Birdsong: Teachers' notes and tips – upper intermediate

1 Pre-reading tasks
   a Play the following ‘song’ and ask students to tell you a) what they can hear
     and b) when this can be heard.
     Tip: download the ‘song’ before the class and play it loud!
     Here is the link: www.idcd.info/ (MP3 format: UK dawn chorus May 2006)
   b Feedback: a) it’s birds singing b) it’s the dawn chorus, so therefore very early
     in the morning.
   c Give each pair a copy of the worksheet and ask them to do part 1. This is just
     speaking, encourage them to say more if they can.
   d Listen out for a student who is quite keen on birds and ask them to tell the
     class why they like them and if they go bird-watching, etc.
     Tip: link the topic to the students’ lives
     Even if only one student is interested in birds that will help to create an interest in the others. Can
     anyone name the bird in the picture? (It’s a thrush.)
   e Ask students to read the three options in part 2.

2 First reading tasks
   a Give each student a copy of the text, ask them to read it quickly and choose
     the best option.
   b Students compare their answers with each other.
   c Feedback: She became interested in birds and wants to help them.
     Tip: provide appropriate first reading tasks
     Set tasks that require students to think about the overall meaning rather than looking for specific
     information. The task should make students read all the text and help them with the gist.

3 Second reading tasks
   a Explain that part 3 of the worksheet is a table that includes sentences which
     summarize the content of the text. They need to read the text again more
     slowly and match up the columns.
   b Highlight the given example, then get students to carry on individually.
   c When they’ve finished they compare their answers with another student,
     checking that they have the same answers.
     Tip: vary feedback
     If you have an IWB in your classroom you can project the table and get students to come up and
     draw the arrows.
     Tip: provide alternative comprehension questions
     The task both tests and aids comprehension but is a change from the typical comprehension
     question format.
4 Third reading tasks

a Notice that there is an additional task to the column matching. Students also have to order the sentences. Again highlight to students that the Jim sentence with the arrows also appears first in the text.

b Students then read to order the sentences.

c Feedback: get students to take it in turns to read out the sentences in the correct order. The answers are at the end of these notes.

Tip: do the task yourself
Although the answers are given, do the task yourself - it helps you to notice any problems your students may have.

4 Post-reading tasks – vocabulary

a Part 4 on the worksheet: as students have read the text a few times now they should be able to find these words fairly quickly.

b Feedback: a pitch black b twitcher (this is a colloquial term) c our feathered friends (coll) d at an unearthly hour e shivering f avian (e.g. avian flu) g cunning h to mimic i a repertoire j to trigger k to make a mental note

Tip: encourage students to work out the meaning of unknown words from context
Tasks like these help students not to be too dependent on dictionaries.

Tip: consider other follow on activities
Are your students interested in the environment and the effect it has on wildlife? If so perhaps suggest they research a couple of other examples where a creature has adapted itself to survive in a changing world. They can share this information in another lesson.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>B What they did</th>
<th>C The reason why</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jim</td>
<td>made his friend get up early</td>
<td>to listen to the dawn chorus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jim</td>
<td>was confident about his friend’s reaction</td>
<td>because the dawn chorus is incredible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The male birds</td>
<td>sing</td>
<td>to defend their territory and find a mate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The male birds</td>
<td>sing complicated songs</td>
<td>to impress the females.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The females</td>
<td>chooses the best singer</td>
<td>as he will be fit and strong.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The dawn chorus</td>
<td>finishes not long after sunrise</td>
<td>because the birds can now look for food.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The blue tit</td>
<td>has adapted its song</td>
<td>to survive in a noisy city.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The sparrow</td>
<td>has reduced in numbers</td>
<td>because the cities are too noisy and light.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The robin</td>
<td>is the first to start singing</td>
<td>because he is the most sensitive to light.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jim’s friend</td>
<td>decides to feed the birds</td>
<td>to help them survive.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>