
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

Take Away English 随身英语

Concepts of happiness

幸福的概念



Vocabulary: human characteristics 词汇: 人类特性

How are you feeling today? Our emotions can vary considerably depending on many factors, including our health, wealth, relationships and where we live. But sometimes we need to take a step back and think about what happiness really means and how we can find it.

Maybe we should **take a leaf out of** Finland's **book** – last year the UN's World Happiness Report found the country to be the happiest place on Earth. The report looked at 'subjective **well-being**'. That's how happy people feel they are and why - based on factors such as, economic strength, social support, life expectancy, freedom of choice, **generosity**, and perceived corruption.

This is just one way of measuring happiness. Research has also suggested that while personal feelings of **pleasure** are the accepted definition of happiness in Western cultures, East Asian cultures tend to see happiness as **social harmony**, and in some parts of Africa and India it's more about shared experiences and family.

Author and journalist Helen Russell has been looking at the positive characteristics of a country's population to see what makes them happy and found Japan to be one of the most **content**. She told the BBC that this was due to their **concept** of wabi-sabi – "this traditional Japanese concept around celebrating **imperfection**... it's this idea that there is a beauty in **ageing**, it's to be celebrated rather than trying to disguise it." So, basically, we should be happy with who we are and rejoice in our **faults** and **individuality**. That's something to put a smile on our faces!

But if you're feeling **down in the dumps** because your home country doesn't have a happiness concept to follow, consider some self-help ideas that the BBC programme Hacking Happiness has been looking into. These include being **virtuous**, finding something **to be passionate about**, enjoying the here and now and being **altruistic** – helping others.

However, our pursuit of happiness could make us **miserable** as we try to meet society's expectations and goals, making us **anxious** and stressed. Also, having too little experience of negative emotions can make us less **adept** at facing new challenges.

词汇表

take a leaf out of someone's book	效仿（某人/物），向...学习
well-being	幸福
generosity	慷慨，宽宏大量
pleasure	欢乐
social harmony	社会和谐
content	满足的
concept	观念
imperfection	缺点，弱点
ageing	变老，衰老
fault	弱点，缺点
individuality	个人特征，特质
down in the dumps	情绪低落，郁闷、不高兴
virtuous	品德高尚的
to be passionate about	对...喜爱的、充满激情的
altruistic	利他的
miserable	痛苦的
anxious	焦虑的，不安的
adept	游刃有余的

测验与练习

1. 阅读课文并回答问题。

1. Which organisation found Finland to be the happiest country on Earth in 2018?
2. According to some research, what provides most happiness in East Asian cultures?
3. According to a traditional Japanese concept of happiness, why is ageing a good thing?
4. True or false? *Anxiety and stress can actually make us happy.*
5. Which word used in the article is a synonym for 'celebrate'?

2. 请在不参考课文的情况下完成下列练习。选择一个意思合适的单词填入句子的空格处。

1. I can't believe my brother's _____ - he's paid for us all to go on holiday to France.

pleasure	generosity	well-being	imperfection
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2. You should _____ out of your sister's book. She does all her homework on time and then she can go out and enjoy herself!

leaf taker	taken a leaf	take a leaf	take a book
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3. I've always tried to lead a _____ life by not drinking alcohol or smoking.

miserable	virtuous	adept	well-being
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4. It's no surprise he's feeling _____ - he's lost his job and can't find another one.

dumped	down at the dump	dumped and down	down in the dumps
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5. It's great to have her working in customer services because she's very _____ at dealing with complaints!

adept	anxious	altruistic	miserable
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答案

1. 阅读课文并回答问题。

1. Which organisation found Finland to be the happiest country on Earth in 2018?
The United Nations' (UN) World Happiness Report found the country to be the happiest place on Earth.
2. According to some research, what provides most happiness in East Asian cultures?
Research found East Asian cultures tend to think of happiness as social harmony.
3. According to a traditional Japanese concept of happiness, why is ageing a good thing?
Wabi-sabi is a concept that celebrates ageing because having imperfections is a good and natural thing.
4. True or false? *Anxiety and stress can actually make us happy.*
False. Our pursuit of happiness could make us miserable as we try to meet society's expectations and goals, making us anxious and stressed.
5. Which word used in the article is a synonym for 'celebrate'?
Rejoice. It means to celebrate something in a happy way. ("We should be happy with who we are and rejoice in our faults and individuality.")

2. 请在不参考课文的情况下完成下列练习。选择一个意思合适的单词填入句子的空格处。

1. I can't believe my brother's **generosity** - he's paid for us all to go on holiday to France.
2. You should **take a leaf out** of your sister's book. She does all her homework on time and then she can go out and enjoy herself!
3. I've always tried to lead a **virtuous** life by not drinking alcohol or smoking.
4. It's no surprise he's feeling **down in the dumps** - he's lost his job and can't find another one.
5. It's great to have her working in customer services because she's very **adept** at dealing with complaints!