

Destination UK – England

Topic

England

Aims

- To visualise and then write about a trip to London
- To practise speaking in a discussion about icons
- To practise reading skills
- To learn rhyming slang and write a short dialogue

Age group

12 - adult

Level

B1 – B2

Time

60 minutes

Materials

1. Destination UK- England student worksheet
2. Internet links:
 - <http://www.icons.org.uk/> - Website about UK icons
 - <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/magazine/4594660.stm> - BBC article about UK icons
 - <http://www.visitengland.com/> - Official site of England's tourist board
 - <http://www.aldertons.com/> - A cockney rhyming slang dictionary

Introduction

This Essential UK lesson plan is part of four entitled Destination UK. They look at the four countries that make up the United Kingdom. This one gives learners an insight into life in England.

Task 1 is a guided visualisation to find out what students think of when they think of London. Task 2 asks students to think about what they consider to be English icons and to think about icons that represent their own country. Task 3 is a simple gap fill for students to complete with statistics about England. Task 4 is a reading from the British Council's UK in Focus website and Task 5 is a fun activity based on Cockney Rhyming Slang. Task 6 needs a map of England and asks students to plot cities and locate some famous landmarks.

As with all of the Destination UK lessons, try to make use of your students who have visited the country and can share information with the group. The lesson can also be a springboard to go onto exploring traditions and cultural differences between the UK and the country you are working in.

Procedure

1. Task 1 - A two minute trip to London.

This task is a guided visualisation. If you've never tried to do this before you will have to get your students ready for the task – younger teenagers who aren't used to this type of activity tend to get a bit giggly the first time you do it but give it a go. Tell them that for the next two minutes you want them to close their eyes and listen to you. You want them to use their imaginations and try to picture what you describe in their minds eye. Let them put their heads down on the tables if they want and try to get students calm and relaxed before you start. When they're ready, read this slowly in a quietish calm voice. (Adapt the text according to the level of your students. This one should give you a basic idea.)

“Close your eyes and imagine you are on an aeroplane. You look out of the window and see the clouds. The plane is arriving at the airport and you feel a little bit nervous as you land. You get out of the plane and follow the signs to get your suitcase. You get your suitcase and walk out of the airport. You can't believe that you are in London at last. You decide to catch a taxi to your hotel in the centre of the city. What does the taxi look like? You arrive at your hotel and leave your bag in your room. You look out of your bedroom window. What can you see? You look up at the sky, what colour is it? What's the weather like? You decide to go for a walk outside to start exploring the city. There are lots of people on the street. What do they look like? What are they wearing? You see buses on the street. What colour are they? What colour are the post boxes? You feel hungry so you stop for something to eat. What do you eat? You decide to start your sightseeing of the city. Where do you go?.....” (continue for as long as you think your students are concentrating and involved.)

When you have finished say to students, “OK. Open your eyes.” Then ask students to draw or write about what they saw. When they have all put some of their images on paper, ask them to explain some of the images. Use their pictures to lead on to task two or on to talking about England. Who's been there? Who'd like to go there? Etc. etc. (Be ready for anything -when I did this with my class I got the twin towers, the Empire State Building and the Pyramids!)

Lesson plan

2. Task 2 – English Icons	<p>Check students understand what an icon is. Give some examples of some icons of their country so they get the idea. There is currently a lot of talk in the British media about icons. (See web links below.) This task asks students to think of some icons they consider to be particularly English. If your students know little about the country use pictures and any visual aids to help you. Give some examples to get the students on track – red phone boxes, double decker buses, tea, fish and chips, roast beef etc.</p>
3. Task 3 – England: Do you know your statistics?	<p>First, revise numbers and check that your students are clear on the difference in pronunciation between sixty and sixteen, forty and fourteen etc. This often causes confusion.</p> <p><i>Answers:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>More than 350 languages are spoken in London.</i> 2. <i>More than 13% of secondary school children in England don't have English as their first language.</i> 3. <i>The population of the United Kingdom is just over 64 million.</i> 4. <i>The population of England is just over 50 million.</i> 5. <i>Britain has more people aged over 60 than under 16.</i> 6. <i>The currency of the UK is the pound. 100 pence make one pound.</i>
4. Task 4 – Reading task: Diverse society, football and food.	<p>This is a reading task from the British Council's UK in Focus website. Pre-teach any vocabulary you think your students won't know. After reading, encourage your students to discuss the questions that follow. The only one with a definite answer is: What's the difference between England, the United Kingdom and Great Britain? Students are often unclear about this and say England when they are actually referring to the UK or Great Britain. As you probably know, the United Kingdom is made up of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland while Great Britain is England, Scotland and Wales.</p>
5. Task 5 – Cockney Rhyming slang	<p>This is included to be a fun activity for higher levels. Before you get students doing the task be sure to explain the following:</p> <p>Cockney rhyming slang originated in the East end of London.</p> <p>It was originally created so users could speak in a sort of secret code language – two of the theories are that it was invented by prisoners who wanted to communicate with one another without the guards understanding or that market vendors invented it to be able to speak without the customers understanding them.</p> <p>It works by taking a pair of connected words (eg. Boat race) and the second word rhymes with the word you want to hide. You can then use just the first word of the connected to pair to refer to the word you want to hide, or you can use the pair of words. (eg. She's got a beautiful boat – meaning she's got a beautiful face!) (Sometimes it can be one word that just rhymes with the word you want to hide)</p>

Lesson plan

Tell students they'll never have to use this slang but it's a way that some people in England (and parts of Scotland?) use to talk informally to one another. It gives speakers the chance to be really creative with the language.

Names of famous people are often used in cockney rhyming slang. E.g. Britney Spears – Beers!

Take this activity very lightly! Encourage students to say the cockney rhyming slang out loud to figure out the English 'translation' by thinking about how it rhymes with the English word.

Either cut up the slips and give one set to each group and ask them to try to match them up or, give the students the information as it is. Then, if you're feeling brave (!) get the students to make up short dialogues using some of the slang.

6. Task 6– Where in England....?

If you have a map of England available, use it to plot the cities on the map either before or after the students do the task. If some of your students have visited England use them to help the others match up the cities. Pictures of some of the places would also enhance the task.

Answers: 1 – Liverpool, 2 – Stratford upon Avon 3 – Oxford and Cambridge, 4 – Birmingham, 5 – York, 6 – Land's End, 7 – Salisbury Plain 8 – Manchester

If possible bring pictures of the places.

When students have done the matching task, find out if any of them know where they are and ask them to find them on a map.

Contributed by

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