

1.3 Vocabulary and skills development

GOALS ■ Guess the meaning of new words ■ Verbs + prepositions

Reading guessing the meaning of new words

- 1 Work with a partner and discuss the questions.
 - 1 In which situations do people whistle?
 - 2 Is whistling acceptable in your culture, for both men and women?
- 2 1.4))) Listen to an extract from a podcast about an ancient whistling language and answer the questions.
 - 1 Where was the language used? Is it still used?
 - 2 In the listening, you hear an example conversation between two whistlers. What is it about?
 - a a concert
 - b a party
 - c a lost sheep
- 3 Read about Silbo Gomero and put the topics in the order they appear in the article.
 - ___ how the language is formed
 - ___ its origins
 - ___ what it sounds like
 - ___ reasons for its disappearance
 - ___ attempts to revive it
- 4a Read the information in the Unlock the code box and use the strategies to help you guess the meaning of the underlined words and phrases in the article.



UNLOCK THE CODE

strategies for understanding new words

When you see a new word in a text, there are several strategies you can use to try to guess its meaning.

- Look at the context (words before and after the new word). This can help you work out the part of speech (adjective, noun, etc.) and give you clues to guess the meaning.
ravine (line 8) 'deep ravines' → it's a noun; it's something which is deep, 'steep hills and deep ravines' → it's probably a kind of valley.
- Look at the different parts of the word. You might already know part of the word.
disapprove (line 31) *dis-* + *approve*
- Use your own language. Sometimes the English word is similar to the word in your language.
unique (line 3) is similar to Italian = *unico*, Slovak = *unikátny*, Indonesian = *unik*.

- b Compare your ideas with a partner.

- 5 Read the article again and answer the questions with a partner.
 - 1 Why is Silbo Gomero ideal for communicating on La Gomera?
 - 2 What is known about the origins of the language?
 - 3 Why is the language in decline?
 - 4 What efforts have been made to keep the language alive?
 - 5 What do La Gomera inhabitants think should happen to the language?

Silbo Gomero: The revival of an ancient whistling language

If you go walking in the hills of La Gomera, you might be lucky enough to hear local people **communicating in** Silbo Gomero. Silbo is unique in that it is whistled, not spoken. Anybody who hasn't **heard of** the language could easily

- 5 **confuse it with** birdsong.

La Gomera is a tiny Spanish island, just the tip of a volcano **sticking out** of the sea, off the coast of north-west Africa. Its steep hills and deep ravines make it difficult to cross. Whistling is perfect for communicating here, as

- 10 whistles can be heard from up to seven kilometres away.

Silbo comes from the Spanish *silbar* meaning 'to whistle', and *Gomero* means 'from La Gomera'. When the first European **settlers** arrived at La Gomera in the 15th century, the islanders – of North African origin – were already

- 15 communicating with whistles. When the Spanish arrived, the locals **adapted** the whistling language **to** Spanish.



Vocabulary & Speaking verbs + prepositions

- 6 Read the information about verbs and prepositions in the Vocabulary focus box.

VOCABULARY FOCUS verbs + prepositions

Some verbs are usually followed by a particular preposition. These are followed by a noun, pronoun or verb + *-ing*.

Verb + preposition + object: *Have you **heard of** Silbo Gomero?*

Verb + object + preposition + object: *It's easy to **confuse** Silbo **with** birdsong.*

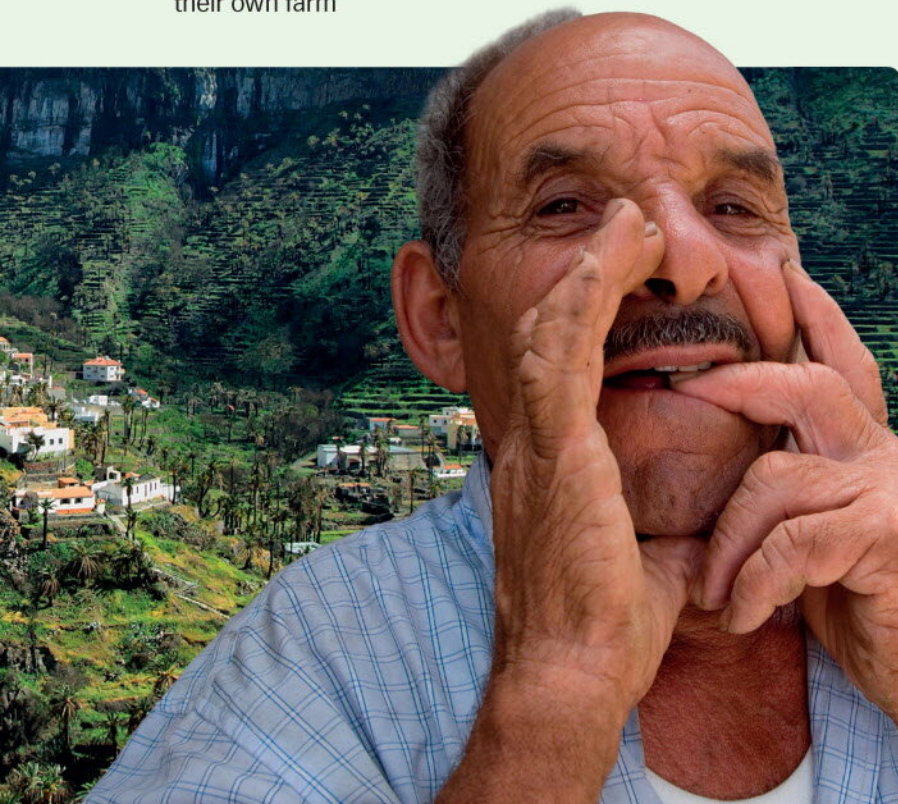
... an attempt to **prevent** the language **from** becoming extinct

Silbo **consists of** four vowels and four consonants which can be whistled in different ways to make over 4,000 words. A finger is placed in the mouth to create a stronger whistle and the other hand is **cupped** next to the mouth to control its direction.

In the 1950s, economic difficulties forced many whistlers to emigrate from La Gomera. This, the growing road network and, later, the development of mobile phones all **contributed to** the **decline** of Silbo.

In 1999, in an attempt to **prevent** the language **from** becoming completely **extinct**, Silbo was made a **compulsory** subject in La Gomera's primary schools. In 2009, the language was awarded the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity designation. Some locals **disapprove of** this, saying it is a peasant language that should be left to die out. Others believe it should be preserved as it is part of the islanders' cultural identity. They also argue that in much of the island you cannot **depend on** telephone **coverage**, so it is an essential form of communication.

- **a peasant** a poor person who works on another person's or their own farm



- 7 Look at the highlighted verbs and prepositions in the article and complete the table.

Preposition	Verb
of	<i>hear</i>
on	
to	
with	<i>confuse</i>
from	
in	

- 8a Complete the sentences with the correct form of the verbs in the box.

ban bring disapprove lead result

Whistling trivia ...

- 1 Henry Ford, founder of the Ford Motor Company, _____ his workers from whistling.
- 2 In Russia, it is believed that whistling indoors can _____ in bad luck.
- 3 In the USA and Canada, spectators at sports events whistle to express approval. However, in Europe and Brazil they whistle when they _____ of a referee's decision.
- 4 There is an old tradition amongst sailors that whistling can _____ on a storm.
- 5 In Sullivan's Island, South Carolina, whistling in public can _____ to a fine of \$500.

- b Add the verbs in the box in exercise 8a to the table in exercise 7.

- 9a Complete the questions with suitable verbs from exercises 7 and 8.

- 1 What factors do you think _____ to a person's happiness?
- 2 What does a healthy diet _____ of?
- 3 Do you think we _____ too much on computers?
- 4 Do you _____ of e-cigarettes? Why/Why not?
- 5 Do you think drivers should be _____ from using mobile phones?

- b Ask and answer the questions with a partner.