

Name that city: the cost of living

Level: Upper Intermediate

Lesson plan by Andrew Drummond

Main Aims:

- To stimulate discussion and provide practice of spoken fluency (spontaneous speech)
- To provide practice of the speech functions 'expressing surprise' and it's opposite 'expressing no surprise' (controlled practice of speech functions/tools)
- To provide practice of the grammar of making comparisons

Other Aims:

- To provide gist reading practice with a global focus
- To provide practice scanning information to check predictions
- To provide practice of preparing for delivering a short presentation (prepared speaking)

Main Activities

1	<p>Introduction and brainstorming: teacher could begin by raising interest in the cities. I tried drawing a map on the board and pointing out the cities' locations. Students work in small groups discussing the questions. Ideally students will know something about each place but not that much.</p>
2	<p>Gist reading (Name That City): students look at the descriptions of the five cities individually and write the name of the city in the space provided. In pairs they can highlight the information that 'gave the game away'.</p> <p><i>Answers: A - Sydney B - Cairo C - Kuala Lumpur D - Paris E - Rio de Janeiro</i></p>

3	<p>Prediction & 1st Reading: students are no doubt aware of the big difference in the cost of living across various cities. Teacher could ask, 'where's the most expensive place you've ever been? What's the cheapest? Etc. Then, looking at the names of the five cities, students predict the order of what will prove the most expensive down to the cheapest according to the information page they are about to receive. Teacher gives out the information and students check their predictions.</p> <p>Answers: this can be a bit problematic because the data doesn't really do exactly what you expect it to. Something like a definite answer can only be achieved by ignoring the anomalous high costs. Doing that yields the order <i>Paris, Sydney, KL, Rio, Cairo</i>.</p>
4	<p>2nd Reading: encourage students to look at the information again, thinking about what they find surprising and what is 'as they expected'. Writing the notes next to the function on the worksheet creates something close to grammatical utterance. However, in order to be grammatical, they will need to expand their notes to include articles etc. The idea here is for students to have a go at using the speech function and comparisons at the same time. This should generate some errors as well as good 'classroom' usage</p>
5	<p>Grammar tune-up: Assuming they had a go at the previous activities and made some errors, you could choose to do a bit of remedial work on the structures suggested by the activity. Teacher writes something like, 'Ahhh, that's what I wanted to say!' on the board, then puts up the following structures:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">I was (not) surprised to hear that [City A] is so much more expensive than [City B]</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">It's (not) hard to believe that buying [Product A] costs so much more in [City A] than in [City B]</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">I wouldn't have thought there was so much difference between the prices of [Product A] from place to place</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">As I thought/ expected, comparing costs in [City A] and [City B] shows a big difference in the price of [Product A]</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">Plus any you think they tried to say</p> <p>To provide practice you could ask students to give examples of each structure using their notes or redo the previous speaking activity asking for controlled practice of the structures and / or students could write a dialogue or short report including the structures.</p>

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| 6 | Discuss and present: this activity is intended to provoke thought on who the winners and losers are out of this inequality and provide practice of delivering presentations (prepared thought) to a group. The last question, on what action could be taken, might trigger a broader discussion on 'capitalism' or something like that. Students who get a bit a stuck when preparing to present could talk on which place they would most like to visit instead. |
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I got this information on the web and wanted the facts given to be 100% authentic. In the end it is about 95%: two of the prices were 'approximated'. The city information is paraphrased from online travel write-ups. I think it still presents quite a clear picture of the strange and massive difference in the costs of different products internationally which you and your students may find interesting.