

NEWSPAPERS IN EDUCATION

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THE PRAGUE POST

The Prague Post, November 28, page A1
'Desperate measures'

Before reading:

What do you know about homeless people? Describe their way of life. Have you ever met a homeless person? Why do you think some people live on the street? Do you know their background? Do you think that other people try to help them? How? Do you think that government or city councils should take care of homeless people? Why? Why not?

Questions after reading:

1. What was Jirka's and Tomáš's job before they became homeless?
2. What do they do to prevent cold and to survive freezing nights?
3. What is the situation of shelters for homeless people? How many beds are there? Can the shelters accommodate everyone in the cold winter?
4. Why do officials think the number of homeless people is rising?
5. To which town do homeless people usually go?
6. How many homeless people are estimated to be in Prague?
7. What was the situation like last year?
8. What does the deputy mayor think about distributing social funds?
9. Retell František's, Josef's, and Štěpán's life stories.
10. What do Neh bová and Homolka, of the Salvation Army, say about the health problems?
11. From the article, get as much information as you can about socio-economic problems and other factors that contribute to homelessness.
12. Does Mr. Homolka think it is their fault and that they are lazy? What do you think?
13. Retell Ladislav Kulhánek's life story.

Vocabulary:

sweeper – *metař, čistič ulic*
frostbite – *omrzlina*

After reading:

Did you find anything interesting or new in this article? Share it with your class.

Go back to the *Before reading* section again. Have you changed your answers?

The Prague Post, November 28, page A3
'School boost seen as pocket change'

Before reading:

What do you think your school has to spend money on? Do you think that your school receives enough funding and is in a good financial situation? Does your school have enough quality resources, sports equipment, access to the Internet, nice classrooms?

What would you like to see improved in your school?

Questions after reading:

1. What is the situation at the Dr. Edvard Beneš elementary school in Prague 9?
2. What did the Ministry of Education and Finance do to help the underfunded national system?
3. How is the Internet project developing?
4. What are Mr. Terkoš's fundamental concerns?
5. What is the textbook and school supplies situation at ES in Prague 9?
6. What are the expenses of the ES?
7. How much did the ES have to pay for heating last year?
8. What problems does the school in Horní Počernice face? What about the school in Olomouc?
9. How much money does the national school system need, according to Mr. Kršek?

Vocabulary:

boost – *podpora*
exasperated – *rozčilen*
chunk – *kus*
woe – *nesnáze, potíže*
cutback – *snížení, omezení*
furnace – *kotel (ústředního topení)*
to allot – *přidělit*
to tackle – *pustit se do, vyřídit*

Activity:

Do you want better study conditions? Can you, as a class, help your school somehow? Think about it in small groups and then discuss your ideas as a class.

You can inform your teacher or the director of your school about your idea and if they approve it, you DO IT and help your school!

The Prague Post, December 5, page A4
'Lemonade Joe's last stand at 90.3'

Before reading:

Do you listen to the radio? What role does radio broadcasting play in society and people's lives? What do you expect from your radio station (music, news, reports,...)? What Czech radio stations do you know? What about English-speaking radio stations? What is your favorite radio station? Why do you like it?

Do you know the station Rádio Limonádov Joe? What is its purpose?

Questions after reading:

1. What sound could you hear after ads on Radio Lemonade Joe?
2. What kind of programming does Radio Lemonade Joe have?
3. What will happen to Radio Lemonade Joe?
4. What will the new radio station on Lemonade Joe's frequency be like?
5. What is the history of Lemonade Joe?
6. How many applicants wanted Lemonade Joe's frequency?
7. What is the new broadcast law like?
8. What do people say about Radio Lemonade Joe?
9. What will Radio Lemonade Joe have to do?
10. What is Mr. Zelenka's opinion?

Vocabulary:

eclectic – *eklektick, přínášející ode všeho něco*
tabloid – *senzacechtiv*
limbo – *prázdnota, přen. země nikoho*
to retain – *udržet*
predicament – *krizová situace, nesnáze*

Activity:

If you had a radio station, what would it be like? What would your programming be like? Describe it to your classmates.



Work in groups and prepare your own radio broadcast. You can include news from your school or town, world news, interviews, music, quiz, call-in, and many other things.

LESSON PLAN: RELIGIONS

What do you believe in? Do you believe in something more powerful than people? What do you call it?

Christmas is coming and you know it is a religious - Christian - celebration.

What do you know about other religions? What religions and faiths do you know? What role have they played in society? Do you believe in good character? Do you believe that religions give order to society?

Read the following summary of some world religions:

Hinduism

The word "Hindu" comes from the name of the river Indus. There are 750 million Hindus in the world, and most of them live in India.

Hinduism includes a very wide range of traditions, beliefs and practices. Hindus believe in a single Divinity or supreme God that is present in everything and in other gods who are aspects of that supreme God. They believe that the soul repeatedly cycles through being born into a body, dying, and being reborn. They believe that the "brahma" (individual soul) goes to "atman" (universal soul) after death. Hinduism is more an approach to the universe and a way of living rather than a religion. Hinduism doesn't have a single scripture that is regarded as uniquely authoritative (its sacred writing "shruti" includes other texts). Hinduism gives more prominence to the oral tradition. As time passed, a caste system developed.

Buddhism

Buddhism is a vast and complex religious and philosophical tradition which stretches back over 2,500 years. It has about 500 million adherents around the world.

'Buddha' means 'one who has woken up'. Most people live asleep, never knowing or seeing life as it really is. As a consequence they suffer. Buddha teaches out of sympathy and compassion for the suffering of beings and for the benefit and welfare of all beings. Buddhism focuses on each individual seeking to attain enlightenment. Key beliefs and values are contained in "The Four Noble Truths": (1) Life is suffering. (2) All suffering is caused by ignorance of the nature of reality. (3) Suffering can be ended by overcoming ignorance and attachment. (4) The path to the suppression of suffering. Buddhists believe in Karma, a force that determines the quality of each life, depending on how well one behaved in the past life. Buddhists' goal is to achieve enlightenment and the state known as nirvana.

Zoroastrianism

Zoroastrianism is a religion founded in ancient Persia by the prophet Zoroaster. The doctrines preached by Zoroaster are preserved in his metrical Gathas (psalms),

which form part of the sacred scripture known as the Avesta. The basic tenets of the Gathas consist of a monotheistic worship of Ahura Mazda (the 'Lord Wisdom') and an ethical dualism opposing Truth (Asha) and Lie, which permeates the entire universe.

About 30,000 Zoroastrians still live in Iran. The Zoroastrian religion has a following of 270,000 people worldwide. They still recite the Avestan liturgy and tend the sacred fires.

Vocabulary:

monotheistic - monoteistick (věřící v jednoho Boha)
to permeate - pronikat, prostupovat

Judaism

Judaism is a monotheistic religion founded by Moses on Mount Sinai, 3,500 years ago. It has about 12 million adherents around the world. Those who convert to Judaism must undertake the observance of Torah, including, if they are men, circumcision.

The fundamental belief of Judaism is that there is a single, all-powerful God who created the universe and everything in it. The Holy book of Judaism is the Hebrew Bible, which includes the Torah (called the Old Testament by Christians), Nebim and Ketubim. The symbol of Judaism is the Magen (shield) of David, which is often called the Star of David. The Jewish place of worship is called a Synagogue.

The Jewish holy day, or Sabbath, starts at sunset on Friday and continues until sunset on Saturday. During the Sabbath, observant Jews will do nothing that might be counted as work. In Judaism, Hanukkah, the festival of lights, is celebrated by the lighting of candles and the preparation of traditional potato pancakes. Today it is seen as a symbol of the survival of the Jewish people.

Christianity

Christianity is a religion practiced by nearly 2 billion people worldwide. It originated in Palestine in the 1st century AD and is founded on the life and teachings of Jesus Christ [4BC-29AD], a Palestinian Jew.

There are many different variations or "denominations". The major division is between Orthodox and Western Christianity (which itself is divided into Roman Catholicism and Protestantism). Christians believe that there is only one God. God has created the world distinct from himself but is believed to be active within it. God reveals himself in three 'beings': Father, Son (Jesus Christ) and Holy Spirit. The Bible is the Holy Book. This is divided into the Old Testament (the five books of Moses) and the New Testament.

The most important holiday on the Christian calendar is Easter, which commemorates the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Jesus.

Islam

Islam began 1,400 years ago in Arabia and now has around 1,200 million adherents.

"Islam" is an Arabic word which means surrendering oneself to the will of God, and achieving peace and security by doing so. Islam believes that there is only one God, "Allah" in Arabic. Muhammad was a Prophet of God. Muslims are guided to follow God's will by the holy book, the Qur'an, which Muslims regard as the unaltered word of God. Muslims believe that they have one life, after which they are judged. The Muslim place of worship is called a mosque. Islam's two holiest places, the cities of Mecca and Medina, are both in Saudi Arabia.

Muslims celebrate Ramadan: For one month each year Muslims the world over fast as part of a special time for prayer and self-examination.

Bahá'í Faith

The Bahá'í religious faith was founded in the late 19th century in Persia (Iran). The founder of the Bahá'í faith was Bahá'u'lláh (Arabic, 'the Glory of God'). It is a religion emphasizing spiritual unity of humankind. It maintains that the teachings of all religions are of value and humankind is spiritually one. It also advocates world peace. Bahá'ís believe in unity of God, unity of religions and unity of humankind. There is no priesthood and no body of ritual exists. The Holy Scriptures are authentic.

There are about 6 to 7 million Bahá'ís in more than 300 countries and dependencies worldwide.

(resources: www.encyarta.msn.com
www.bbc.com)

Choose one religion or faith and find more information about it. Find more about its principles and beliefs and about its festivals and how they are celebrated. (You can use, for example, the Internet or encyclopedias, but remember, it is hard to summarize something as complex as religions. If you really want to know about something, it is always better to go directly to the source.) Share your findings with your class.

CHRISTMAS

Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus Christ.

Historians do not know what date Jesus was born and they are also unsure exactly when Christians first began celebrating the Nativity of Christ. Most of them believe that Christmas originated in the 4th century as a Christian substitute for pagan celebrations of the winter solstice. Before the introduction of Christmas, each year on December 17 Romans honored Saturn, the ancient god of agri-

culture, in a festival called Saturnalia. This festival lasted for seven days and included the winter solstice, which usually occurred around December 25 on the ancient Julian calendar. During Saturnalia, the Romans feasted, postponed all business and warfare, exchanged gifts, and temporarily freed their slaves. The Church hoped to draw pagans into its religion by allowing them to continue their revelry while simultaneously honoring the birthday of Jesus.

The Roman Catholic Church chose December 25 as the day for the Feast of the birth of Jesus Christ. The Eastern Orthodox Church took a slightly different course. By the end of the 4th century, the Eastern Church in Constantinople had also begun to acknowledge December 25 as Jesus' birthday, but it emphasized the celebration of Christ's baptism and the arrival of the Three Wise Men of the East in Bethlehem, where they gave the infant Jesus presents (on January 6) as the more important holiday.

Find information about the origins of some Christmas traditions, like kissing under mistletoe.

WORDS OF WISDOM: GENEROSITY

"No one is as generous as he who has nothing to give." - French proverb

"Generosity is not giving me that which I need more than you do, but it is giving me that which you need more than I do." - Kahlil Gibran

"The true meaning of life is to plant trees,

Vocabulary:
pagan - pohan
solstice - slunovrat
baptism - křest

The word Christmas entered the English language sometime around 1050 as the Old English phrase *Christes maesse*, meaning 'festival of Christ'. Scholars believe the frequently used abbreviation of Christmas - Xmas may have come into use in the 13th century.

Santa Claus

The legend of Santa Claus has European origins and was brought to New York by Dutch settlers in the early 18th century. Traditionally, Santa Claus - from the Dutch *Sinter Klaas* - was depicted as a tall, dignified, religious figure riding a white horse through the air. Known as Saint Nicholas in Germany, he was usually accompanied by Black Peter, an elf who punished disobedient children.

What does Santa Claus look like now?

The Christmas Tree

In the 17th century, Germans had transformed this pagan symbol of fertility into a Christian symbol of rebirth. According to legend, the Christmas tree tradition

under whose shade you do not expect to sit." - Nelson Henderson

"Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can." - John Wesley

WHAT'S LIFE LIKE IN CANADA ?

Chelsea is Canadian living in Prague. This is what she wrote about her home country:

Growing up in Canada is an amazing and enriching experience. It is the second biggest country in the world, after Russia, but has the lowest population density, about 3 people for every square kilometer. So there's a lot of room, and not a lot of people. Because of its size, it's difficult to say what the climate is like. Canada has very diverse climates and geography. It's a lot like our culture.

Despite the stereotype, Canada isn't always freezing. Most of the country has four seasons like Europe, but the difference between summer and winter is more extreme. Temperatures in the summer can reach as high as 40 degrees and in the winter they often fall as low as minus 40. Of course Canadians living on the west side of the Rocky Mountains have it much better. Their climate only goes from around 30 degrees at most in the summer and only goes as low as zero in the winter. And they have mountains.

Canada is one of the most multicultural societies in the world. It is a place where people from all over the world are encouraged to retain their ethnic diversity

when they emigrate from their home lands. Because of that, we are always learning, taking the best from every culture that comes in. As a result we grow up eating an incredible selection of international foods. We love our differences, but it does make it difficult to know what our national identity is.

Another thing that makes Canada different is that we have two official languages, English and French. And while 80% of the country speaks only English and 20% French, there are only 10% who are truly bilingual. In school all English students must take French classes until they are 15 years old, so many people have at least a working knowledge of French. The relationship between the Francophones and Anglophones is sometimes strained, as French speakers were treated like second-class citizens for many years. Thankfully that has changed, but there are still many hard feelings. As recently as 1995, the people of Quebec voted on whether or not they would seek sovereignty from Canada. The vote was incredibly close, but they decided to stay, much to the relief of many Canadians who feel that Canada couldn't be Canada without Quebec.

(to be continued January 16)

began with the founder of German Protestantism, Martin Luther. While walking through the forest on Christmas Eve, Luther was moved by the beauty of the fir trees and brought one indoors and decorated it with candles to remind his children of God's creation. In 1841 Prince Albert of Germany gave his wife, Queen Victoria of England, a gift of a Christmas tree. This was the first Christmas tree in England and the custom spread quickly. German immigrants took the Christmas tree to other parts of Europe and to the United States and Canada, where it soon became a popular tradition.

How is Christmas celebrated in English speaking countries? Find information and share it with your class.

What would you like to get for Christmas? What would you like to give? What do you wish for yourself? For people you know? For all humankind? Are you planning to make someone happy at Christmas time? How? What is your greatest wish for the New Year?

(resource: www.encarta.msn.com)

STORY TIME

The Princess and the Bowling Ball

Once upon a time there was a prince. And this Prince's dad and mom (the King and Queen) somehow got it into their royal heads that no princess would be good enough for their boy unless she could feel a pea through one hundred mattresses.

So it should come as no surprise that the Prince had a very hard time finding a princess. Every time he met a nice girl, his mom and dad would pile one hundred mattresses on top of a pea and then invite her to sleep over.

When a princess came down for breakfast, the Queen would ask, "How did you sleep, dear?" The princess would politely say, "Fine, thank you." And the King would show her the door.

Now this went on for three years. And of course nobody ever felt the pea under one hundred mattresses. Then one day the Prince met the girl of his dreams. He decided he better do something about it. That night, before the Princess went to bed, the Prince slipped his bowling ball under the one hundred mattresses.

When the Princess came down for breakfast the next morning, the Queen asked, "How did you sleep, dear?" "This might sound odd," said the Princess. "But I think you need another mattress. I felt like I was sleeping on a lump as big as a bowling ball." The King and Queen were satisfied.

The Prince and Princess were married. And everyone lived happily, though maybe not completely honestly, ever after.

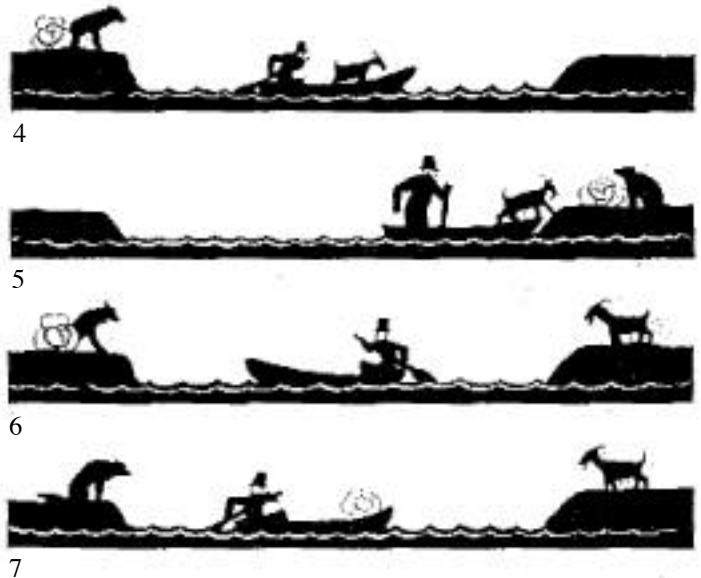
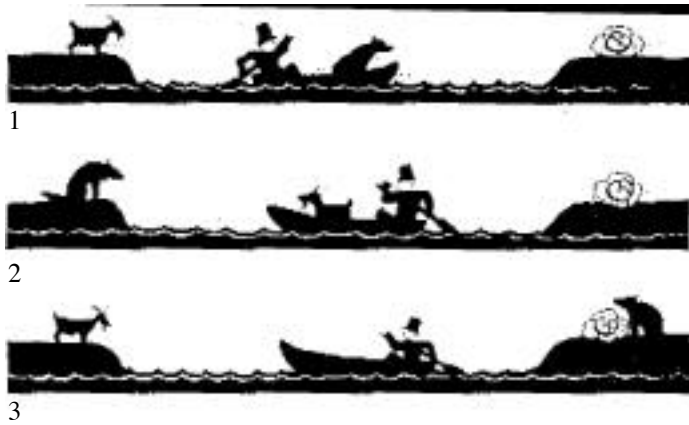
Do you know any fairy tale like this? Think of a traditional fairy tale and make it more funny. Work in groups. Retell the stories to the rest of the class.

LET'S THINK! (CABBAGE, GOAT, WOLF)

Teachers, please, photocopy the following pictures and cut them out.

TASK: The boatman must take the goat, wolf and cabbage to the other bank of the river and all must survive. Be careful: the wolf will eat the goat, and the goat will eat the cabbage, if given the opportunity.

Students should discuss the quiz together in English and put the pictures into the right order.



from 'Scientific American'

Correct order: 4, 6, 7, 2, 1, 3, 5

CIVICS: OLIGARCHY

When a small group of individuals wields a large portion of power and governs the lives of the majority, it is called an "oligarchy." According to the Oxford Dictionary, an oligarchy is "a government in which power is in the hands of a few." More often than not, those few are generally the people who are richer and more powerful than the others, what you might call the aristocrats or the nobles. And these nobles are not always men: just as monarchies have both kings and queens, women sometimes appear in councils of aristocrats.

An Oligarchy works with a small percentage of citizens establishing and enforcing policy. Sometimes this ruling group is overt about their position as leaders of the country. The way it works is that there is a group of people who are in charge. In some cases they are elected, and in other cases they are born into their position, like a group of tribal leaders or elders. Finally, there are oligarchies that are formed by groups that require people to have a certain amount of money to join the council. This group then governs the county according to its collective ideals.

In many societies people have lived quite happily under an Oligarchy. Many cultures defer to a group of tribal elders who debate and discuss the issues that affect their people. However, like most political systems where a select group of people possesses power, there is the possibility of abuse. If the ruling group has a political agenda that runs contrary to the interests and opinions of the people, it can lead to a situation of hardship and even war. Think about a country that doesn't have a single head of state, but a group of lead-

ers. They're more common than you might think, and some work well, while others are in a state of chaos.

There are some cases where people are ruled by an oligarchy they are unaware of. There are many people who believe that the majority of democratic societies are, in fact, oligarchies running under the auspices of democracy. True democracy is almost impossible in some countries that have huge populations. These countries often use a form of government called a representative democracy, where a group of elected officials represent the interests and opinions of the community that has elected them. The sheer volume of decisions required to keep a government functioning in these huge countries is so enormous that it is not viable to take into account the opinions of each and every citizen on every decision. So, in these systems of representative democracy, citizens ostensibly elect people to fairly represent them. However, even this democratic system is flawed, in that there are loopholes that allow for the concentration of power in the hands of the few.

Vocabulary:

wield - ovládat, vládnout, řídit
 enforcing - prosadit
 overt - neskr van
 auspices - patronátem koho
 viable - provediteln
 ostensibly - zdánliv

Exercise 1

Why is it important that government function like it is supposed to?
 Can you think of a time when a government has ruled under a falsely named political model?
 What happened when people discovered

that the government was misrepresenting itself to the people?

Exercise 2

If you were to make the Czech Republic an Oligarchy, who would be in the group of leaders? Who would make the decisions about forming this group of leaders?

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