How did the months get their names? (teacher's notes)

1. Warm-up (Activity 1) 5 mins

Aims: to break the ice and foster a safe environment for learning.

Procedure: Put up pictures of different calendars on the board (or give links to pictures in Skype for online) and ask what they have in common and what they represent.
Answer: calendar, to show the days, weeks, and months of the year.
Ask what a modern calendar looks like (choose from the offered pictures), what calendar they use, if they have a calendar for 2018 other than on the phone and what it looks like. Put them in pairs to discuss these questions and then check as a whole classroom.

2. Lead-in (Activity 2) 5 mins

Aims: to generate interest in the topic and prepare student for the first reading.

Procedure: Let students look at the riddles for some time. You can ask them to work in pairs and discuss what the riddles mean. After they finish ask them what all words they guessed have in common (months). Ask them if they know where months got their names. Ask them if they know the origin of the names of the months in their native language. Ask where they think the names of English months came from and what they could be named after. Accept any ideas at this point and encourage they to speculate on the topic and remember their answers.

Answers: March, May, September, December.

3. Reading for Gist (jigsaw reading) (Activity 3) 5 mins

Aims: to read the text quickly for a general comprehension.

Procedure: As the text is very big, it is a good idea to organise a jigsaw reading procedure. You can divide students into 4 groups (one group for each season) or (if you have a smaller class) into 2 groups. With an individual learner let them choose 3-4 months they are interested in reading about. Each group read the introduction and only about their months!
Tell them they are going to read a blog post from Oxford Dictionary blog and find out if their predictions about the origins of the names of the months are true.

Question to answer (optional, for stronger learners): What is the name of the month derive from?
Set a time limit (2-3 min) and let them read the text. Discuss the answer inside the group (people who read about the same months work together) and complete the chart about their months. Do not check as a whole class!

Answer: from the name of gods, rulers, festivals, Roman months and numbers. December - god, February - festival (feast), March - god, April - Roman month, May - goddess, June - goddess, July - ruler, August - ruler, September - number, October - number, November - number, December - number).

4. Speaking to share information 5 mins

Aims: to practice speaking in order to share information about what each group have read about.

Procedure: When students have discussed their answers inside the groups, ask them to stand up and talk to people from other groups to complete the whole chart. To make the activity snappy, give 30 seconds for every group (if there were 4 groups). After that, let them sit down and check the answers as a whole class. Emphasize that they do not need to share the details, only the origin, in one word.

This activity is for a group only. If you have 1-to-1 lesson, this activity will for homework.

5. Pre-teaching Blocking Vocabulary (Activity 4) 5 mins

Aims: to unblock words necessary to understand the text and complete the task.

Procedure: Ask students to match the words with the definitions. They can use the text to help them figure out the meaning of the word. Model and drill the pronunciation, check the meaning of some words.
Optional: ask to make sentences with the new words.

Answers: 1d, 2e, 3a, 4b, 5c.

6. Scanning and reading for details (Activity 5) 10 mins

Aims: to read the text for deeper comprehension.

Procedure: Ask students to look through the questions they will need to answer. Check if everything is clear. Let them scan the text to find the part with the answer to

the question and then read around it to get the information. Let them discuss the answers in pairs and as a whole class.

You can continue jigsaw reading procedure or let student read the whole text this time (if they are good at scanning). If they read parts of the text, assign them the questions and then let them share the answers during the whole class feedback.

7. Productive Follow-up (Speaking) (Activity 6) 12 min

Aims: to personalise the text and practice speaking for fluency.

Procedure: Let the students complete the chart with their plans. Draw their attention to grammar. Give them examples for each form and put it on the board.
e.g. In April I am taking part in the Skyteach conference (it is decided already).
    In June am going to have a vacation (I know it for sure, but I haven't decided where to go yeat)
    In October I will probably visit a national park to enjoy the colours of autumn (I don't know if I will, but it seems a good idea, I've just come up with it).
Let them work on their own. Then, let them work in pairs and tell each other 1 plan in each form.
After they finish get a content feedback from them.

If you do not have much time, let them write at least 2 plans for each grammar form and do the rest at home and post it on https://padlet.com/ for all the class to see.

8. Sum up 3 mins
Summarise the lesson and tell students what results they have achieved (Now you can … After our reading and speaking lesson you will be able to….).
Optional: Tell them a joke related to the topic of the lesson and if they want, they can find more for the next lesson and put them on board for everyone to read during the break.
e.g. - Can February march? - No, but April may.

or   - I can't believe the calendar factory fired me.
    - What have you done?
    - I have taken a day off.

Ask them if they have any questions.
Conduct delayed error correction if needed.

Homework: Research the origin of the names of the months in your own language. Choose 2-3 months most interesting months to write about. Let the students publish their findings on https://padlet.com/ Let them comment under each other's posts.