

Blue jeans ... More than just a pair of pants

**A mini-unit for Intermediate ESL learners
.... By Hetty Roessingh, November 1999**

Blue Jeans ... More than just a pair of pants

Many of our new ESL learners arriving in high school are coming from the Pacific Rim. They have studied English before, and can generally read at approximately a grade equivalent (GE) 4-5. This is not sufficient for integration into English 10 – the first in the sequence of academic literature based courses they need if they wish to attend university. For this placement, a GE 7 is recommended.

These students have learned the English they bring through fairly conservative, traditional methods and they are unlikely to have had a native English-speaking teacher. Rote learning and grammar/translation has often been the approach. Thus, while they have the BS of the BICS equation under control, they lack the IC – the interpersonal communication skills.

This unit has been developed with a variety of goals in mind:

- 1) to help develop interpersonal communication skills by designing learning tasks that require talking with native speakers (NS), as well as with their classmates in ESL
- 2) to encourage ESL learners to take an active, collaborative role in developing their English language proficiency and constructing meaning
- 3) to develop reading strategies for vocabulary development, namely contextual guessing. This is the single most important strategy ESL learners will need to apply in order to expand their vocabulary.
- 4) to practice grammar forms in context.
- 5) to begin to develop academic skills such as gathering data, conducting simple research, drawing conclusions and writing about their work using scaffolded supports and teacher modeling.
- 6) to present their work in class. **Presenting** is now a major skill area in mainstream high school classes, across the curriculum. ESL learners need to be prepared and to develop the confidence to participate in these kinds of tasks.
- 7) to help ESL learners understand the culture of Canadian high schools. The dress codes in Canadian schools are generally quite flexible: few of them require uniforms. The way Canadian teenagers dress reflects teen/school culture.

The unit begins with learning tasks designed to offer concrete images and build background knowledge for the readings. The initial reading is short, and the questions are generally at the literal, “right there” level. Subsequent readings push students to begin using context and background knowledge to make meaning of new vocabulary and concepts (i.e. Blue jeans: More than just a pair of pants). Contact assignments, representing their data, and scaffolded writing tasks move the students in the direction of CALP like development.

This unit could be used successfully with 12 – 15 year old students as well. We hope you and your students enjoy working with this unit as much as we have!

Ideas for learning tasks:

Preamble: explain that blue jeans are part of the teen culture in Canada. They are more than just pants: they are part of a teen's identity. Who wears jeans in this class? What kinds of labels do we have here? Where do you like to shop? In this unit, we are going to learn more about teenagers and jeans.

1. **Make a poster.** Have a magazine box on hand, filled with flyers and fashion type magazines. Have the students create a poster on "Jeans: The look I like". Ask the students to present their work to the class. Classmates may ask questions. This is a task that allows the teacher to do some informal assessment: do the students have the vocabulary for color, size, shape, fit, cost, etc.
2. **Read** the two articles about blue jeans. Study says Levi jeans are uncool is a short article followed by mostly literal level ("right there") questions. The second article, Levi's opens its own superstore in its fight to win back the teen market is considerably longer. It recycles and builds on the first article and moves forward with some reading strategies for getting at the meaning of new words. Question sheets accompany both articles.
3. **Scaffolded writing.** My Jeans. Students can use the frame to complete writing a few sentences about their preferences in blue jeans.
4. **Contact assignment.** Have the students use the chart to help them conduct "mini interviews" with 15 NS each, and record their data. Rehearse the interview questions in class beforehand. Give class time and send students out to where they might find NS: the cafeteria, lounge area. When they have collected their data, have them bring it back to class.
5. **Group work.** Have the students work in groups of four to collate their data, and create visual representations to display what they have learned from their interviews. This can be in the form of pie or bar charts showing the proportion of each label. Allow the students some choice about how they will do this work, and encourage them to work on computer. They should write a few sentences with each visual to explain the data, and draw conclusions (e.g. teenagers love jeans, they are picky about labels, they are willing to pay). Have them make presentations to the class about their research.
6. **Write a 5-paragraph essay.** Walk the students through the keyhole format for writing a 5-paragraph essay. Do the introduction together, paying particular attention to "nailing" the thesis statement. Each of the three body paragraphs deals with one topic from the interview data: labels, where to shop and cost of jeans. Help the students get the conclusion down. It needs to link back to the thesis statement. Allow students in-class time to get started on the essay writing. Look at the first draft next day. You may be able to do some peer editing ... make a transparency (with the student's permission) of a piece of writing. Work together to find the grammar, spelling, punctuation mistakes and to tighten up the work.

Study reports Levi jeans are uncool; Parents don't know their pants

It's true! Your parents' choice of blue jeans is NOT hot! A New York City based company that studies consumers' choices in clothing purchases has just finished a survey. While Levi's may be your parents' favorite jeans, teens will buy anything but.

So, what's hot right now? Here are the results of the survey that asked 2,000 13- to 24 year olds this exact question.

Favorite labels today include Calvin Klein for the girls and Polo, Abercrombie and Fitch, and FUBU for the boys. Other brands sure to make it big include Banana Republic, Tommy and Diesel.

The under-16 age group has its own taste and choice. The low rise cut has been very popular. Old Navy, the Gap and MUDD all have a low-rise jean on the market and they are selling like hotcakes.

Work wear denims are in increasing demand among young men. Wal-Mart, Work Warehouse and Zellers will have the preferred brands in stock. Look for Wrangler, Lee and ... Levi's.



Blue jeans: more than just a pair of pants.

**Study reports Levi jeans are uncool;
Parents don't know their pants**

1. Look at the title of this article. What does the word uncool mean?
2. What label of jeans do people your parents' age wear?
3. In the second paragraph, hot means:
4. What kind of jeans do young women and girls prefer now?
5. Name three labels that young men like to buy.
6. Name three labels that are becoming popular.
7. For young people under the age of 16 the popular labels are:
8. Find the words that describe the cut of the newest look in jeans for young teens:
9. Show or tell the class what this cut looks like:
10. Find the expression that tells you that these pants are selling fast:
11. Wrangler and Lee brands are bought by:
12. Where can you buy Wrangler and Lee jeans?
13. Look at the caption below the picture. What do you think the caption means?

MAKE A PUZZLE

The jeans market

Use a puzzle-maker program to create a wordsearch to recycle some of the new vocabulary so far. You might embed the following words:

Attract

Fit

Sales

Brands

Fubu

Shoppers

Choice

Generation

Style

Color

Khakis

Survey

Customers

Label

Taste

Cut

Lee

Teens

Denim

Levi

Tommy

Designer

Pants

Wear

Diesel

Polo

Wrangler

Fashion

Popular

Youth

Levi's opens its own superstore in its fight to win back the teen market



Modern new store tries to give Levi's a new image

Blue jeans are not as popular as they were in the 1950's and 60's. Back then, movie star James Dean was the hottest rebel in town, always wearing what else, but his Levi's. A whole generation of rebellious youth of the 60's grew up on peace and love and wore nothing else but ragged and ripped dungarees.



Things have changed for Levi Strauss & Co. Today, khakis and designer jeans have taken over as

the choice of a label conscious young generation. Blue jeans are more than just a pair of pants.

But Levi's is about to strike back. Yesterday, the world famous blue jean maker opened its own superstore in San Francisco. They hope that the young generation of fashion conscious shoppers will rediscover Levi's as the blue jean of first choice.

The Levi Company was founded in 1853. It began selling jeans during the California gold rush of the late 19th century. Prospectors in search of gold needed pants that could take a lot of wear and tear. Levi's were the perfect garment for the rugged prospectors. Over time, Levi's entered the mainstream market. For over 100 years, denim has been popular everywhere for work as well as casual wear. And Levi's was unrivalled as the leader in the jeans market.

In February 1999 Levi Strauss & Co. recorded sales of \$6 billion. This was a decrease of 13 percent from 1998. Levi's

plans to close half of their 22 factories in North America. About 5900 employees will be laid off.

Danny Kraus, a spokesman for Levi's, says it's time to rethink their sales strategy. He thinks that going after the youth market is the key to bringing the company back to good health.

The new superstore in San Francisco has done everything possible to make shopping fun and exciting. Music and art help to attract young shoppers into the store. The main idea is that Levi's are once again hip and hot. This is the only store of its kind. Levi Strauss & Co. management thinks this store will be a good gauge of the teen market's choice in pants. It's make it or break it for Levi's and they are counting on the success of their superstore.



... So much to choose from, so little time to shop ...

As an added attraction technology is used to identify customers and to take body measurements. If you want a perfect fit, made-to-measure jeans might be the answer. Your fingerprints can be matched to your body measurements, and in no time at all, your custom-made jeans will be ready for you.

Whether the superstore will help Levi Strauss recover its market share is anybody's guess, says Kurt Barnard, president of Barnard's Retail Trend Report. But he thinks Levi's is on the right track.

For today's fashion conscious young shoppers, labels matter. The labels of choice are FUBU and Diesel, and teenagers turn a blind eye to the cost.

Among the older shoppers, khakis have taken over for work and casual wear. Banana Republic and the Gap are the labels people are looking for. Once upon a time, jeans were everywhere on everybody. No longer. "By and large, khakis have replaced jeans," says Mr. Barnard.

The new superstore looks like the right idea for breathing some life into the Levi label – as much an American icon as Kentucky Fried Chicken or Coca Cola.

Levi's opens its own superstore in its fight to win back the teen market

Modern new store tries to give Levi's a new image

1. The title of the article reads, "Levi's opens its own superstore in its fight to win back the teen market: ...". Do you know what Levi's are?

No _____ Yes _____ Levi's are _____

2. If you don't know what Levi's are, read the first sentence of the article. Now make a guess:

Levi's are _____

3. Find two other words in the first two paragraphs that means pants:

4. Fewer people are buying Levi's these days. Find a statement in the second paragraph that tells you this.
5. "Blue jeans are more than just a pair of pants." What does this statement mean?
6. Levi Strauss & Co. have a plan to start selling their jeans again. Who will they sell them to?
7. When did Levi Strauss start making blue jeans?
8. Who bought those first jeans that Levi Strauss Co. made?
9. Find the words in paragraph 4 that tell you that jeans were made to take a lot of rough wear.
10. In 1999, Levi Strauss sold _____ worth of blue jeans.
11. In 1998, Levi Strauss sold _____ worth of blue jeans.
12. How many factories will Levi Strauss have to close down because of poor sales last year?
13. How many workers will lose their jobs?
14. Where will the new Levi's superstore be?
15. How will young people be attracted to come into the store?
16. Tell how you can get the perfect fit in jeans.

17. Find two phrases that describe jeans that fit exactly right.

18. Name two other brands of jeans mentioned in the article that are popular with young people:

19. Find the phrase that tells you that teenagers don't pay attention to the cost of their jeans.

20. The article tells us that another kind of pants has taken over blue jeans for work

and casual wear. These pants are called _____ and you can buy them at

_____ or _____.

21. Coca – Cola, KFC and Levi's are called icons. Give a few examples of icons of Canadian culture. What is an icon?

As Canadian as _____

As Canadian as _____

As Canadian as _____

An icon is _____.

Tag questions exercise:

Sometimes when we want to make a question, we add a “tag” at the end of a sentence. Try to complete the following, using the example as a model.

Ex. James Dean was hot in the 1950’s, wasn’t he?

1. Young people of the 1960’s wore ragged jeans, _____?
2. Today’s young people are label conscious, _____?
3. Khakis have taken over the blue jeans market, _____?
4. Young people will rediscover blue jeans, _____?
5. The new superstore is in San Francisco, _____?
6. Prospectors looked for gold in California, _____?
7. About 5900 factory workers will lose their jobs, _____?
8. Kraus says Levi’s must rethink their sales strategy, _____?
9. Becky bought her blue jeans at the Gap, _____?
10. The key to Levi’s business recovery is the teen market, _____?
11. Levi’s are hip and hot again, _____?
12. Technology can help give you the perfect fit, _____?
13. Labels matter, _____?
14. Teenagers will pay whatever the price, _____?
15. Everyone loves KFC, _____?

Now, rewrite the questions above, using the more conventional affirmative form. Follow the example below:

Ex. James Dean was hot in the 1950’s, wasn’t he? Was James Dean hot in the 1950’s?

My Jeans

I have _____ pairs of blue jeans. I (like/dislike) jeans because

_____. My favorite brand of blue jeans is _____.

You can buy these jeans at _____.

They cost around _____.

The fit I like can be described as _____

_____.

Besides blue jeans, I like _____ colored denim. I wear jeans to

_____, _____, and to _____.

One place I would not wear jeans is _____.

In Calgary, I have noticed that people wear jeans _____.

Calgarians especially love to wear jeans in the summer during _____

_____. Then they wear jeans _____.

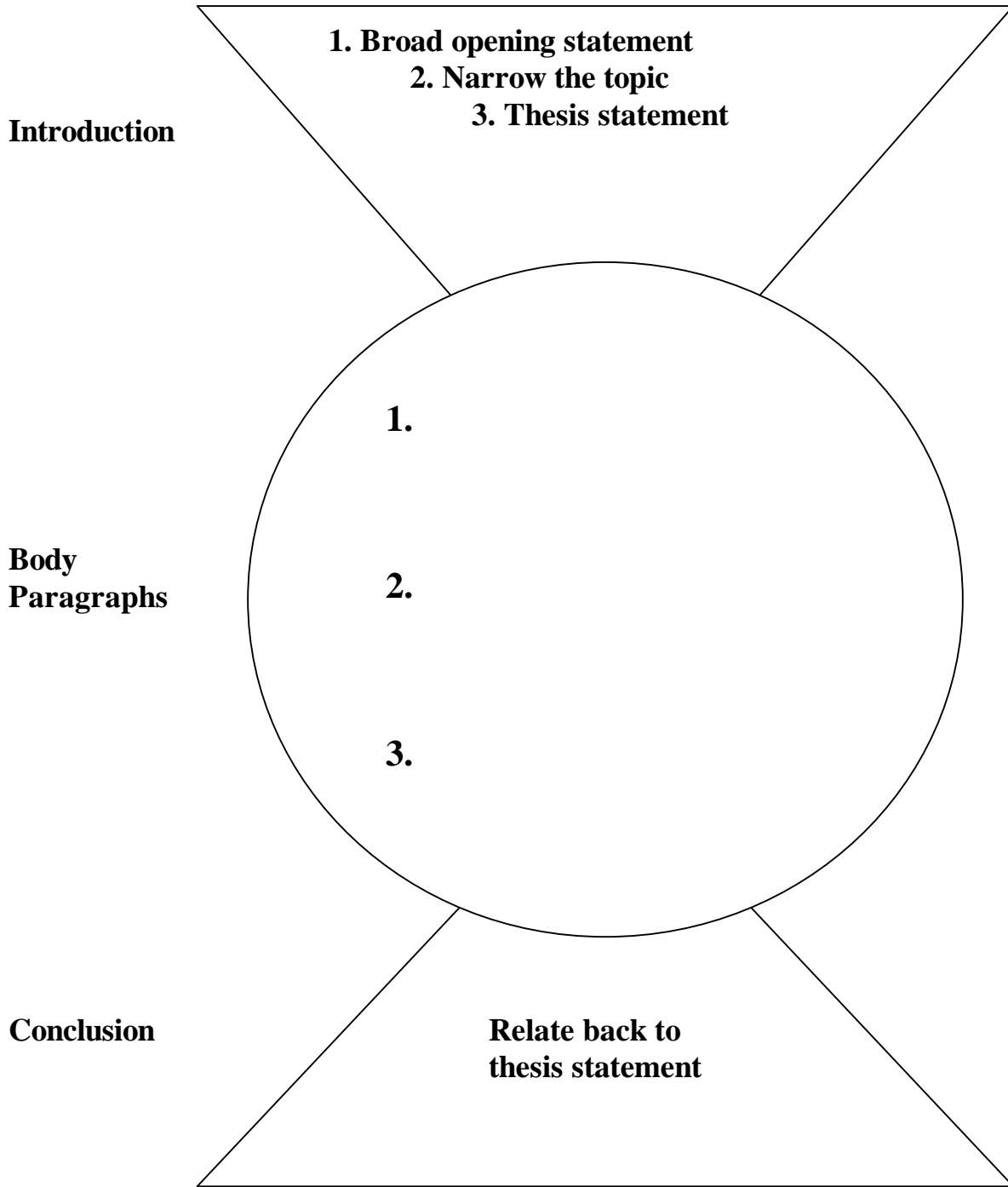
Contact assignment

You are to conduct a survey (“mini-interviews”) with 15 people in the school, at the bus stop ... anywhere you can find people who will talk to you about blue jeans. Fill in the chart below with the information you gather from these people. Practice the interview questions in class before you head out!

First name?	# of jeans?	Favorite brand?	Where to shop?	Cost?

When you have collected all the information, meet back in class in groups of 4. Put your data together. Make charts to display your data. Present your data to the class.

Keyhole Format



Scaffolded writing exercise:

The teacher and the class can begin writing this essay together. Students can write the three body paragraphs on their own, using their data from the contact assignment as a basis for their writing. Do the INTRODUCTORY paragraph together, using a language experience approach to do this work, and recording the students' ideas on the chalkboard.

Blue Jeans

INTRO:

“Big idea” statement (or two) as an opening sentence.

e.g. Everyone likes jeans. Jeans have been popular for 150 years.

Narrow the topic.

e.g. Teenagers especially love their jeans.

For teenagers, jeans are not just pants.

Jeans make a statement about you.

Thesis statement: This may be the MOST important statement you make in your introduction. It gives the reader an idea of the organization of the BODY, and it controls the topics you will cover.

e.g. The kind of jeans you have, where you buy them, and how much they cost, seems to matter.

BODY:

Paragraph 1: Labels

Paragraph 2: Where to shop:

Paragraphs 3: Cost:

CONCLUSION:

These few sentences must provide a summary of the essay, and make the link back to the thesis statement. The teacher and the students can work on this together. ESL students' writing here often sounds stilted and “stuck”.

e.g. Teenagers love jeans.

They usually have several pairs.

Labels count! Teenagers are willing to pay.

Levi's make a comeback with their Super Low Jean



Tom Brown has been a plumber for 25 years. Over those years, he's heard his share of jokes about plumber's cracks. But in today's youth market, cracks are where it's at, with the latest low-rise blue jeans. These pants are flying off store shelves four times as fast as other styles, says Jeff Beckman of Levi Strauss & Co.

The low-rise pants are cut low enough to show the top of the gluteal divide – otherwise known as plumber's crack. They are extremely popular with female shoppers from pre-teen to mid-20's.

Britney Spears and Jennifer Lopez – favorite film stars of today's youth culture – popularized the new look of showing off a stretch of skin in the midriff area. How much, exactly? Levi's Super Low pants stop about six centimeters below the belly button, and they have been an instant success.

The pants are not easy to wear, though. Stephanie Vento, a 17-year-old student says, "Every time I sit down, someone tells me they can see my butt. I have to like, pull it

up." They were originally worn by models with well-toned tummies. But girls who have a little to spare in the midriff zone don't seem to mind. "I think it's cute," says 18-year-old Eunice, who admits to owning a pair. "Besides the low-rise pants are all I can find in the stores right now."

Parents and school principals are not sure what to make of the new look in pants. Some principals keep T-shirts on hand, for those girls who expose too much skin or go too low.

But just ask Tom Brown what he wants his 13-year-old twin daughters to wear and he makes himself clear. He doesn't think girls should put their butts on display and he won't allow his daughters to wear low-rise pants. They just show too much for his likes.

Fashion doesn't always reflect good taste. And business doesn't always care about it either. For Levi Strauss & Co. the name of the game for the last two years has been survival, and the low-rise look has the company management smiling once again

The Blue Jeans Market

T Q L S G L M F U A E H L F O
T O I X A S E A M C X I N L C
A K M B B H Z S I S Y M O F H
S E E M W F U O E J N P D I E
Z L C C Y A H U P I R E Z T T
F U B U X C L Y S G D K E G S
X R Q P T Z Z Z I T X H D T A
M S M B F D G S K S M Y T O T
G A O E L Q N C A U M K I Q U
R E N G I S E D H K B P R W S
U T S A H T Z Z K P S R M O Z
S U R V E Y Y V K R B W M K N
X D F A U L P T T R X H B J B
B F Z O Z E L L Z O J S B Z P
M I N E D Z U M J E Y A V S U

CHOICE

FIT

STYLE

CUT

FUBU

SURVEY

DENIM

KHAKIS

TASTE

DESIGNER

LABEL

TEENS

DIESEL

POLO

TOMMY

The Blue Jeans Market - Solution

t	Q	L	S	G	L	M	F	U	A	E	H	L	F	O
T	O	I	X	A	S	E	A	M	C	X	I	N	L	C
A	K	M	B	B	H	Z	S	I	S	Y	M	O	F	H
S	E	E	M	W	F	U	O	E	J	N	P	D	I	E
Z	L	C	C	Y	A	H	U	P	I	R	E	Z	T	T
F	U	B	U	X	C	L	Y	S	G	D	K	E	G	S
X	R	Q	P	T	Z	Z	Z	I	T	X	H	D	T	A
M	S	M	B	F	D	G	S	K	S	M	Y	T	O	T
G	A	O	E	L	Q	N	C	A	U	M	K	I	Q	U
R	E	N	G	I	S	E	D	H	K	B	P	R	W	S
U	T	S	A	H	T	Z	Z	K	P	S	R	M	O	Z
S	U	R	V	E	Y	Y	V	K	R	B	W	M	K	N
X	D	F	A	U	L	P	T	T	R	X	H	B	J	B
B	F	Z	O	Z	E	L	L	Z	O	J	S	B	Z	P
M	I	N	E	D	Z	U	M	J	E	Y	A	V	S	U

CHOICE

FIT

STYLE

CUT

FUBU

SURVEY

DENIM

KHAKIS

TASTE

DESIGNER

LABEL

TEENS

DIESEL

POLO

TOMMY

Blue Jeans

C T I Q W D K W T O Q C E O L
D L W V K M R S M C O Q E Z B
A M J F E A A P A L A T L A S
N U P I N L P Z O A F R A U Q
H B E G G T C R W X R Q T H D
Q D L N O I H S A F A W H T A
W E S F C E T R M A L L S F A
R H P A B U Q R X Z U S H Y P
S C B Y L A S R K Y P Z O D A
Y O U T H E I T S I O K P Z N
I X K G E T S D O V P F P T T
W E O U R H N T U M E Q E N S
G E N E R A T I O N E K R Z Q
R W W F R I R A E W W R S L Z
Z M C B Y K J F I E M R S X A

ATTRACT

BRANDS

COLOR

CUSTOMERS

FASHION

GENERATION

LEE

LEVI

PANTS

POPULAR

SALES

SHOPPERS

WEAR

WRANGLER

YOUTH

Blue Jeans – Solution

c	T	I	Q	W	D	K	W	T	O	Q	C	E	O	L
D	L	W	V	K	M	R	S	M	C	O	Q	E	Z	B
A	M	J	F	E	A	A	P	A	L	A	T	L	A	S
N	U	P	I	N	L	P	Z	O	A	F	R	A	U	Q
H	B	E	G	G	T	C	R	W	X	R	Q	T	H	D
Q	D	L	N	O	I	H	S	A	F	A	W	H	T	A
W	E	S	F	C	E	T	R	M	A	L	L	S	F	A
R	H	P	A	B	U	Q	R	X	Z	U	S	H	Y	P
S	C	B	Y	L	A	S	R	K	Y	P	Z	O	D	A
Y	O	U	T	H	E	I	T	S	I	O	K	P	Z	N
I	X	K	G	E	T	S	D	O	V	P	F	P	T	T
W	E	O	U	R	H	N	T	U	M	E	Q	E	N	S
G	E	N	E	R	A	T	I	O	N	E	K	R	Z	Q
R	W	W	F	R	I	R	A	E	W	W	R	S	L	Z
Z	M	C	B	Y	K	J	F	I	E	M	R	S	X	A

ATTRACT

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