Freedom for the Chilean miners!

Level
Pre-intermediate and above (equivalent to CEF level A2–B1 and above)

Comment
This eLesson looks at the recent rescue of the 33 miners in Chile from their underground prison. The event was full of adventure, danger, drama and hope. Students who are familiar with the story, even in their first language, are likely to find the text and tasks easier to handle. Your handling of the lesson will partly depend on how much prior knowledge the students have of the event.

How to use the lesson

1. Write up on the board *Freedom for* …and try and elicit how this news headline might finish. Give hints if students cannot initially guess the topic.

2. Very briefly elicit what happened. Ask students to complete exercise 1 (if you have a strong group who are familiar with the events, omit this stage). Monitor and check which words students are putting in the B row. Elicit the meaning of these at feedback and also the part of speech. Drill any problematic words, eg collapse, mine, tube as students will need to say the words in the next stage.

3. If students already know something about the story, encourage them to share what they know in groups of three. If not, then you could show some of the visuals connected with the event, to clarify the overall situation and to motivate them to read.

4. Students read and complete exercise 2. For less confident students, allow them to compare answers before class feedback.

5. Let students complete exercise 3 in pairs if they wish. As a change from class feedback, when students are finishing, write the answers on the board for them to check against.

6. Students complete exercise 4, which is an additional comprehension task, independently. Take feedback.

7. If you have the facilities, it might be appropriate to use some of the website material at this point. Allow students to initially read the discussion points in exercise 5 (in relation to the last point, explain that the miners were allowed to be met by up to three people of their choice). Put them into pairs or threes for the discussion. Monitor and pick up on any points of interest, for later feedback.

8. If appropriate for your group, complete the collocation task in exercise 6. See if students can do it without referring to the text initially.

9. Depending on students’ needs and preferences, complete exercise 7 and/or exercise 8. For both tasks, you could access and use (some of) the profiles of the 33 miners, letting students choose which miner they want to roleplay. For the writing task, remind students at the start what happened on Day 17.
Answer key
1 Students’ own answers.
2 c, d, f, i

3
1 food, medicine, letters and supplies (more specifically hot meals, regularly downloaded music, small beds and a projector screen)
2 the rescue capsule (designed jointly with the Chilean navy)
3 advice (presumably about how to cope during and after the event)
4 medicine; one of the miners also received medical training

4
1 It was a happy news story, and one which lasted several weeks; it was a disaster story which did not end tragically, and this is relatively rare.
2 It was designed by experts, and it could even separate into two (allowing the miner inside to go back down if there was a problem).
3 a skin, teeth and breathing
   b anxiety and depression
4 It’s possible that some of the miners will find it hard to adjust back to normal life and this will be made worse by the pressure of the media (for example, newspapers asking the men to sell their stories).
5 They did this to keep themselves mentally well and hopeful. They were also advised to do this by those on the surface (presumably, it is vital in such situations to keep focused and forward-looking; it would also help the men from a physical point of view too).
5 Students’ own answers.

6
face danger(s)
adjust to (normal) life
receive / give training / advice
download music
catch someone’s attention
suffer from a health problem

Related websites
The following websites might be useful, for either yourself or your students.
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-11544807 (the story in slides)
http://www.channel4.com/news/33-miners-69-days-625-metres-down (includes a video which summarises events)
http://www.theengineer.co.uk/design-engineering/news/nasa-designed-capsule-helps-free-chilean-miners/1005467.article
http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-latin-america-11493800 (graphics of the rescue day)