NEWS LESSON

Twenty-Eight Years, One Journey 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	**expedition**	☐	A	something good that you succeed in doing
2	**conditions**	☐	B	a guess about how long or how much
3	**estimate**	☐	C	rules or things that must happen first
4	**paperwork**	☐	D	official documents that you have to complete
5	**delays**	☐	E	times when something happens later than planned
6	**generosity**	☐	F	a long, organised journey with a clear purpose
7	**achievement**	☐	G	being kind by giving things freely
8	**adjustment**	☐	H	a small change you make to get used to something

3 Read

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

Karl Bushby left the bottom of Chile in 1998 and refused to take a lift. He is now a few hundred kilometres from his own front door.

1 For most people, getting home is a matter of catching a bus, train or plane. For Karl Bushby, it has taken almost 28 years. The former British soldier left southern Chile in 1998 with a few hundred dollars. He wanted to reach his hometown of Hull without using transport to move forwards along his route. This October, after crossing continents and swimming the English Channel, he finally set foot on British soil.

2 Bushby began in Punta Arenas, near the southern tip of South America. He planned to walk north through the Americas, cross the Bering Strait into Russia and continue west towards Europe. He set himself two strict conditions. He could not take transport to advance, and he could not go home until the expedition was complete. He originally expected it to take about 12 years. That estimate turned out to be wildly optimistic.

3 Physical dangers came early. In South America, he faced extreme weather and crossed the Darién Gap, a difficult jungle region where travellers can encounter armed groups. In 2006, he and fellow explorer Dimitri Kieffer spent roughly two weeks crossing the frozen Bering Strait from Alaska into Russia. Their progress depended on unstable sea ice, and entering Russia led to their arrest because they had not arrived through an official border crossing.

4 Surprisingly, paperwork became as much of an obstacle as the wilderness. Bushby spent years working around visa restrictions, financial setbacks and international borders that were closed or difficult to cross. The pandemic caused further delays. When his route reached the Caspian Sea, he ran into another seemingly impossible problem. In 2024, he completed a lengthy swim across it with a support team, then continued through Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey.

5 On 5 October 2026, Bushby landed near Dover after swimming across the English Channel. He was back in Britain for the first time under his own expedition rules, but the walk was not yet over. About 400 kilometres remained between the landing point and Hull. The final stretch is small compared with the thousands of kilometres behind him, yet it carries an enormous emotional weight.

6 The journey has come at a personal cost. Bushby missed much of his son's childhood, important family occasions and the ordinary routines that shape most people's lives. At the same time, he says that the generosity of strangers has changed his view of humanity. People with very little often offered him food or somewhere to sleep. Soon the mission that has organised almost all his adult life will be complete. Reaching home will be an achievement. Discovering what comes next may be the bigger adjustment.

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. According to the text, paperwork delayed Bushby about as much as the wild landscapes did. (T) (F) (NG)
2. When he landed in Britain, the distance still to walk was much smaller than the distance already behind him. (T) (F) (NG)
3. Bushby's original estimate of 12 years was close to the real time. (T) (F) (NG)
4. A film company is making a documentary about the expedition. (T) (F) (NG)
5. Bushby and Kieffer needed about two days to cross the Bering Strait. (T) (F) (NG)

5 Vocabulary

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

ambition	humanity	obstacle	optimistic	outcome	routines	setbacks	unstable

1. Our guide was _____ about the weather, so we packed only light clothes.
2. Losing his passport was the biggest _____ to the trip, but he found a way to continue.
3. After several _____ , including a broken ankle, the team still finished the race.
4. The bridge looked _____ after the flood, so nobody was allowed to cross it.
5. Travel breaks everyday _____ , such as cooking at home and going to work.
6. After seeing so much generosity, he felt his faith in _____ had returned.

6 Verb forms

Write the correct form of the verb in brackets.

1. By the time he reached Dover, he _____ for almost 28 years. (WALK)
2. Bushby and Kieffer _____ after they entered Russia. (ARREST)
3. If he had used a vehicle, he _____ his own rules. (BREAK)
4. Bushby spent years _____ around visa restrictions. (WORK)
5. He originally expected the walk _____ about 12 years. (TAKE)

7 Language focus: phrasal verbs

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed. Many phrasal verbs have more than one meaning, so read the whole sentence before you choose the small word.

along	beyond	down	forward	off	out	up

1. The long walk turned _____ to be harder than the hikers had expected.
2. If you don't plan your route, you may end _____ in the wrong town.
3. The hikers put _____ their start by a day because of the storm.
4. Many travellers try to cut _____ on the weight of their rucksacks.
5. She is looking _____ to seeing her family again.

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

4 True, false or not given

1 T · 2 T · 3 F · 4 NG · 5 F

5 Vocabulary

1 optimistic · 2 obstacle · 3 setbacks · 4 unstable · 5 routines · 6 humanity

6 Verb forms

1 had been walking or had walked · 2 were arrested · 3 would have broken · 4 working · 5 to take

7 Language focus

1 out · 2 up · 3 off · 4 down · 5 forward

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