

Changing Lives

Topic

Downshifting – the difference between rural and urban lifestyles

Aims

- To practise adjectives to describe lifestyle
- To practise using comparatives and describing routines
- To discuss / learn popular expressions
- To develop reading and speaking skills

Age group

Teens

Level

B1- B2

Time

60 minutes

Materials

1. Changing Lives Student worksheet
2. Internet links: <https://www.peakdistrict.org/> This site will give you views of villages and houses similar to those mentioned in the texts.

Introduction

This lesson consists of two case studies based on real life stories of people living in the UK today. The stories

www.teachingenglish.org.uk

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deal with their decision to give up an apparently successful and fast-paced lifestyle for a rural life in the Peak District. The topic encourages students to talk about their own lifestyles and priorities.

Procedure

1. Introduce the topic (10 minutes)	<p>- For lower level students, introduce the topic with pictures or postcards of where you come from and the nearest towns or countryside. Ask students in pairs to describe the pictures and try to preview key vocabulary like peaceful, polluted, crowded, pretty. Ask them what types of houses they can see and what types of transport people might use. Ask them what types of jobs people might do in rural or urban areas.</p> <p>- For higher levels, introduce the topic with images of urban and rural areas from where you come from and ask them to imagine the lifestyles of people in the pictures. Ask each student to select one picture which shows the type of place they might like to visit or live in. Tell them about how you chose to move for your course of study in the UK. Draw as much as possible on your personal experience and the students' own experience during this lesson.</p>
2 Your lifestyle	<p>Ask students to look at the adjectives in task 1 and run through them to check they know their meanings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circle the ones which describe your lifestyle in the UK as an example, then ask students to do the same and compare with their partner. • Then make it clear if you would like to add other adjectives to your choice and tell them if you are content with your lifestyle. At this point reviewing the comparative forms of adjectives should come naturally ' I would prefer a calmer, less hectic life than I have at the moment.' • Ask lower levels to work out the comparative forms for each adjective in pairs before you proceed with the second question • The last question asks students to say if there is a difference between their lifestyle at the moment and what they would prefer. This can be explored more freely with higher levels but keep it quite brief.
3. Countryside and town life	<p>Remember that some countries may be more centralized on a capital city and being in the country can be very isolating. Transport to rural areas might be excellent or poor. Schools in rural areas might be considered better or deprived, depending on priorities. The climate around the country might be dramatically different and this will dictate lifestyle differences and economic differences as in the poor rural South of Italy with its hotter climate and the more developed North with its foggy winters.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students can do these activities in pairs or small groups. Get them started by giving an example from your own area of the UK. • Feedback from this task should bring out a good idea of attitudes towards urban and rural life. I may bring out regional prejudices and local rivalries but be wary of joining in an debate on such matters. • You could do the last question as a class poll with a show of hands. In a higher level group who need more fluency practice, encourage them to do this question

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	<p>in groups or to mingle around the whole class. They should not just say where they would prefer to live but also give a couple of good reasons why.</p>
4. Changing Lives	<p>This reading in Task 3 can be done in pairs. You could give one student in each pair one of the two case studies so that each student has to share the information from their case with their partner. This will require more speaking.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draw / Use a map of the UK and point out the Peak District • Try to have an image available to give them an idea (see weblinks below) If appropriate, name other main areas, like the Lake District, the Dales etc.
5. Interpretation	<p>This task asks students to think beyond the bare facts and reflect on the factors involved in choosing their lifestyle.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This exercise can be done in small groups • Higher level students should be encouraged to say as much as possible about the motivations of the personalities in the case studies and about their own opinions and feelings • Get as many responses as possible from around the class during feedback.
6. My family	<p>Prepare lower levels carefully for this task. Build up a list of questions they might ask their partner. Give an example using your own family when you were their age and invite questions: Did you / do you have lunch together? Did you /do you have to travel a long way to school? Did you / do you spend Sundays with your relatives?</p>
7. Sayings	<p>This task may be too challenging for your lower level groups. Put students in pairs or small groups to do this task. Note that some people just get a feeling for a place that they like. Ask students If they have ever had such a reaction to a place.</p>
8. Discussion	<p>Many people in the UK are become dissatisfied with fast-paced lifestyles in cities. Downshifting to a cheaper and calmer rural life or a different working life at home are two solutions. These choices are not always possible for everyone and some people are forced to live in places that they do not like or do jobs that they would like to change.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These topics are best suited to higher levels. Students can work in pairs or in small groups. The last questions can be a group brainstorming exercise.

Contributed by

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