

Reading Lesson



Warm up

- 1 What do you know about the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC – *Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia*)?
- 2 Read the title of the article. What do you think it will be about?

FARC Goes Dark

The FARC has publicly declared that it will soon release its remaining hostages, some of whom have been held for nearly 15 years. The announcement on the FARC's website also said that it would no longer use kidnapping as a way to **raise money**.

Juan Manuel Santos, the president of Colombia, reacted with **caution** to the news, as the FARC has made (and broken) promises like these before. However, he said that this was an important first step towards **establishing** a dialogue, and that this communication was necessary in order to end 48 years of civil conflict.

The FARC, which began as the military section of the Colombian Communist Party, describes itself as a peasant army, fighting imperialists in support of Bolivarian goals. It **was founded** in 1964 as a reaction to the land reform following *La Violencia*, a violent period in Colombian history between 1948 and 1958 in which over 300,000 people died.

In the 1980s and 1990s, the FARC funded its activities primarily through ransoms. In response, numerous **right-wing** paramilitary groups formed. Together with the FARC, they made Colombia the

kidnapping capital of the world. In more recent times, the FARC has received most of its money from drug trafficking: while it **carried out** over 2,500 kidnappings in the mid-1990s, it was responsible for less than 60 in 2011.

Although the governments of many countries (such as the U.S.A. and the members of the European Union) classify the FARC as a terrorist organization, several other countries support it. Perhaps its closest **ally**, and most public defender, has been President Hugo Chávez of Venezuela, who has recently **fallen ill**. Some people wonder if the FARC's move towards a peaceful end to the fighting is actually in preparation for losing the assistance of its eastern neighbor.

Others claim that the FARC is simply not as powerful as it used to be. In the past, the FARC controlled **a third** of Colombia, but, since 2002, it has experienced a number of losses that have left it with much less land and many fewer troops. Caracol Radio recently **aired** an interview suggesting that the FARC "is wounded" and is looking for a "negotiated exit" from the conflict.

Comprehension

Circle the correct answer: A, B, or C.

- 1 What is the FARC going to do?
 - A take more hostages
 - B free its hostages
 - C kill its hostages
- 2 What did Juan Manuel Santos think?
 - A He was very happy about the news.
 - B He didn't care about the news.
 - C He had mixed feelings about the news.
- 3 When did the FARC begin?
 - A 1964
 - B 1948
 - C in the 1980s
- 4 How does the FARC make most of its money?
 - A from selling drugs
 - B from ransoms
 - C from selling cars
- 5 Why do some people think the FARC has made this announcement?
 - A many of their troops are wounded
 - B possible loss of Venezuelan support
 - C being termed "terrorists" by the U.S.A. and the E.U.

Vocabulary

Read the definitions and write the correct forms of the words in bold in the text.

- 1 to start an organization, political party, etc. _____
- 2 careful thought before accepting something as true _____
- 3 a friend or supporter in a fight or war _____
- 4 to collect money for a particular purpose _____
- 5 to broadcast something on radio or television _____
- 6 to become sick _____
- 7 to cause to exist or happen _____
- 8 to do or perform a task _____
- 9 politically conservative; "of the right" _____
- 10 one of three equal parts of something _____

Open your Mind...



- 1 Do you think the FARC will stop kidnapping people? Why / Why not? Why do you think it has made this announcement?
- 2 Do you have groups like the FARC in your country? What effect do they have on the lives of ordinary people?

Seize the day!



Skills in use: Setting personal goals

Skills in Mind: Making the most of opportunities

Task 1.1

Imagine that you are one of the hostages being released by the FARC.

You have not:

- heard from your family or friends since 1997
- had any news about life outside of living with the FARC (world events, technological developments, etc.)
- been able to work, learn, or travel

Reflect

How do you feel? What have you missed most? What things did you take for granted?

Imagine now that throughout those difficult years, one thing kept you motivated: you had set yourself some positive goals to achieve if you could go home.

Think about the things that you didn't do before you were kidnapped and that you want to do now. What are your goals?

Write them here:

Task 1.2

Consider the following aspects of your life. What are your goals for each of these areas? For example, do you want to: spend more time with your grandparents? Study new things? Eat more junk food?

Take some time to think about these carefully.

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| • studies | • social relationships |
| • family relationships | • romantic relationships |
| • hobbies | • appearance |
| • travel | • career |

Reflect

How would you prioritize these goals? Which are more important?

Task 2.1

Now that you are out of captivity, seize the day! How you can apply these hypothetical goals to your real life? How many of them can you realistically achieve? Write down a realistic goal for each category and put a date for when you want to achieve each one.

If you are not sure of a date, put ST (short term) or LT (long term).

Goal 1	Date	Goal 5	Date
Goal 2	Date	Goal 6	Date
Goal 3	Date	Goal 7	Date
Goal 4	Date	Goal 8	Date

Refer to your goals regularly. You will be surprised what a change you can make to your life with clear goals!

Teacher's notes



Warm up

- 1 Ask students if they know anything about the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC). Who are they? What are they famous for? (Lots of information can be found about the FARC online or in reference books. If students have access to the Internet, they could research this in class or at home in preparation for the next class.) Write up the words *terrorist*, *kidnap*, *ransom*, and *hostage* on the board and clarify the meaning.
- 2 Have the students read the title only. What does *dark* mean here? Ask them to make predictions about the article based on the title. Accept all ideas.
Then ask the students to take one minute to read through the article. Were their predictions correct?

Comprehension

Pre-teach the following words if necessary: *peasant*, *drug trafficking*, *troops*, and *wounded*. Then have students read the article and answer the questions individually. They can check their answers with a partner.

Answers

- 1 B
- 2 C
- 3 A
- 4 A
- 5 B

Vocabulary

Draw students' attention to the words in bold in the text. Have them read the definitions in pairs and discuss the meaning. Clarify any words in the definitions that they are unsure about. Then students should try to match a word or phrase in bold in the text with each definition. If they can, they should write the form of the word in the same form as it appears in the definition. If they find this too difficult, however, accept answers in the same form as they appear in the text.

Answers

- 1 found / were founded
- 2 caution
- 3 ally
- 4 raise money
- 5 air / aired
- 6 fall ill / fallen ill
- 7 establish / establishing
- 8 carry out / carried out
- 9 right-wing
- 10 a third

Open your Mind...



- 1 Divide the class into small groups and let them discuss the first question. Then have them feed back to the rest of the class. Encourage students to give reasons for their opinions and to challenge others if they disagree.
- 2 Put students into groups again and have them talk about similar organizations that may exist in their own country (or in other countries around the world – for example, *Euskadi Ta Askatasuna* (ETA) in Spain, the *Irish Republican Army* (IRA) in the U.K., the *Free Syrian Army* (FSA) in Syria, etc.) and the impact that these groups have on ordinary people. Feed back to the rest of the class and encourage students to share their opinions and experiences with everyone.

If you wish, these questions could also be presented as a writing task. Let students discuss their ideas in groups first and then write a short essay to answer the questions, either in class or for homework.

Life Skills Project

Skills in use: Setting personal goals

Skills in Mind: Making the most of opportunities

Objectives

For this project, students imagine they have been held hostage for 15 years and are now free. They set some personal goals, thinking about what they may have taken for granted before they were prisoners. This helps them to focus on the things they really want to do, and the opportunities around them. It is only when we have our freedom taken away that we realize how much we could have done.

Instructions

Hand out the worksheet and make sure students understand the instructions.

Students can then complete the project individually as homework.

Alternatively, if you prefer, students can do the project in class and work in pairs or groups for Task 1.1. In this case, simply facilitate discussion at the beginning and then monitor students as they work, helping with any language problems they might have. Pre-teach the following words, if necessary: *seize the day*, *take for granted*, *short term*, *long term*.