



**Fluentlicious**  
Materials for language learning

# Awake for 201 Hours: The Peter Tripp Experiment

level: B2, main topic: sleep



# Warm-up 1

Which of these things are most essential for a healthy life? Why? Would you add anything else?

- sleep
- water
- food
- social contact
- sunlight
- technology
- entertainment
- exercise



## Warm-up 2

How long can you live without ... ?

1. water
2. food
3. social media
4. coffee
5. sleep
6. reaching out to your friends
7. travelling
8. sunlight
9. exercise
10. music





# Vocabulary

1. publicity stunt

2. booth

3. deprivation

4. to remain

5. vivid

6. to insist

7. to claim

8. to decline

9. endurance

A. a small, enclosed space used for specific activities (e.g., broadcasting, voting)

B. to continue to be in a particular state or situation

C. when something becomes worse in quality, strength, or success

D. the ability to stay strong and keep going through difficult conditions

E. to demand or say something firmly, even if others disagree

F. a dramatic action designed to attract public attention

G. extremely clear, strong, or realistic (e.g., images, descriptions, dreams)

H. to say that something is true, even without proof

I. the state of not having something that is needed (e.g., sleep, food)



# Vocabulary - let's talk!

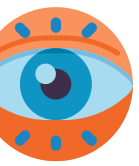
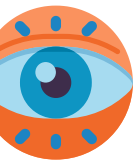
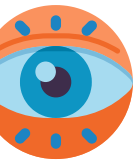
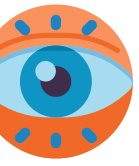
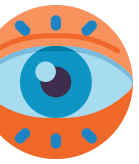
1. Do you think celebrities should use **publicity stunts** to stay popular, or does it make them look unprofessional? Why?
2. Have you ever used a photo **booth**, a voting **booth**, or a ticket **booth**? What was the experience like?
3. Which type of **deprivation** do you think is most difficult to handle — sleep deprivation, food deprivation, or social deprivation? Why?
4. In stressful situations, how do you manage to **remain** calm?
5. Do you ever have **vivid** dreams? Can you remember one that felt especially real?
6. When was the last time someone **insisted on** something you didn't agree with? How did you react?
7. Do you think people should be careful when they **claim** something publicly without evidence? Why or why not?
8. How do you politely **decline** an invitation when you're too busy or not interested?
9. Which activities require the most **endurance**, in your opinion — long-distance running, studying for hours, or dealing with difficult people?

# Peter Tripp and the 201-Hour Wakeathon

In 1959, American radio host Peter Tripp became famous for one of the most unusual publicity stunts in broadcast history. To raise money for charity and increase his own popularity, he decided to stay awake for 201 hours—more than eight days—while broadcasting live from a glass booth in New York City. Scientists joined the event to observe the effects of extreme sleep deprivation on the human mind.

At first, Tripp managed surprisingly well. During the first couple of days, he joked with passers-by and chatted with listeners on the radio. However, the lack of sleep soon began to affect him. By the third day, he struggled to stay focused and needed help performing simple tasks. To keep him awake, doctors gave him stimulant medication, including amphetamines, which were commonly used at the time but not well understood. Although these drugs helped him remain conscious, they also made his mind more unstable.

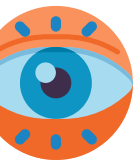
As the days passed, Tripp began experiencing paranoia and vivid hallucinations. He believed that people around him were trying to harm him. He sometimes failed to recognise colleagues he had known for years. On one occasion, he became terrified because he thought a desk drawer was on fire. At another moment, he insisted that spiders were crawling on his shoes. His behaviour grew increasingly unpredictable, and psychologists reported that he slipped in and out of a dreamlike state, even though he was technically still awake.



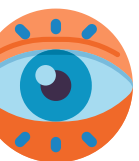
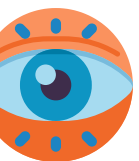
# Peter Tripp and the 201-Hour Wakeathon



When the experiment finally ended, Tripp was quickly put to bed. He slept for about 13 hours straight and then continued to take long naps for several days. Doctors initially believed he would fully recover once he returned to a normal sleep routine. However, some people close to him claimed that Tripp was never quite the same afterwards. His personality reportedly changed, he became more irritable, and his career declined soon after. While it is difficult to prove direct long-term damage, many scientists today believe that such extreme sleep deprivation can have lasting psychological effects.



Peter Tripp's experiment remains one of the most famous—and controversial—examples of how far a person can push the limits of human endurance. It also serves as a warning about the powerful and unpredictable consequences of going without sleep.



# True or false?

1. Peter Tripp stayed awake for more than a week to raise money and increase his popularity.
2. During the entire experiment, Tripp stayed inside a soundproof recording studio.
3. Doctors gave Tripp stimulants to help him stay awake.
4. The hallucinations Tripp experienced were mild and didn't affect his behaviour.
5. At one point, Tripp believed that a desk drawer was burning.
6. After the experiment, Tripp slept for almost an entire day.
7. Scientists were sure that Tripp suffered permanent brain damage.
8. People close to him noticed changes in his personality after the experiment.
9. The experiment is still considered controversial today.





# Let's talk!

1. How many hours of sleep do you usually need to feel well?
2. What happens to you when you don't sleep enough?
3. What helps you sleep better?
4. Do you think society treats sleep as something important? Why / why not?
5. What's the longest you've ever stayed awake? How did you feel?
6. Why do you think people find extreme challenges interesting?
7. What dangers do you see in staying awake for many hours?
8. If someone offered you money to stay awake for 48 hours, would you try it?
9. Do you think experiments like Peter Tripp's should be allowed today?
10. Do you think Peter Tripp understood the risks? Should the organisers have protected him more?



# Answer key

## Vocabulary match

1. publicity stunt – F
2. booth – A
3. deprivation – I
4. to remain – B
5. vivid – G
6. to insist – E
7. to claim – H
8. to decline – C
9. endurance – D

## True / false

1. T – He did it for charity and publicity.
2. F – He stayed in a glass booth, not a studio.
3. T – Doctors gave him stimulant medication.
4. F – His hallucinations were intense and changed his behaviour.
5. T – He believed a desk drawer was on fire.
6. T – He slept about 13 hours immediately after.
7. F – Scientists couldn't prove permanent damage.
8. T – People close to him noticed personality changes.
9. T – It's still considered controversial today.



Thank you!  
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