

Topics

Day trips, unexplained sights.

Aims

- To practise forming written questions
- To ask and answer questions.
- To listen for specific information

Age group

14+

Level

B2+

Time

Approximately 40-60 minutes

Materials

1. [Audio file](#)
2. [Image](#) (Stairway to nowhere)

Introduction

This activity is designed to encourage students to develop their higher-level critical-thinking skills to speak about images.

The focus in this lesson is on question formation and answering questions.

Procedure

1. Show students the photograph and ask them to write down at least 5 questions they'd like to find answers to, working individually or in pairs.
2. Still looking at the photograph, students mingle as a whole class or work in pairs, changing partner at least twice. They take turns to ask their questions and take the role of the photographer to answer their partner's questions, being as imaginative as possible.
While students speak, monitor and provide vocabulary as required. Write this vocabulary on the board during or at the end of the activity for students to record in their notebooks.

Image bank: Stairway to nowhere (higher level)

3.	Ask students to write down as many of their partners' answers to their own questions as they can from memory, using the vocabulary on the board where appropriate. This can be written as if it were an article in a magazine, or as an interview with the photographer.
4.	Conduct whole class feedback, discussing some of the questions and answers.
5.	Play the recording. Students listen and tell you which, if any, of their questions are answered. Ask if the photographer's answers are the same as the students'.
6.	<p>Language focus (indirect questions) – play the recording for the second time. Ask students to write down the questions they hear the speaker ask. Prepare the following examples on an OHT, an IWB flipchart, or write them on the board after the recording has finished:</p> <p><i>Why did they build it?</i></p> <p><i>Where was it going to go to?</i></p> <p><i>Who built it?</i></p> <p><i>Where's the door?</i></p> <p><i>Did they forget to put in a door?</i></p> <p><i>Did they take the original door away?</i></p> <p><i>Why did they decide to keep the staircase when they'd obviously got rid of the door?!</i></p> <p>Elicit from students how we form 'indirect' questions and provide examples:</p> <p><i>I wonder why they built it; I wonder where it was going to go?</i></p>
7.	<p>Students to repeat stage 2 of the activity. Ask them to look at the questions they wrote originally and turn them into <i>indirect questions</i>, for example:</p> <p>Why did you build the staircase? → Can you tell me why you built the staircase?</p> <p>Monitor and help students where necessary, then elicit a few examples on the board to focus on the change in structure.</p>
8.	<p>Extension and further practice:</p> <p>Students can practice forming indirect questions by choosing a different picture from the ELTPics set 'Every picture tells a story' (http://www.flickr.com/photos/eltpics/sets/72157626599491389/) and repeating stages 1 & 2 above.</p>

Contributors

Activity by: Fiona Mauchline
Photograph by: Sandy Millin

Transcript

Sandy

I took this photo when I was on holiday with my friend Kate. We were in the British Lake District, in the north west of England, between Lancaster and Scotland. We were walking through the village of Hawkshead and looking at the houses... It's a very pretty village and a very famous English poet, William Wordsworth, went to school there... and, um, yeah, we were walking through this village Hawkshead and I saw this little staircase. Do you see it? And, um, it made me laugh because it seemed pretty pointless. I mean, look! Why did they build that?! You can see that there's no door for it to go to.... Isn't it funny?

So it made me wonder how long it had been there, and why did they build it – you know, where was it going to go to originally - and who built it – can you imagine building a staircase and then going 'Oh! Where's the door? Oops'..... I don't know, it's funny, I mean, did they forget to put in a door? Or did they take the original door away? But then why did they decide to keep the staircase when they'd obviously got rid of the door?!

So, yeah, it was a good holiday, I really enjoyed it and Hawkshead was really nice and very typical of the Lake District, so the photo's just a holiday snap, but also it's funny, it's one of those funny things you see on holiday sometimes, and it makes me smile, AND, and yeah, it reminds me of a great holiday.