

NEWS LESSON

The Longest Walk Home

BEFORE YOU READ

1 Warm up

Talk about these questions with a partner.

1. What is the longest journey you would willingly make on foot?
2. Would you enjoy travelling without a fixed return date?
3. What would you miss most on a very long journey?

2 Key words

These words are in the article. Write the letter of the meaning (A to H) in each box.

1	**vehicle**	☐	A	the way you go from one place to another
2	**route**	☐	B	the time when you are a child
3	**expedition**	☐	C	people you do not know
4	**pandemic**	☐	D	a machine such as a car or bus that carries people
5	**permission**	☐	E	a long, organised journey to a faraway place
6	**jungle**	☐	F	a sickness that spreads to many countries
7	**strangers**	☐	G	when someone says that you are allowed to do something
8	**childhood**	☐	H	a thick forest in a hot country

3 Read

Read the article and underline the key words from task 2. The paragraphs are numbered.

In 1998, Karl Bushby left Chile to walk home to Hull. After almost 28 years, he is nearly there.

1 In November 1998, Karl Bushby set off from the southern tip of Chile with a small amount of money and a very unusual plan. He wanted to walk home to Hull, in northern England. The journey would take him through the Americas, across the sea ice between Alaska and Russia, and eventually across Europe. He thought it might take 12 years. Almost 28 years later, he finally reached Britain. Walking is the short way to describe it: he also had to swim, and he was often stopped for months or years along the way.

2 Karl had two rules. He would not use a vehicle to move forwards along his route, and he would not return home until he had completed the journey. The former British soldier called his adventure the Goliath Expedition. At first, he walked north through South America. He travelled through hot deserts, mountains and dangerous jungle. In the Darién Gap, between Colombia and Panama, he had to deal with the threat of armed groups.

3 After reaching North America, Karl carried on towards Alaska. In 2006, he and another explorer crossed the Bering Strait on moving sea ice. It was one of the most dangerous parts of the whole journey. They finally reached Russia, but the authorities arrested them because they had not entered the country at an official border point. Problems with visas and permission to travel would continue for years.

4 Money, closed borders and the pandemic all held up Karl's progress. In 2024, he made a long swim across the Caspian Sea with support from a team. He then travelled through Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey before continuing into Europe. On 5 October 2026, he reached Dover after swimming across the English Channel. He was finally back in Britain, although he still had around 400 kilometres left to walk to Hull.

5 The adventure has been exciting, but it has also cost him a great deal. Karl has missed years with his family, including much of his son's childhood. He has also depended on the kindness of strangers for food, shelter and help. These experiences have made him more positive about people. After nearly three decades on the road, one question remains. When he finally arrives home, how will he get used to ordinary life again?

Sources: The Guardian. Picture: AI illustration.

4 True, false or not given

Circle **T** (true), **F** (false) or **NG** (the article does not say).

1. In 2006, Karl and another explorer went across the Bering Strait on ice. (T) (F) (NG)
2. He reached Hull on 5 October 2026. (T) (F) (NG)
3. Karl and the other explorer were arrested when they arrived in Russia. (T) (F) (NG)
4. His son has joined him for part of the walk. (T) (F) (NG)
5. Karl has missed much of his son's childhood. (T) (F) (NG)

5 Vocabulary

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed.

arrested	authorities	explored	shelter	threat	unusual	visa

1. Walking across a continent is a very _____ plan, because most people take a plane.
2. The _____ of bad weather made the hikers turn back.
3. Police _____ two men after the robbery at the bank.
4. When the storm began, we found _____ in an old barn.
5. You must ask the local _____ before you camp in the park.

6 Verb forms

Write the correct form of the verb in brackets.

1. He wanted _____ home to Hull, in northern England. (WALK)
2. He thought the journey _____ about 12 years. (TAKE)
3. In October 2026 he _____ across the English Channel. (SWIM)
4. The authorities arrested them because they had not _____ at an official border. (ENTER)
5. He has _____ years with his family. (MISS)

7 Language focus: phrasal verbs

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed. A phrasal verb is a verb plus a small word. The small word changes the meaning, so learn the two words together.

across	after	beyond	down	on	out	up

1. We were tired, but we carried _____ walking until dark.
2. The engine broke _____ in the middle of the desert.
3. He finally gave _____ smoking after twenty years.
4. Her grandmother looked _____ her when her parents travelled.
5. Watch _____ for snakes on the path.

SPEAK

8 Talk about it

Discuss in pairs or small groups. Give reasons for your answers.

1. When does sticking to a plan become harder to admire?
2. Would you rather finish a huge challenge or enjoy every stage of it?
3. What could make arriving home feel strange after years away?

9 Role-play: a very long trip

Work in pairs. Read your card, then have the conversation. Swap roles and do it again.

Student A · the traveller

You want to leave your job and walk across a whole country. You will be away for a year. Explain why it matters to you and answer your friend's worries.

Student B · the friend

You are worried about your friend's plan. Ask about money, safety and family. Try to agree on a plan, or a shorter trip.

Useful phrases

I've always wanted to do something like this.
What if you run out of money?
I'd miss my family, but I can't give up now.
Have you thought about the risks?
We could split the trip into two parts.
That's a fair point, I hadn't thought of that.

Afterwards, tell the class: did you agree on a plan, and who gave way?

ANSWER KEY

2 Key words

1 D · 2 A · 3 E · 4 F · 5 G · 6 H · 7 C · 8 B

4 True, false or not given

1 T · 2 F · 3 T · 4 NG · 5 T

5 Vocabulary

1 unusual · 2 threat · 3 arrested · 4 shelter · 5 authorities

6 Verb forms

1 to walk · 2 would take or might take or could take · 3 swam · 4 entered · 5 missed

7 Language focus

1 on · 2 down · 3 up · 4 after · 5 out

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