteenth century, there was a revival of interest in the clans with the romanticism of novelists like Walter Scott.

The Maoris - There has been conflict between Maoris and the majority of European origin. However, now the Maoris are encouraged by the NZ government to celebrate their own traditions. The Maoris make up an important part of the identity of New Zealand.

## **Module 4 – Unit 10**

77% of 12 to 16 year-olds shop online in Britain. Boys spend more online than girls. The biggest internet shoppers are from Scotland. (Halifax Pocket Money survey – 2006) The most common things to buy are CDs (40%) and computer games (34%)

## **Module 4 – Unit 11**

- the Yap islanders used the stone coins as status symbols and kept them outside their houses
- in the 19th century many national bank notes were backed by gold or silver – the government promised to pay an amount of these metals in exchange for the notes
- the delicatessen owner was called Frank Tortoriello. He didn't have enough money to move his deli because his son had cancer and he had big medical bills
- time bank schemes exist in North America, Europe and Japan. 20,000 people are involved in various local currency schemes like this around the UK

The Celts occupied much of central and western Europe from the 5th century BC until they were pushed north and west by the Romans and later by Germanic Tribes (like the Anglo-Saxons). Now, the seven 'Celtic Nations' are in the far west of Europe: Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Brittany, Cornwall, Galicia (in Spain) and the Isle of

Man. Celtic coins were made from the 4th century in central Europe and from the late 2nd century until about 50AD in Britain.

## **Module 6 – Unit 17**

The antibacterial chemical 'triclosan' makes its first appearance here. It appears as the toxic chemical which poisons the river and which can cause allergies. There are also studies to indicate that the chemical can be carcinogenic when in contact with chlorine in water (which is the case of shampoo).

We do not wish to start a health scare and the big pharmaceutical companies would contest the information below. However, there is no doubt that, at high concentrations, triclosan is a potentially dangerous chemical and has a very negative effect on wildlife. In the story, we presume that the company are mis-using the chemical.

See this extract from the **World Wildlife Fund's** website on safe shopping

<http://safershopping.wwf.org.uk/Articles.aspx?id=13>

'Triclosan is an antibacterial chemical and is widely incorporated into numerous everyday products where there is a perceived need for such properties e.g. in soaps, detergents, toothpastes, mouthwashes and plastic kitchenware. Research is showing that triclosan is very toxic to aquatic life and can also form persistent and bioaccumulative breakdown products in the environment (these have been found to be building up in fish in freshwater lakes). It has also been detected in human breast milk. Recent research has highlighted other undesirable properties for example, triclosan in soaps and dishwashing detergents has been shown to react with chlorinated tap water to produce chloroform, whilst sunlight can convert triclosan in sewage effluents to dioxins (which are extremely toxic chemical compounds).'

For effects of 'triclosan' on human health see this extract from an organic pharmacy.

[http://www.ellament.com/acatalog/Chemical\\_lowdown.html](http://www.ellament.com/acatalog/Chemical_lowdown.html)

'The US Environmental Protection Agency registers triclosan as a pesticide giving it a high score for its risk to human health and to the environment. It is thought to encourage anti-microbial resistance in the same way as excessive anti-biotic use according to research at Tufts University in Boston. Triclosan has been found in breast milk and fish 9. It is used in deodorants, toothpaste and washes as an anti-bacterial.'

## Module 8 – Get Ready

The ancient game of *tlachtli* is like basketball. Games similar to basketball were played all over Mesoamerica by peoples like the Aztec, the Maya, and the Olmec. The object of the game was to put a ball through a hoop made of stone at one end of a court. But unlike basketball, the players can't use their hands. Also the losers had their heads chopped off after the game. The players were prisoners of war, the enemies of the Aztecs who were hosting the game. The game was a ritual honouring Amapan and Uappatzin, the patron deities of the game of *tlachtli*, and honouring Huitzilopochtli, the Aztec god of war.

The ball was the size of a bowling ball, and weighed about two and a half kilos. Getting it through the hoop without using the hands was so hard that the first team to score a goal won. The ball was made of natural rubber.

The origins of rugby are not clear. When William Webb Ellis is supposed to have deviated from the rules of football (soccer) in 1823, there was no such thing as "soccer". Schools and villages played by their own rules, with no regard for anyone else's, as there were no inter-school matches. In fact, none of the various types of football then played bore much resemblance to modern soccer.

## Module 8 – Unit 22

**Emil Zatopek (1922 - 2000)** is the most famous Czech runner ever and one of the best runners of the XXth century. The peak of his career was in 1950s. He won titles at almost all European Championships in that decade.

**Diego Maradona** (born 1960) is considered one of the best and the most controversial footballers ever. He played in four FIFA World Cup tournaments, and led the Argentina national team to victory over West Germany in 1986. After retiring from football he struggled with a long standing problem of cocaine abuse. He is now host of a popular Argentinian TV programme.

**Elena Isinbayeva** (born in 1982) is world champion in women's pole vaulting. She has broken the world record over 15 times, often jumping just 1cm higher than previously. Many commentators say that she does it because she earns money for every new world record and not for the height of her jumps.

At the 1952 Summer Olympics in Helsinki he won gold in the 5000 m and 10,000 m runs, and at the last minute he decided to compete in the marathon for the first time in his life and won. He also broke the existing Olympic record in each of the three events.

Zátopek's running style was distinctive and very much at odds with what was considered to be an efficient style at the time. His head would often roll, face contorted with effort, while his torso swung from side to side. He often wheezed and panted audibly while running. His training routine was also very different from what other runners did at that time. He was the first to introduce intense interval workouts that now have become standard.

A hero in his native country, Zátopek was an influential figure in the Communist Party. However, he supported the party's democratic wing, and after the Prague Spring in 1968, he was removed from all important positions and forced to work in a uranium mine as punishment. Zátopek died in Prague, in 2000 at the age of 78.

## Module 8 – Unit 23

Legends obscure the origins of the games, so placing any certain date on the start of the contest is impossible. Most historians date Iphitos (Iphitus) to some time in the ninth century B.C. The first recorded Olympic victor was Korobos of Elis, traditionally dated to 776 B.C.

The Olympic games held no place in the Christian empire. The emperor Theodosius I legally abolished the games in 393 or 394 A.D. The modern games were started again in 1896 in Athens. The games were amateur until the 1980s when athletes effectively became professional.

## **Module 10 – Unit 29**

*The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* was a [science fiction comedy](#) series written by [Douglas Adams](#). It was originally broadcast on [BBC Radio 4](#) in [1978](#). Since then it has been adapted to other formats. Adaptations have included [stage shows](#), a [series of five books](#), a TV series, a computer game and [comic book adaptations](#). A film version was produced in 2005. In all versions, the series follows the adventures of [Arthur Dent](#) who, with his friend [Ford Prefect](#) (an [alien](#) who is writing a guidebook for the galaxy) escapes the destruction of Earth by an alien race called the [Vogons](#). [Zaphod Beeblebrox](#), Ford's semi-cousin and part-time Galactic President, unknowingly saves the pair from certain death. He brings them aboard his stolen spaceship, whose crew completes the main cast of characters: [Marvin the Paranoid Android](#), a [depressed robot](#), and [Trillian](#), the only other survivor of Earth's destruction. The characters begin a journey to find the planet of [Magrathea](#) and the [Question to the Ultimate Answer](#).