Snuggle with Jan
Guilt and shame
Work sheet

A. Did you know?

Guilt – the feeling of responsibility or remorse for having committed an offense against laws, moral standards, values etc. whether real or imagined. Etymologically, the word guilt is derived from “to pay for” and “debt”

Shame – the feeling arising from one’s consciousness for something dishonourable, improper, ridiculous, shameful etc. done either by oneself or by someone else. Etymologically, the word shame is thought to root from “to cover”

There are different explanations to why we feel guilt, but one common theory is that this feeling helped us survive in a tribe or group. Feeling guilty for something we’ve done, decreases the chances of us repeating what we’ve done, thus reducing the threat to a larger group and in the end increasing our chances of survival.

Shame is thought to be of use to us in order to help regulate the behaviour of the group. By feeling shame, we show others in a group what is acceptable behaviour and what is not.

Japanese, Korean and Chinese as well as Ancient Greek cultures are said to be “shame-based” rather than “guilt-based” in that getting caught is seen as more remorseful than actually having done something bad. This may lead to a focus on etiquette rather than ethics.

The sense of guilt as seen in Christian and Muslim societies is said to have been inherited from Judaism, Persian and Roman culture and focuses more on ethics than on etiquette.

Psychopaths lack guilt or remorse for pain they have caused others. Instead they rationalise their behaviour, blame someone else or deny it completely.

“For being born somewhere else”, Goya
B. Discuss

Before you discuss Guilt and Shame in class prepare by writing down your answers to the questions. Hand in to your teacher. The discussion in class will be based on what you and your peers have written down. There is no need to write your name on the paper!

1. Reflect on this sentence: **Guilt is something you feel inside and you can feel shame in front of others.**

Can you find any examples of situations when people feel guilt and when people feel shame?

2. Is sex something to feel ashamed about?

3. Is it common to feel guilty when you break up with someone?

4. Is it possible to feel guilty when you have been dumped?

5. Is it common to feel ashamed if someone breaks up with you?

6. Should you feel guilty about things that you do when no one can see you?

7. What things make you feel guilty?

8. Why do people feel shame?

9. When it comes to relationships, what could be shameful?

10. How come guilt, shame and sex usually walk hand in hand?

11. Is it shameful to watch porn? Why? Why not?
C. Attitudes

Guilt and Shame- What is it, really?

Your task is to try to find answers to what guilt and shame is and why they play such a big part in societies in the world. Find examples of how guilt and shame can be explained and discuss guilt and shame from different perspectives.

- Work in groups of 3-4 students.
- Use the Internet to find a text that you find interesting about guilt and shame. Make sure that you don’t choose the same text as anyone else as the purpose of this task is to find as many different texts as possible to discuss.
- Write a short summary of your text. Remember to include your source!
- Present your summaries in class.
- Discuss:

1. What different definitions of guilt and shame did you find?
2. What cultural differences have you come across when it comes to guilt and shame?
3. What was new to you?
4. What did you already know?
5. Can you trust all sources?
6. What different attitudes are there about guilt and shame when you compare your texts?
7. How would you explain guilt and shame after reading and hearing more about it?
8. Is it easier or more complicated to explain guilt and shame now?
9. Were there any questions that you didn’t find an answer to?
Welcome to Old Nick’s language school. When it comes to talking about guilt and shame, it’s good to know the correct lingo, otherwise it’s easy to get confused. Here you will learn different words and expressions I’m sure you didn’t know beforehand.

**Phrases connected with guilt and shame in English in general:**

- **shame boner** (an erection that invokes a feeling of self-hatred)
- **guilt control** (when someone uses guilt to try to control your behavior. Often seen in religion, politics and social media)
- **guilt hibernation** (when, after letting a friend down, a person keeps a low profile to avoid the guilt and shame)
- **shame cave** (a place one goes after performing an embarrassing or dishonorable act)
- **shame google** (googling something you are ashamed of not knowing)
- **guilt gift** (a gift one gives that is motivated purely by guilt)
- **guilt trip** (when someone tries to make you feel guilty for thinking/feeling/doing things a certain way) or (when someone tries to make you do whatever they want you to so they start making you feel bad about something until you give in and do whatever they want)

**Phrases connected with guilt and shame in Aussie-land:**

- **come a gutser** (to make a bad mistake, have an accident)
- **rort** *(noun or verb: cheating, fiddling, defrauding)*
E. Crossword

Guilt and Shame

Across
2 tillit
7 förolämpande
8 tjek
11 forplanta sig
14 ologiskt
15 vara otrogen
17 förväntningar
18 ångra
20 spänning
22 kille
23 håla, lya

Down
1 dömd
2 ånger
3 dyrka
5 skamsen
6 samvete
9 äcklig
10 skuld
12 hinder
13 definiera
16 rotade
19 tabu
21 skam
F. Who are you?

What would you do? Choose the best answer to the question below.

You have stolen your friend’s banana and you know that she really needs it in the afternoon when she is going to write an important test. You peel it and take a big bite. With your mouth full of stolen banana you suddenly see your friend standing there. She is so disappointed in you! What is your reaction?

a) She is disappointed? I am disappointed in her for not offering me the banana before! I had to steal it. I was hungry and she had a banana that was just lying there! Besides, she could have brought two bananas. She knows that I am always hungry in the afternoon!

b) If she hadn’t caught me there would have been no problem. I would have eaten the banana, hid the banana peel under my shoe and skated out of the room.

c) I am glad I was caught. I wasn’t enjoying the banana anyway. The bitter taste of stolen food is glued to my palate and the only way to get rid of it is to kneel down and apologize.

a) You need to learn right from wrong! If you are hungry every afternoon you should learn to bring your own bananas instead of stealing other people’s food! Think of your poor friend who will fail her test because of you. What if she has diabetes? She could fall into a coma and never wake up! You could at least have asked her. Shame on you!

b) You feel ashamed only when caught. No feelings of guilt or any concerns for other people’s needs unless they catch you in the act. Do you think that your friend would have done the same to you if you had a banana that you really needed? Think about it! How would you feel if you came to the test with no banana in your bag? Bad, bad, bad!

c) You have a deep-rooted feeling of guilt, but it didn’t stop you from stealing, did it? Hypocrite! Do you really think that you can erase your bad actions simply by apologizing? God is pointing his big finger at you!
G. Lyrics

Look at the lyrics below. What is this song about really? How can you tell? Are there any key phrases? Were there words or phrases you didn’t know since before? Can you find metaphors or similes in it?

“It’s a sin”, Pet Shop Boys

When I look back upon my life it's always with a sense of shame
I've always been the one to blame
For everything I long to do, no matter when or where or who
Has one thing in common, too
It's a, it's a, it's a, it's a sin, it's a sin
Everything I've ever done, everything I ever do, every place I've ever been, everywhere I'm going to, it's a sin

At school they taught me how to be, so pure in thought and word and deed
They didn't quite succeed
For everything I long to do, no matter when or where or who
Has one thing in common, too
It's a, it's a, it's a, it's a sin, it's a sin
Everything I've ever done, everything I ever do, every place I've ever been, everywhere I'm going to, it's a sin

Father, forgive me, I tried not to do it
Turned over a new leaf, then tore right through it
Whatever you taught me, I didn't believe it
Father, you fought me, 'cause I didn't care and I still don't understand

So I look back upon my life forever with a sense of shame
I've always been the one to blame
For everything I long to do, no matter when or where or who
Has one thing in common, too
It's a, it's a, it's a, it's a sin, it's a sin
Everything I've ever done, everything I ever do, every place I've ever been, everywhere I'm going to, it's a sin
It's a, it's a, it's a, it's a sin
It's a, it's a, it's a, it's a sin

Confiteor Deo omnipotenti vobis fratres, quia peccavi nimis cogitatione Verbo, opere et omissione, mea culpa, mea culpa, mea maxima culpa
H. Key to Crossword

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18 ångra
20 spänning
22 kille
23 håla, lyta

Down

1 dömd
3 ånger
4 dyrfka
5 skamsen
6 samvete
9 äcklig
10 skuld
12 hinder
13 definiera
16 rotade
19 tabu
21 skam