

## Lead-in

### Childhood memories [ whole class > pairs ]

- Describe your favourite childhood toy to students. In your description, withhold key information, and reveal clues one at a time. Ask students to interrupt you as soon as they work out what your favourite toy was.
  - In pairs, students take it in turns to:
    - describe their favourite toys to each other, following your example
    - explain what toys they dreamed about having as children
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## Part I

### Toys for twins – role play [pairs]

#### 1. Show **slide 1** [photos of children]

Introduce students to twins, Matt and Lola.

**Imagine Matt and Lola are your nephew and niece. They are twins. You want to buy them a toy each, as birthday gifts.**

In pairs, students predict what toys would be the most attractive for the kids.

#### 2. Show **slide 2** [photos of toys]

**You buy the gifts together with your partner. Because of your limited shared budget, you can only afford one toy for each child. You can only choose from the selection of toys in the pictures.**

- **Individually, take 2 minutes to make up your mind.**
- **In pairs, take 3 minutes to reach compromise. Don't be too easy-going in the discussion.**

Elicit ideas from random pairs.

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## Part II

**Character toys - text** [ whole class > individually > pairs > individually]

3. Tell students that the two children actually received one of the toys in the pictures.

▶ the video commercial of the military action figures (picture 3):

<https://youtu.be/pUymhSKd2YQ>

Ask students to raise a hand if they agree with the choice.  
Elicit arguments from random students.

4. Give out **the handout** [article – page 1].

Have students read the text on page 1 and annotate it:

- in the right margin box, students put a tick next to each paragraph which includes CRITICISM of the toys
- in the body of the text, they **highlight** fragments which could be interpreted as **CRITICAL**, and underline those which include NEUTRAL information.

Let students compare answers in pairs before you check with the whole class.

5. Individually, students write down one sentence to describe their emotional reaction to the Ministry of Defence`s decision to launch this range of toys. Ask them to put the notes aside and keep the message secret for a while.

If time allows, go through the highlighted phrases and ask students to work out their meaning from the context.

## Part III

**Action man - video** [ individually > whole class]

6. Tell students that they are going to see the video which shows the children playing with action figures. At this point, they do not know it is about a different kind of toys.

Ask them to watch the video and answer the three questions:

**Why would someone produce these toys?**

**Why would someone make these videos?**

**Why are the toys called Action Men?**

- ▶ the video commercials of the action man figures – choose one or several, depending on the time available:

**PTSD ACTION MAN:** <https://vimeo.com/132313549>

**PARALYSED ACTION MAN:** <https://vimeo.com/132313548>

**DEAD ACTION MAN:** <https://vimeo.com/132313547>

**THE 3 COMMERCIALS COMBINED:** <https://vimeo.com/131462825>

7. Show selected slides from sections 3 and/or 4 of the slide deck [video print screens & photos of Action Man toy boxes, respectively ]

Use them to elicit answers from students.

If you choose the slides in section 4, ask students an extra question:

**What do you learn about the life of contemporary war veterans from the items included with each Action Man figure?**

8. Show slides in section 5 and ask students to explain the link between the info and the Action Man campaign.

Tell them that the Battlefield Casualties campaign has been launched by Veterans for Peace, a British peace charity founded by war veterans. They appeal to regular British people and ask them to put pressure on politicians so people younger than 18 are not recruited to join the armed forces.

**About Veterans for Peace:** <http://veteransforpeace.org.uk/>

**About the Battlefield Casualties project:**

<http://battlefieldcasualties.co.uk/index.php/the-facts/>

## Part IV

**Emotions** [ individually > pairs> new pairs]

9. Show **slide 6** [adjectives to express extreme anger]  
Guide students to clarify the differences and similarities in meaning.

1. **incensed** – extremely angry
2. **livid** – [informal] extremely angry
3. **seething** – extremely angry without showing it much
4. **outraged** – extremely angry and shocked
5. **sickened** – extremely angry because you disapprove of the situation, but can't prevent it
6. **disgusted** - extremely angry because you think the situation is totally unacceptable and you feel contempt for those who made it happen
7. **indifferent** – not caring about or interested in

10. In pairs, students discuss how they feel about the following:

- I. **the decision of The Ministry of Defence to launch a series of HM Armed Forces character toys**
- II. **the British law which allows people under 18 to join the armed forces**
- III. **the video campaign of Veterans of Peace featuring the Action Man toys**

11. After students form new pairs, have them decide how much they agree with the 5 statements displayed on the slide.

Show **slide 7** [statements about war and military forces]

1. Good countries are involved in just wars.
2. Whatever the military participates in is a noble cause. The military push out myths about wars.
3. Armed conflict is always futile.
4. The media show the distorted truth about war. The general public need a more realistic view of what war really is.
5. Civilians and veterans can stop governments from military intervention. Wars can be abolished and the arms race can be stopped.

You may want to pre-teach or elicit the meaning of: **futile, push out myths, the distorted truth, abolish sth, the arms race.**

When ready, ask pairs to comment on one point which proved the most controversial.

**Follow-up:**

- At home, students watch a video documentary telling the story of Richard Buck, a war veteran suffering from PTSD who joined the army aged 17, and David Pendleton, a PR specialist who helped the British government run the campaign to recruit teenagers to join the army.

**The video:** [http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/video/2013/oct/28/british-army-young-recruit-video?CMP=embed\\_video](http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/video/2013/oct/28/british-army-young-recruit-video?CMP=embed_video)

- Each student prepares a short speech (1-2 minutes) to answer the question:

**Which of the two men is more to blame for his actions? Why?**

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