

12.4 Speaking and writing

GOALS ■ Reflect on life events and choices ■ Write a biography



Speaking reflecting on life events and choices

- 1 Work with a partner and list the three most significant turning points in your life (e.g. moving home, changing career, getting married).
- 2 **12.13**))) Listen to four people talking about a significant change in their life. For each person note down what the change was and why they made it.
- 3a Choose the correct options to complete the sentences.
 - 1 I couldn't have *wished for* / *desired* a better course.
 - 2 I'm very *appreciate* / *grateful* to the tutors *for* / *with* allowing me to switch.
 - 3 So *thank* / *thanks* goodness I didn't listen to my parents ...
 - 4 *In* / *With* retrospect, losing my job was a blessing *of* / *in* disguise.
 - 5 ... when I think of all the money I wasted, I could really *kick* / *hit* myself.
 - 6 *On* / *With* hindsight, I should never have started ...
 - 7 *That's* / *What's* done is done.
 - 8 ... there's no *point* / *need* in crying *about* / *over* spilt milk ...
- b **12.14**))) Listen and check. Then practise saying the sentences.

- 4 **TASK** Think back over some of the significant life decisions that you've made. Choose four or five topics in the box or your own ideas, and follow the instructions. Use the language in the Language for speaking box and past conditional sentences.

family give up a habit hobby/sport important purchases
relationships school/college/university subjects
skills learnt studying English travel work your home

- Tell your partner what you did and why.
- Say what you are pleased about and what you regret.
- Say how your life would be different now if you hadn't made those decisions.

LANGUAGE FOR SPEAKING reflecting on life events and choices

Looking back

In retrospect, ...

With hindsight, ...

Things that have gone well

I'm so pleased/glad I ...

Thank goodness I ...

It's so lucky I ...

I feel very fortunate

to have ...

I couldn't have wished for

a better ...

I'm so/very/'ll be forever grateful

to (person) ... for ... (+ -ing).

It was a blessing in disguise.

... was a good call.

Things you regret

I kick myself about it now.

What was I thinking?

Expressing resignation

What's done is done.

There's no point in crying over spilt milk.

Writing a biography

- 5 Discuss the questions with a partner.
- Do you have a favourite sportsperson? Why do you like them?
 - Look at the photo in the biography. Do you know this athlete? What makes a sportsperson qualify as 'a legend'?
- 6 Complete the biography of Emil Zátopek with suitable prepositions.
- 7 Work with a partner. Without looking back at the biography, can you remember ...?
- his main achievement
 - his training style
 - why he was popular with other athletes
 - what he had in common with his wife
- 8 Match the highlighted words and phrases in the biography to their meanings, 1–5.
- never been done before
 - a person who is the first to develop an idea
 - a ceremony that takes place when someone dies
 - a very famous name
 - not known
- 9 Read about language that is used in a biography in the Language for writing box. Which of the phrases are in the biography of Emil Zátopek?

LANGUAGE FOR WRITING writing a biography

Describing achievements

He was one of the greatest ... of all time

He was renowned/best known/famed for ...

Biographical details

He was born and brought up in ...

He spent his childhood ...

He was one of six children ...

At the age of ..., he ...

His life took an unexpected turn for the better/worse when ...

His life was turned upside down when ...

Life changed dramatically for X when Y happened ...

His funeral was attended by ...

- 10 Write a biography about someone, either a famous person who interests you or someone you know, who has led an inspiring life. Follow the structure of the model biography of Emil Zátopek.

EMIL ZÁTOPEK:

AN OLYMPIC LEGEND

Emil Zátopek (1922–2000) was a Czech long-distance runner, considered one of the greatest athletes ¹_____ all time. He is best known ²_____ winning three gold medals at the 1952 Helsinki Olympics, when he won the 5,000 metres, 10,000 metres and the marathon in just over a week, earning himself the nickname 'The Czech Locomotive'.

Zátopek was born and brought ³_____ in the north-east Czech town of Kopřivnice, and ⁴_____ the age of sixteen he left school to work in a factory. His life took an unexpected turn when he was selected by the factory sports coach to take part ⁵_____ a race. Despite protesting that he was too unfit to take part, he ended up coming second out of 100. This sparked off his interest in running.

In 1948, he became a household name after he won an unprecedented thirty-eight 10,000-metre races in a row and set eighteen world records over various distances.



Zátopek was renowned ⁶_____ his hard training routines. He was a pioneer of 'interval training' – making short, intense efforts, sometimes running 400 metres eighty times in succession. This method was unheard of at the time but later became standard for athletes across many sports.

He was also famed for his cheerful and sociable personality. He gained the respect of other athletes because he made an effort to communicate with them after learning a variety of languages.

Zátopek got married ⁷_____ Zana Ingrova, who, ⁸_____ coincidence, was born on the same day as him, in the same year. Zana was a great athlete in her own right, winning a gold in the javelin in 1952.

When Zátopek died in 2000, aged seventy-eight, leading figures from the world of sport travelled from round the globe to attend his funeral.