

Getting to know Wales

Topic

Life in Wales

Learning outcomes

- Give some facts about Wales and other countries
- Take notes while listening to an interview
- May develop intensive listening skills (identifying individual words in sentences)

Age and level

13-17, Adults (B1 / B2)

Time

Approximately 60 minutes

Materials

- Presentation OR Student worksheet
- Audio: Full Interview
- (Optional) Audio: Clips 1-5
- (Optional) Map / images showing Wales and the area around Swansea

Introduction

In this lesson, learners hear a man being interviewed about his life in Wales. First, learners share what they already know about Wales, then identify true / false sentences about the country. Activities support them in listening to an interview that may be challenging for some. They practise taking notes while listening, then have the option to develop intensive listening skills. Finally, they write true / false

sentences about their own or another country. Follow-up activities are suggested for learners who are interested in the topic.

A student worksheet accompanies this lesson. However, teachers can use a presentation for a no-printing option.

Procedure

<p>Lead-in: Sharing what we know about Wales</p> <p>(10 mins)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you are using the presentation, show slide 2. Ask learners if they can guess where the picture is taken. (Wales; it's actually Whitesands beach and Carn Llidi in Pembrokeshire) • Tell learners that they are going to learn about Wales in this lesson. Either as a whole class or in small groups, ask learners to share what they already know about Wales (or what they can guess about Wales if they have seen the picture on slide 2 e.g. it has a coast). If learners discuss in groups, ask them to share information / ideas with the rest of the class. • Establish that Wales is a country that is part of the United Kingdom. If it's possible, show the class where Wales is on a map, for example: http://tinyurl.com/6ecp2yk.
<p>Task 1: Reading activity</p> <p>(10 mins)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show slide 3 of the presentation or refer learners to Task 1 of the student worksheet. Ask them to read the statements together and decide which one they find the most surprising. Ask each group to report back to the class on the most surprising statement. • Now tell the learners that not all the statements are true. Ask them to decide which five of the statements they think are false. Once groups have decided, ask for their ideas. • You could make this a competition and give points for correct answers, or you could get the learners to go on the internet to find out the answers and more information themselves. • As you review the answers with the class, give information about Wales using the notes below. This information will support learners in understanding the interview in the next part of the lesson. Make sure they understand the words in bold. <p>Answers</p>

1. False – The highest mountain in the UK is Ben Nevis in Scotland (1344 metres high). The highest mountain in Wales is Snowdon (1085 metres).
2. True – Sir George Everest was a famous Welsh traveller and explorer.
3. False – It has its own language (**Welsh**) but uses the same money as the rest of the UK and has no independent army. Around 29% of the population speaks Welsh.
4. False – The Welsh flag is a red dragon on a green and white background. The Scottish flag has a white cross on a blue background.
5. True – Wales has its own national **rugby** team that competes with much larger countries from around the world.
6. False – The capital city is Cardiff. **Swansea** is a city in South Wales. In general, South Wales is more **industrialised** and more **built-up**. A motorway called the M4 passes through the area.
7. True – ‘Eisteddfod’ means ‘sitting together’ in English. Music is very important in Wales and Welsh **choirs** and singers are famous around the world.
8. True – Just over 3 million people live in Wales. Much of Wales is **rural**. Over 90% of the land area of Wales is used for **farming** (mostly to raise sheep and cows).
9. False – Welsh Rarebit is made from cheese on toast.
10. True – This Welsh town actually exists and its name translates as ‘The church of St Mary in the hollow of white hazel trees near the rapid whirlpool by St Tysilio’s of the red cave’.

Task 2:
Listening
activity
(15 mins)

- Now tell the learners that they are going to listen to an interview with a man called Ieuan from Wales. Explain that he lives in a small village called Pontarddulais.
- If it’s possible, show where the village is on a map e.g. Google maps: <https://tinyurl.com/j5u23ex9>. Point out the towns of Llanelli, Swansea, and the M4 motorway. These are all mentioned in the interview, and it will help learners to understand when they listen.
- Show **slide 4** of the presentation or refer learners to **Task 2** in the student worksheet. Explain that the man is asked questions 1-4. In small groups or as a whole class, learners try to guess what the man might say. They can use ideas from what they have learned about Wales so far in this lesson.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell learners that they will now listen to the interview. As they listen, they should make notes about his answer to each question. Explain that learners should just note what they understand. • Play the 'Full interview' audio file and let learners make notes. Give them time to compare their notes with a classmate and then let them listen a second time. • Give them time to compare again and monitor to see how much information they have managed to understand. Don't worry too much if they haven't got all the information, as it is quite a challenging activity. • You might want to let the learners listen a third time and this time let them read along with the transcript as this will help them to understand the accent. The transcript is available at the end of this Lesson Plan, and it is also available on slides 5-8 of the presentation. <p>Note: 'Boyo' means 'boy / man' in English; 'bach' is a term of endearment.</p> <p>Answers</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. small / close (closely-knit) community, rural but lots of facilities 2. rugby, industry, farming 3. more built-up and industrialised, lots of fields have been built on, more people in the community that they don't know, more commuters who don't work in the area, more vibrant school with English kids learning Welsh 4. male voice choir, rugby players
<p>Task 3: Intensive listening activity (optional) (10-15 mins)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is an optional activity. For this activity, make sure that learners don't have access to the transcripts. • Tell learners that they will listen to five sentences from the interview and that they should listen and count the number of words in each sentence. • Play clips 1-5 through twice and give the learners a few moments to think and write down their answers. Then tell them how many words were in each sentence and see if they were correct. <p>Answers</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 16 words 2. 16 words (counting contractions as two words) 3. 12 words (counting contractions as two words) 4. 13 words 5. 15 words

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Once they know the number of words, ask them to listen again and write the sentences down as they hear them. They may need to listen again once or twice to do this. Again, be sure to give them time to write after listening to each sentence and the opportunity to compare with a partner. Once they have finished listening, get the learners to dictate the sentences to you and write them up on the board. <p>Answers</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A lot of the fields I remember when I was a child have been built on. They're commuters, so they don't play a big part in the community any more. I suppose we've produced quite a few rugby players as well. Everybody in Wales takes part in music of some sort during their life. A lot of the people speak Welsh and that makes the accent a lot stronger.
<p>Task 4: Writing activity (15-20 mins)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put the learners in small groups and ask them to write a list of statements about their area, town or country, or another country. Half of them should be true; half of them should be false. When groups are ready, they can swap their lists or read them out to the class. Other groups / learners should guess if the statements are true or false.
<p>Follow-up activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask the learners to do some online research and find images of Wales. Then ask them to write a short summary of what they know about Wales. If you have a school blog or website, you could post these online. If learners would like to hear more Welsh accents and find out more about people who live in Wales, they can find video clips at https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b09szstr/episodes/guide. Some of these video clips deal with more adult themes, so be sure to choose ones that are suitable for the level and age of your learners.

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Transcript

Interviewer: First of all, Ieuan, can you tell me a little bit about the part of the UK that you're from?

Ieuan: Yes, so I'm from a small village in South Wales called Pontarddulais. Pontarddulais is about in the middle of South Wales.

Interviewer: Right. And can you tell me a little bit about what you like about your area?

Ieuan: Yes, I really come from a small village, and so it's a closely knit community and it's pretty rural really, so there's lots of facilities there but actually we're kind of country kids when we grow up there.

Interviewer: What mostly happens in that area?

Ieuan: I'd say mostly rugby; rugby and industry were the two things and farming was the other thing.

Interviewer: Right, and since you've lived there, which, is that from since you were a child?

Ieuan: Yes.

Interviewer: What would you say are the major changes in that area?

Ieuan: I think the major change has been the fact that it's become a lot more built-up and, I suppose, industrialised. It's along the M4 corridor, so there's been building all over the place. A lot of the fields I remember when I was a child have been built on with the new housing estates and things like that. So things have changed a lot. There's a lot more people in the community now that we don't know, a lot more incomers and I'd say people we don't know. They're just, they're commuters, so they don't play a big part in the community any more; they just live there in the evenings and the weekends. Apart from that we don't see them. There has been a positive effect; the school is much more vibrant now, and a lot of the kids are learning Welsh even though they are English incomers. So yes, there has been a positive effect too, I have to say.

Interviewer: Oh, that's good.

Ieuan: Yeah.

Interviewer: Is your region famous for anything, would you say?

Ieuan: Well, we've got a very good male voice choir. I don't know if that makes us famous or not, but Pontarddulais Male Voice Choir tours the world, really. So for a small village, that's quite a big thing really. I suppose we've produced quite a few rugby players as well. Ryan Evans, Peter Hopkins – people like that.

Interviewer: And, what about music?

Ieuan: Well, we always take part in the Eisteddfod, which is the sort of national music festival of Wales. In fact, that includes all sorts of activities, not just music but also poetry and storytelling and much more, actually, but that's the main thing, and that tours Wales and recently came to a town near us, which was a great honour for us. Everybody in Wales takes part in music of some sort during their life.

Interviewer: Can you just tell me a little bit about how people speak in your area?

Ieuan: Yeah it's funny, there's a distinct accent for this part of the world; we call ourselves the Taffs. This is Llanelli and the nearby town is called Swansea and they have a longer drawn out sort of accent. But here everybody, a lot of the people speak Welsh and that makes the accent a lot stronger and people say we've got a sing-song type of accent here, which makes it difficult for some people to understand, but otherwise I think we speak quite slowly so often people say we're easy to understand. People do call each other 'boyo' and 'bach' and that sort of thing. All right, bach?