

Destination England

Topic: England

Aims:

- To develop all four communications skills
- To revise language of describing places

Level: Intermediate and above

Introduction

This lesson gives students the opportunity to find out more about England. It is one of a collection of four Destination UK lesson plans that look at the four countries that make up the UK. They will have the chance to read about England and find out a little about its people, culture and icons.

Procedure

A Two Minute Trip to London

- This is a guided visualisation activity to introduce the topic of England. 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.)

Example text:

"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 the next activity or start talking about England. Who's been there? Who'd like to go there? Etc.

Tip: If you have never used an activity like a 'guided visualisation' before, your students may wonder why they are doing it. You could explain to your students that it is a challenging and useful listening activity. If it doesn't go well the first time, try it again with another topic at a later stage in the course. Sometimes it might take several attempts for you and your students to get used to new activity types.

English Icons

- 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. This activity 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. Put students into small groups and give each group a copy of **Worksheet A**. When the groups have finished, put groups together to compare their ideas.

Tip:

Have a look at these websites before doing this activity.

<http://www.icons.org.uk/> - English icons.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/magazine/4594660.stm> - An article about English icons.

Worksheet A – English Icons

What images represent England to you? Work in groups to decide on your top 5 English icons. Write them here:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Compare your answers with your classmates.

What icons represent **your** country? What do you think a British person would put as the top 5 icons of your country? Write your ideas here:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Compare answers with your classmates.

England – do you know your statistics?

- This is a mini quiz with some facts and figures about England. Put students into pairs and give each pair a copy of **Worksheet B**. Alternatively you could put the numbers on the board and dictate the sentence as a ‘beep dictation’. This simply means reading out the sentences and saying ‘beep’ where there is a gap.

Answers:

1. More than 250 languages are spoken in London.
2. More than 9% of secondary school children in England don't have English as their first language.
3. The population of the United Kingdom is almost 60 million.
4. The population of England is just over 50 million.
5. Britain has more people aged over 60 than under 16.
6. The currency of the UK is the pound. 100 pence make one pound.

Tip: Before doing this activity, 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.

Worksheet B – England – do you know your statistics?

Read the statements about England and try to put the correct number in the gap.

60	60	250	50	100	16	9
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1. More than ____ languages are spoken in London.
2. More than ____% of secondary school children in England don't have English as their first language.
3. The population of the United Kingdom is almost ____ million.
4. The population of England is just over ____ million.
5. Britain has more people aged over ____ than under ____.
6. The currency of the UK is the pound. ____ pence make one pound.

Do you know any similar statistics about your country? Write some statements about your country and test your teacher!

Reading Task – Diverse Society, Football and Food

- 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.

Worksheet C – Reading Task - Diverse Society, Football and Food .

This is a text from the British Council's UK In Focus website.
Read the text and then discuss the questions in groups:

Diverse Society, Football and Food – Living in England**Where it is**

England is perhaps the country most people first think of when they think of the United Kingdom. It borders both Scotland and Wales and almost 50 million people live in there, which is over 80% of the UK's total population. Major cities include London (the capital), Birmingham, Sheffield, Leeds, Newcastle, and Manchester. London is one of the most well known cities in the world and for many is representative of the whole of England, if not the whole of the UK. Other icons include football, actors Jude Law and Kate Winslet, Bridget Jones, pubs and beer. But for most these represent the whole of the UK, not just England.

Indistinct identity?

Many of the people in our survey, either English by birth or now living here, commented that it was very difficult to distinguish between English and British culture and identity. People found that they often identify more with other things than with England as a country. These other things include: the place or region in which they live, whether it be a major city or one of the English counties such as Yorkshire, Devon or Northumberland; the UK as a whole; or the religious or ethnic community they are from.

Source: <http://www.britishcouncil.org/ism-ukinfocus-regional-england.htm>

- What's the first country you think of when you think of the United Kingdom?
- What's the difference between England, the United Kingdom and Great Britain?
- Have you, or any of your classmates, ever visited any of the cities mentioned in the text?
- Which other famous people do you consider to be English icons?

Cockney Rhyming Slang

- This is included to be a fun activity for higher levels. Before you get students doing the task be sure to explain the following:
 - i) Cockney rhyming slang originated in the East end of London.
 - ii) 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.
 - iii) It works by taking a pair of connected words (e.g. 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. (e.g. 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)

- iv) 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.
 - v) Names of famous people are often used in cockney rhyming slang. E.g. Brittany 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.
 - Make a copy of **Worksheet D** for each group and cut up the table. Ask students to try and match them up. Then, if you're feeling brave and fancy a challenge, get the students to make up short dialogues using some of the slang!

Worksheet D – Cockney Rhyming Slang

Did you know that in the East end of London some people use a special sort of slang language to speak to each other?

Cockney Rhyming Slang	English
Apples and pears	Stairs
Dog and bone	Phone
Adam and Eve	Believe
Tom Jones	Bones
Uncle Fred	Bread
Sausage and mash	Cash
Loaf of bread	Head
Runner beans	Jeans
Dustbin lids	Kids
Eiffel Tower	Shower
Baked potato	See you later
Mickey Mouse	House

- Have a look at these examples of Cockney Rhyming Slang and try to make up a short dialogue using the slang language instead of the English words.
- Try and make up some new rhyming slang! You could mix English and your language if you want.

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.*

Worksheet E – Where in England...?

... would you go to see the following places? Match the places of interest to the cities/ towns in the box below.

- 1) The home town of The Beatles
- 2) The home town of Shakespeare
- 3) The two most famous universities
- 4) The second largest city after London
- 5) A Viking museum or a Viking festival
- 6) The most South-Westerly point in England
- 7) Stonehenge
- 8) The home of one of the richest football clubs in the world

Cambridge / Manchester / Liverpool / Salisbury Plain / Birmingham / York /
Stratford upon Avon / Oxford / Lands' End

Do you know where all the places are? Have a look at a map of England and see if you can find the places.