CLASSROOM WORKSHEET

Putin Frees American Prisoner as Russia Demands Better Proposals

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NAME _____ CLASS _____ DATE _____ SCORE _____ / 17



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1 Read

The number beside each paragraph helps you talk about it.

1 Russian President Vladimir Putin released Stephen Hubbard, a 74-year-old US citizen, during a meeting with envoy Steve Witkoff in St. Petersburg. Hubbard had been held since 2022. He was the last American in Russia that Washington called wrongfully imprisoned. Trump said he personally asked for the release by phone and that no concession was required. The Kremlin dismissed Witkoff's written proposals as lacking substance. However, Putin agreed in principle to resume trilateral talks after November 10. Kremlin aide Yuri Ushakov said a first-ever meeting of China, Russia, and the US leaders was being prepared. The goal was to include it in the Asia-Pacific summit in Shenzhen next month. Trump said he had suspended new sanctions to keep negotiations moving. Ukraine's Zelenskyy pushed for halting front line positions as a first step. Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov said talks should focus on building a security structure for both Russia and Ukraine after the conflict.

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2 Key words

envoy /ˈɛnvɔɪ/ *noun*

a person sent by a government to represent it in talks or negotiations with another country.

The country appointed a special envoy to lead the peace negotiations.

in principle /ɪn ˈprɪnsɪpl/ *idiom*

agreeing with the general idea or plan, without having agreed on the specific details yet.

Both parties agreed in principle to meet again next month.

concession /kənˈsɛʃən/ *noun*

something you agree to give or allow in a negotiation, usually because the other side demands it.

Neither side was willing to make a concession on the key issue.

dismissed /dɪsˈmɪst/ *verb*

refused to consider seriously; treated something as unimportant or unacceptable.

The committee dismissed the report because it contained no evidence.

resume /rɪˈzjuːm/ *verb*

to begin something again after a pause or interruption.

The company plans to resume production after the strike ends.

suspended /səsˈpɛndɪd/ *verb*

stopped or paused officially, usually for a period of time, with the possibility of restarting later.

The government suspended the new regulations until further notice.

3 Reading comprehension

EXERCISE 1 Understanding the News Report

3 points

Read the lesson text carefully and choose the best answer for each question.

1 What can we infer about the Kremlin's reaction to Witkoff's written proposals?

(a) The Kremlin found them incomplete but was willing to continue discussing them.
(b) The Kremlin refused them entirely and cancelled all future meetings.
(c) The Kremlin accepted them immediately and signed a new agreement.
(d) The Kremlin never received them because the meeting was too short.

2 Why did Trump suspend new sanctions against Russia?

(a) Because Russia had already agreed to all of his demands.
(b) Because Congress had overruled his sanctions policy.
(c) To keep negotiations moving forward.
(d) To punish Ukraine for refusing to negotiate.

3 What does the phrase 'agreed in principle' suggest about Putin's decision?

(a) He fully committed to all details of the meeting schedule.
(b) He accepted the general idea but specific terms had not yet been finalised.
(c) He disagreed with the idea but was forced to accept it publicly.
(d) He had already held the trilateral talks before the meeting.

EXERCISE 2 Key Details

Answer each question in one or two complete sentences using information from the lesson text.

1 Who was Stephen Hubbard and how long had he been held in Russia?

2 What did the Kremlin say about Witkoff's written proposals?

3 What was Lavrov's stated priority for the resumed talks?

4 Vocabulary and grammar practice

EXERCISE 3 Reported Speech and Passives

4 points

Complete each sentence by putting the verb in the correct form. Think about whether the sentence needs a passive or reported speech structure.

1 Trump said he personally _____ (ask) for the release by phone.

2 The Kremlin _____ (dismiss) Witkoff's proposals as lacking substance.

3 A first-ever meeting of China, Russia, and the US leaders _____ (prepare) according to Kremlin aide Ushakov.

4 Stephen Hubbard, a 74-year-old US citizen, _____ (release) during a meeting in St. Petersburg.

EXERCISE 4 Vocabulary Check

6 points

Match each term (left column) with its correct definition (right column).

1 envoy	_____	A	refused to consider seriously; treated as unimportant
2 dismissed	_____	B	a person sent by a government to represent it in negotiations
3 in principle	_____	C	agreed on the general idea but not on all the specific details yet
4 resume	_____	D	to begin something again after a pause or interruption
5 concession	_____	E	stopped or paused officially, with the possibility of restarting later
6 suspended	_____	F	something you agree to give or allow in a negotiation because the other side demands it

EXERCISE 5 Put the sentences in order

4 points

These sentences are from the story. Put them in the order they appear.

A Hubbard had been held since 2022.

B He was the last American in Russia that Washington called wrongfully imprisoned.

C The Kremlin dismissed Witkoff's written proposals as lacking substance.

D Trump said he personally asked for the release by phone and that no concession was required.

Correct order: _____ _____ _____ _____

5 Guided writing

EXERCISE 6 Summary and Opinion

Write a summary (80–130 words) of the key events in the lesson text: Hubbard's release, the Kremlin's reaction to the proposals, and what leaders plan to do next. Then add one or two sentences giving a reasoned opinion: do you think the agreement 'in principle' to resume talks is a positive sign? Use at least three of the following words: released, dismissed, in principle, resume, concession, suspended. Write 80 to 130 words.

Answer key

For the teacher

Keep this page for yourself and copy only the pages before it. Short-answer and writing tasks list one possible answer.

Exercise 1 Understanding the News Report

1 A. The Kremlin found them incomplete but was willing to continue discussing them. The text says the Kremlin 'dismissed' the proposals as 'lacking substance', which means they found them incomplete. However, Putin still agreed in principle to resume trilateral talks after November 10, so the door was not fully closed.

2 C. To keep negotiations moving forward. The text explicitly states: 'Trump said he had suspended new sanctions to keep negotiations moving.'

3 B. He accepted the general idea but specific terms had not yet been finalised. 'In principle' is a set phrase meaning agreement on the general concept without commitment to particular details. The text says he 'agreed in principle to resume trilateral talks', so the specific arrangements were still to be made.

Exercise 2 Key Details

1 Stephen Hubbard was a 74-year-old US citizen who had been held in Russia since 2022. The text states: 'a 74-year-old US citizen' and 'Hubbard had been held since 2022.'

2 The Kremlin dismissed Witkoff's written proposals, saying they lacked substance. The text states: 'The Kremlin dismissed Witkoff's written proposals as lacking substance.'

3 Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov said talks should focus on building a security structure for both Russia and Ukraine after the conflict. The text states: 'Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov said talks should focus on building a security structure for both Russia and Ukraine after the conflict.'

Exercise 3 Reported Speech and Passives

1 had asked In reported speech, a past action before the reporting verb ('said') shifts to past perfect: 'ask' ''had asked'.

2 dismissed This is a completed past action in the narrative, so past simple is used: 'dismiss' ''dismissed'.

3 was being prepared The action was ongoing at a reference point in the past, and the meeting is the receiver of the action, so past continuous passive is needed: 'was being prepared'.

4 was released Hubbard received the action (someone released him), so passive voice is required. The event is completed, so past simple passive: 'was released'.

Exercise 4 Vocabulary Check

1 B. a person sent by a government to represent it in negotiations

2 A. refused to consider seriously; treated as unimportant

3 C. agreed on the general idea but not on all the specific details yet

4 D. to begin something again after a pause or interruption

5 C. agreed on the general idea but not on all the specific details yet

6 E. stopped or paused officially, with the possibility of restarting later

Exercise 5 Put the sentences in order

A, B, D, C Hubbard had been held since 2022. He was the last American in Russia that Washington called wrongfully imprisoned. Trump said he personally asked for the release by phone and that no concession was required. The Kremlin dismissed Witkoff's written proposals as lacking substance.

Exercise 6 Summary and Opinion

Putin released Stephen Hubbard, a 74-year-old American held since 2022, during a meeting with envoy Witkoff in St. Petersburg. Although the Kremlin dismissed Witkoff's proposals as lacking substance, Putin agreed in principle to resume trilateral talks after November 10. A meeting of China, Russia, and US leaders may be added to the Shenzhen summit. Trump suspended new sanctions to keep negotiations moving. I think agreeing in principle is a cautiously positive sign, because both sides have kept channels open despite deep disagreements. One possible answer. Yours will be different and can still be good: check it against the list.