

## Less is more?



### Activity 1: Warm-up

How many things do you possess?

How many of them do you use on a regular basis?

Do you sort your stuff and throw away things you don't need?

Do you like collecting things?

### Activity 2: Reading



#### My stuff - A one-year human experiment about what truly matters

After a split with his long-time girlfriend Petri Luukkainen found himself buying more and more things with his credit card. Deciding **enough is enough**, he starts a new experiment. Everything he owns will be put into **storage** (literally everything: Luukkainen begins the film completely naked in a totally empty flat) and he will allow himself to pick one **item** per day while **forbidding** himself from buying anything new. As he **retrieves** one item at a time, Luukkainen begins to **appreciate** the difference between what he wants and what he needs. But when a new girl enters his life, the experiment proves a little more difficult to keep going.

This is an often surprising documentary that shows Western culture's relationship with the things that it owns. Luukkainen starts with the things that he needs (unsurprisingly, the first item he retrieves is a long coat) and it leads to some wonderful moments when he rediscovers the **joy** of something he's denied himself: the warmth of a **duvet** or the softness of a pillow. But as his basic needs are slowly taken care, it becomes interesting to see how unnecessary many of his **belongings** seem and how easy it can be to live without them.

**The concept of the film:** Take all of your stuff into a storage, and bring back only one item per day. The result? An everyday adventure driving him deeper and deeper into the empty spot in his heart. You're right: this would be borderline insane even without his decision of constantly filming himself.

**Author of the article:** Laurence Boyce

**Source:** <http://www.screendaily.com/reviews/the-latest/-my-stuff/5051968.article>

**2A: What is the film about? Summarise its plot in two sentences.**

Before writing your summary: Work in pairs and find different expressions and phrases used to describe the plot of a film/book.


**2B: Vocabulary: Match the words (1-9) with their definitions (A-I).**

1.	enough is enough	A	to get or bring (something) back from somewhere
2.	storage	B	a warm cover for your bed, consisting of a large cloth bag filled with feathers or a soft material
3.	item	C	to refuse to allow (something) to order (someone) not to do something
4.	to retrieve	D	to recognize the full worth of to be grateful for (something)
5.	to forbid	E	an individual thing, usually one of several things in a group or on a list an individual subject that you are discussing or dealing with an article in a newspaper or magazine
6.	to appreciate	F	the things you own
7.	joy	G	space available for storing something, in particular allocated space in a warehouse
8.	duvet	H	a feeling of great pleasure and happiness
9.	belongings	I	used for saying that something must stop

Definitions A, C, D, G, H: <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/>

Definitions B, E, F, I: <http://www.macmillandictionary.com/>

**2C: Fill the gaps with the words from the activity 2B. Put them into the correct form where necessary.**

1. Please remember to take all your ..... with you when leaving the train.
2. Petri ..... one item a day.
3. It is ..... to smoke here.
4. I love lazy Sunday mornings spent under a warm .....
5. I would ..... your help.
6. We saw the tears of ..... on her face.
7. I rented a ..... for my belongings.
8. How many new gadgets does she need, before .....
9. No more than 6 ..... allowed in changing room.

**2D: Find synonyms.**

1.	duvet (BrE)	A	to get back
2.	to forbid	B	be grateful
3.	joy	C	comforter (AmE)
4.	to retrieve	D	to ban
5.	to appreciate	E	happiness

**Activity 3: Watch the trailer of the film “My stuff” and answer the questions:**



1. What rules did Petri set?
  - ①
  - ②
  - ③
  - ④
2. What do you think of the experiment? Give three adjectives to describe it.
  - ①
  - ②
  - ③
3. Would you do such an experiment on yourself? Yes/no? Why?

4. Imagine you are going to do such an experiment – prepare a list of 5 things which you would retrieve first.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

**Activity 4: Find synonyms for the underlined expressions in the text from the activity 2.**

Source: <http://www.finnishfilmaffair.fi/page/films/my-stuff/userid//email/>

**My stuff**

When twentysomething **Petri gets dumped by his girlfriend**, he tries to get over it by **pushing his credit card limit**. He buys **stuff** - lots of stuff. But it doesn't make him happy. Petri is in the middle of an existential crisis when he decides to start **an experiment on himself**: He puts all his **belongings** in a storage container. For one year, Petri allows himself to **retrieve** only one item per day and he **is not allowed to** buy anything new. New life begins naked next to a radiator. Little by little Petri learns how to live again with less for himself.

Petri gets dumped by his girlfriend	
pushing his credit card limit	
stuff	
an experiment on himself	
belongings	
retrieve	
is not allowed to	

**Activity 5: Watching**

**5A: Before watching:**

1. How big is your flat/house? How many rooms are there in your flat/house? Is it enough for you?
2. Do you feel comfortable at your place? What can you change in your flat/house so that you can feel better at home?



5B: Watch the speech and summarise Graham Hill's message. What are his three approaches?

Summary:

3 approaches:

①

②

③

5C: Watch the speech again (00:58 – 5:05) and fill the gaps with words or chunks:

1. So we've got ..... the space, but we've become such good shoppers that we need even more space.
2. So where does this lead? Lots of ..... , huge ..... , and perhaps not coincidentally, our happiness levels ..... over the same 50 years.
3. Well I'm here to suggest there's a better way, that less might actually ..... more.
4. I bet most of us have experienced at some point the ..... of less: college - in your dorm, traveling - in a hotel room, camping - rig up basically nothing, maybe a boat.
5. So I started a project called Life Edited at lifeedited.org to ..... this ..... and to find some great solutions in this area.
6. First up: ..... my 420 sq. ft. apartment in Manhattan with partners Mutopo and Jovoto.com.
7. It's time for me to .....
8. .... , we should buy and own some great stuff.
9. [...] a little side table stretches out to ..... 10.
10. Most of us, maybe all of us, are here pretty happily for a ..... with a couple of bags, maybe a small space, a hotel room.

**5D: After watching: Discussion**

What do you think of the idea of editing our lives?

Would you like to put Graham's ideas into practice?