

Hospitality and Tourism

Giving information: Tourist Information Centres

by Keith Harding

Level: Intermediate (to Upper Intermediate)

Target age: 16+

Time needed: 90 minutes

Grammar / language objective: Written and spoken forms for giving information and making recommendations.

Materials: Worksheet

1. Warm-up

- Write up the abbreviations 'FAQs' and 'TIC'. Ask the students if they know what they stand for [*Frequently Asked Questions and Tourist Information Centre*] and where they would find them (in a tourism context).
- Elicit the differences:
 - FAQs are *written* information found mainly on websites (and also some printed information); TICs give information mainly in *spoken* form (but also offering written information).
 - FAQs will often be looked at *before* arrival in the destination; TICs will be visited *after* arrival.
- Discuss the main questions that tourists coming to the students' city would want answered. Write up ideas and vocabulary.

2. Reading

Set up

- Ask students what they know about Denmark and Copenhagen. If possible, find / download pictures of some of the sights and attractions to prompt (e.g. Little Mermaid, Legoland).
- Use verbal prompts: *attractions, weather, type of holiday, food, entertainment*.
- Try to elicit (and then write up) the following attractions and facilities which occur in the text: *palace, castle, amusement park, gardens, beach, restaurant, airport*.

Reading task

- Give out **Worksheet 1**, which has FAQs for Denmark and Copenhagen. Students should work in pairs to decide which paragraphs a-e contain the answers to the FAQs. Not all of the FAQs are answered in the text.

Key:

1. (c – any time of year)
2. (each paragraph describes a different kind of holiday, from sightseeing holidays in a, to family holidays and road trips)
3. (e – road or plane)
4. (b – yes)
5. and 6. (not answered)
7. (a)
8. (d)
9. (not answered)
10. (not really answered, although restaurants could be considered as part of a city's nightlife)

- Optional: ask students to use the internet to find answers to the questions not answered in the text.

3. Language focus: vocabulary

In pairs, ask students to read the text and find as many positive adjectives as possible. Then ask them to complete the gap-fill on **Worksheet 2**.

Key:

1. *delicious*; 2. *facinating*; 3. *magnificent*; 4. *excellent*;
5. *marvellous*; 6. *famous*; 7. *top-quality*; 8. *friendly*;
9. *must-see*

Ask them which of the adjectives can be used with (a) places, (b) people, (c) food and drink. There will be some overlap.

4. Language focus: functions

- In pairs, ask students to read the text and look for expressions that involve making recommendations. Do the first one together in class. One place you'll definitely want to see is...
- If you want to help them, you can give them key words: *without, must, worth, miss, don't, could*.
- Report back on the expressions and write them up on the board noting the form, particularly the use of infinitive and gerund:

Key:

- *One place you'll definitely want to see is the statue of 'the Little Mermaid'.*
- *Don't leave Copenhagen without visiting the marvellous Tivoli Gardens.*
- *Legoland is a 'must-see' attraction.*
- *One place that is really worth visiting is the Hans Christian Andersen Museum.*
- *You shouldn't miss the Danish speciality, smorrebrod.*
- *Don't forget to try the famous Danish beer.*
- *You could always hire a car.*

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5. Writing

- In groups, get the students to brainstorm ideas for the FAQ page of a website for their country or region. Start by using the example answers for the five Denmark questions as models. They can then think about the answers for the other five FAQs.
- Get each group to write up one of the FAQs. The rest can be done as homework.
- As an extra activity, you can get the groups to dictate their one written question to the other groups (after it has been corrected of course!).

6. Spoken recommendations

- Get students to look at the list of written recommendations you wrote on the board in 4. **Language focus: functions.** Discuss whether any of them could also be spoken forms, e.g. when giving information at a TIC.
- The answer is that they could all probably be spoken, but the last three are more usual – the others are better in written forms.
- Ask if they can think of any other ways of making spoken recommendations.
- Prompt by giving the key words on **Worksheet 2** in order to elicit the expressions indicated below. Remember that as these are spoken forms, you need to model and drill the forms orally before writing them up. Then get them to note down the target forms on their worksheets.

Key:

if	If I were you I'd + inf
recommend	I'd recommend –ing
why	Why don't you + inf?
thought	Have you thought of –ing?
best	One of the best things you can do is to + inf
idea	It's a good idea to + inf
might	You might like to + inf

- Students practise in pairs by taking turns to say one of the key words plus a tourism topic (e.g. *attraction, museum, food, hotel*) to which the other student must reply with a recommendation for their city or region.

For example:

When you go to London, have you thought of visiting Madame Tussauds?

Yes. And when you're in Paris, you might like to take a boat trip on the Seine.

7. Role-play

- Arrange the class so that it resembles a TIC – i.e. desks at which a visitor can speak to a Tourist Information Officer.
- Divide the students into three groups: A, B and C. Give each group a copy of the role card (on **Worksheet 3**).
- After 5 to 10 minutes change groups (and then change again for a third time) so that everyone gets a turn at each of the roles.
- If you want, you can use a different place (e.g. Copenhagen) rather than the students' own city or region.
- At the end get all the 'quality managers' (i.e. everyone) to report back on how everyone did.

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Reading

Look at the FAQs from the website giving information for tourists thinking of going to Denmark. Match the answers (a to e) to five of the FAQs.

Denmark: Frequently Asked Questions:

1. When is the best time to visit Denmark?
2. What different holidays can I have in Denmark?
3. What is the best way to get to Denmark?
4. Is it a good place for a family holiday?
5. Is it a good place to hold a business conference?
6. What language is spoken in Denmark?
7. What is there to see in the capital city?
8. What is the food like in Denmark?
9. Is there any typical Danish accommodation to stay in?
10. What is the night-life like in Denmark?



a. Copenhagen has many fascinating palaces and castles, such as the Amalienborg Palace (where the Royal Family live), and the Rosenborg Castle (home of the magnificent crown jewels). One place you'll definitely want to see is the statue of 'the Little Mermaid', probably the most famous image of Copenhagen. Don't leave Copenhagen without visiting the marvellous Tivoli Gardens, an old-fashioned amusement park.

b. Danish hospitality is very friendly to children and there are lots of attractions that suit all the family. Legoland is a 'must-see' attraction for children and adults alike. The park boasts models of famous cities and sights, built from 33 million Lego bricks. There are also rides and other attractions. In Odense, one place that is really worth visiting is the Hans Christian Andersen Museum, which tells the story of the famous writer of fairy-tales and children's stories.

c. Denmark is a year-round destination. There is something to do every month of the year – beaches and seaside resorts in the summer, city tours in the winter. However, please note that the winter can be cold and wet, and some of the famous attractions (like Legoland and the Tivoli Gardens) are not open all the year.

d. Denmark has a variety of eating places from top-quality restaurants to cosy family cafes. You shouldn't miss the Danish speciality, smorrebrod – delicious open sandwiches – which are served around lunchtime. Sausages and meatballs are also well-known dishes, and of course don't forget to try the famous Danish beer.

e. Copenhagen Airport is linked to many major cities. There is also an international seaport at Esbjerg and there are excellent road and rail links to the rest of Europe. You could always hire a car on arrival at the airport.

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Language focus: Vocabulary

Underline as many positive adjectives in the FAQs as possible. Then complete the gap-fill.

1. d _____
2. f _____
3. m _____
4. e _____
5. m _____
6. f _____
7. t _____ - q _____
8. f _____
9. m _____ - s _____

Language focus: Spoken recommendations

Write grammar rules for the 'recommending' expressions you found in the FAQs. The first one has been done for you.

- if *If I were you I'd + inf* _____
- recommend _____
- why _____
- thought _____
- best _____
- idea _____
- might _____

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Role-play: Role cards



Group A

You are tourist information officers for the city or region where you are studying.

Group B

You are visitors who should each think of a number of questions to ask (e.g. information about places to visit, places to eat, where to take the children). You can use the FAQs as prompts.

Group C

You are 'quality managers' who should listen to each of the exchanges and note down:

- (a) whether the information is accurate, and
- (b) each time one of the 'recommending' expressions is used.