NEWS LESSON

A Dance Where Nobody Is Watching You



BEFORE YOU READ

1 Warm up

Talk about these questions with a partner.

1. Do you know any traditional dances from your country?
2. Is it easy or difficult to meet new people where you live?
3. Would you go to a dance evening alone?

2 Key words

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

1	**traditional**	☐	A	something that people have done for a very long time
2	**steps**	☐	B	funny in a way that is not serious
3	**spokesperson**	☐	C	the flat parts of phones and computers that you look at
4	**polished**	☐	D	shared by everyone in a group
5	**communal**	☐	E	the small movements of your feet in a dance
6	**silly**	☐	F	very neat and perfect, with no mistakes
7	**screens**	☐	G	a person who speaks for a company or group
8	**partner**	☐	H	the person you dance or do something with

3 Read

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

At a pub in south London, young and old are learning the same dances together. You do not need a partner, or any skill at all.

1 A ceilidh is a traditional dance from Scotland and Ireland. The word comes from Gaelic and means something like a visit or a gathering, and it is said "KAY-lee". A band plays, someone explains the steps, and everybody dances in lines and circles. You do not need a partner. You do not need to be good.

2 Last Friday, a ceilidh filled the Ivy House pub in Nunhead, in south-east London. The pub is better known for rock and indie music, but that night the dancefloor belonged to a folk band and a crowd of all ages. Many of the dancers were young, and many of them had never been to a ceilidh before.

3 The numbers suggest this is not only happening in one pub. According to the ticket platform Eventbrite, ticket sales for ceilidh events in the UK grew by 16% from 2024 to 2025. Across the world, they grew by 15%. A spokesperson for the platform said young people are looking for events that are "communal and a lot less polished".

4 The dancers gave simple reasons. "We spend a lot of time looking at screens," said Matt, who liked the chance to spend an evening offline. George, 35, was at his first proper ceilidh. "I just like how silly it can be," he said. "It just makes you feel alive." His partner Louise, 32, liked that nobody was judging how well anyone danced. Jamie, 19, has been to many and says they are becoming popular with his friends.

5 Part of the appeal seems to be that you cannot look cool while doing it. You get hot, you get the steps wrong and you laugh at the same moments as everyone else. Ed McCabe, who founded the London Ceilidh Club, said the scene has boomed since Covid. In his words, people simply want to be in a room together.

6 It is not perfect for everyone. The music is loud, the room is crowded and some people would rather not hold hands with a stranger. But for a first-timer who arrives alone, that may be the point. Within one dance, you have already met six people.

Sources: The Guardian, 'Ceilidh renaissance' lures gen Z offline in search of real-life joy. Picture: .

4 True, false or not given

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

1. You need a partner to join a ceilidh. T F NG
2. The Ivy House is usually known for rock and indie music. T F NG
3. Jamie is 19 and has been to many ceilidhs. T F NG
4. Ceilidh tickets have become more expensive. T F NG
5. The Ivy House is in the north of London. T F NG

5 Vocabulary

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

alive	appeal	boomed	crowd	judging	popular	stranger

1. Part of the _____ of old dances is that nobody has to be perfect.
2. Cafes in the town centre have _____ since the new university opened.
3. Football is very _____ in many countries, and millions of people watch it.
4. Some people stay at home because they think others will be _____ them.
5. Her mother told her never to go home with a _____ .

6 Verb forms

Write the correct form of the verb in brackets.

1. At a ceilidh, a band _____ and everybody dances. (PLAY)
2. Many of the dancers _____ to a ceilidh before. (NEVER BE)
3. Across the world, ticket sales _____ by 15%. (GROW)
4. Ed McCabe, who _____ the London Ceilidh Club, said the scene has boomed since Covid. (FOUND)
5. Within one dance, you _____ six people. (ALREADY MEET)

7 Language focus: collocations

Complete the sentences with words from the box. Two words are not needed. A collocation is a pair of words that sound right together, like heavy rain. Learn the verb and the noun as one piece.

do	get	make	pay	spend	take	tell

1. It is easy to _____ new friends at a ceilidh, because you change partners often.
2. Anyone can _____ part in the dances, even if they are beginners.
3. Many young people _____ hours every day on their phones.
4. Beginners often _____ lost in the middle of a dance, but someone always helps.
5. The dancers _____ their best, but nobody cares about mistakes.

SPEAK

8 Talk about it

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

1. What is good about activities where everybody is a beginner?
2. Which is easier for meeting people: a party, a class or a dance? Why?
3. What stops people from trying something new in public?

9 Role-play: a Friday night out

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

Student A · the friend who wants to go

You went to a ceilidh last week and loved it. Invite your friend for Friday. Explain what it is like, answer their worries and try to agree a plan.

Student B · the friend who is not sure

You are tired and think dancing in front of strangers sounds embarrassing. Ask questions, say what worries you, and decide if you can agree a plan you both like.

Useful phrases

Why don't you come to a ceilidh with me?

I'm not very good at dancing.

Don't worry, you don't need a partner.

That's not really my kind of evening.

How about we try it for an hour? If you're not enjoying it, we'll leave.

Let's meet at seven, then.

Afterwards, tell the class: are you going to the ceilidh, and what changed your mind?

ANSWER KEY

2 Key words

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

4 True, false or not given

1 F · 2 T · 3 T · 4 NG · 5 F

5 Vocabulary

1 appeal · 2 boomed · 3 popular · 4 judging · 5 stranger

6 Verb forms

1 plays · 2 had never been · 3 grew · 4 founded · 5 have already met

7 Language focus

1 make · 2 take · 3 spend · 4 get · 5 do

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