

## Nature and Environment

**Aim:** to prepare students to write an article describing a place

**Level:** Upper intermediate / B2

**Language:** descriptive language; places connected to nature

**Time:** 60 minutes + 30 minutes for exam task

**Materials:** one copy of the worksheets and exam question per student

### Vocabulary building

1. Put the students in pairs and hand out the worksheet.
2. Ask the students to look at the phrases and explain the meaning of each one. Allow them to use a dictionary.
3. Check the meaning of each of the phrases by asking different students to explain each one.
4. Next, ask the pairs to work together and describe places they have visited or seen using as many of the phrases as possible. Give students five minutes or so to do this. Monitor and listen to some of the descriptions.
5. Ask a few students to share some of their descriptions with the rest of the class.
6. Next, ask the students to look at the picture and write down as many sentences as they can to describe their impression of the place. Ask the students to use some of the sentence patterns given and the vocabulary from the first activity. Give the students a few minutes to do this in their pairs.
7. Monitor and help where necessary.
8. Put the students in groups of four (two pairs together) and get them to compare their sentences with each other.
9. Ask a few students to share some of their descriptions with the rest of the class.

### Reading

1. Ask the students to read the article quickly and decide on the best heading.

2. Put the students in pairs and get them to discuss and compare their answer.

3. Check the answer as a class.

**Key:** C) *A place to remember*

4. Next, ask the students to read through the article again and find the words and expressions used to describe each of the things from 1 – 7.

5. Put the students in pairs and get them to check their answers together.

6. Monitor and help where necessary.

7. Check the answers as a class.

**Key:** 1. *beautiful freshwater / crystal clear*; 2. *surrounded by grassy meadows and rolling hills*; 3. *rocky / snow-covered*; 4. *mysterious and dense*; 5. *picturesque*; 6. *on dramatic rugged cliffs / overlooking the lake*; 7. *breathtaking*

**Note:** The main purpose of this activity is to draw attention to the use of some of the descriptive language used in the article. The article includes a number of the phrases from part 1.

### Writing

**Note:** This activity is designed to be a semi-controlled writing activity. It is very similar to an early activity (the second one of the vocabulary building), but is designed to get the students to use the language to describe somewhere they know. In other words, to personalise the use of the language.

1. Ask the students to think of a place they know quite well and that they could describe using some of the phrases from the vocabulary activity at the start of the lesson.

2. Then, ask the students to write some sentences describing the places using some of the sentence stems / prompts from the box. Encourage them to use the earlier vocabulary wherever possible.

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3. Monitor and help where necessary.
4. Put the students in pairs or small groups and ask them to share their sentences with each other.
5. Finally, if there is time, ask the students to write a paragraph using some of their sentences.

### Practice exam question

**Note:** This can either be done in the class (preferable) or set for homework.

- The students should read the task rubric telling them what they need to do.
- They should make notes about key ideas before they start writing.
- Give the students a time limit of 30 minutes for this activity.

Suggested marking scheme:

Total mark out of 20 with each criteria worth up to 5 marks.

#### Content – answering the question

- 5 – answers the question and all the information included
- 4 – answers the question but one or two things missing
- 3 – answers the question but a number of things missing
- 2 – tried to answer the question but quite a lot missing
- 1 – failed to answer the question

#### Range of vocabulary and grammar

- 5 – used a wide range of vocabulary and grammar appropriate to the task
- 4 – used a wide range of vocabulary and grammar but not always appropriate to the task
- 3 – used a fairly wide range of vocabulary and grammar appropriate to the task
- 2 – used a limited range of vocabulary and grammar
- 1 – used a very limited range of vocabulary and grammar

#### Accuracy of language (i.e. spelling, tenses etc)

- 5 – minimal errors, well-developed control of language
- 4 – errors occur when attempting more complex language
- 3 – a number of errors but they do not impede communication
- 2 – a lot of errors, distract the reader, difficult understanding
- 1 – frequent errors, difficult understanding

#### Organization and appropriacy

- 5 – effectively organized and appropriate
- 4 – clearly organized, on the whole appropriate
- 3 – adequately organized, reasonable but not always appropriate
- 2 – inadequate organization, attempt to use appropriate format and register but unsuccessful, inadequate
- 1 – lack of organization, little or no awareness of appropriate format

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### 1 Vocabulary building

Work in pairs. Read the phrases and use a dictionary to explain their meaning. Then, name as many places as possible that you have visited, seen or heard of which can be described using these words.

*unique natural beauty*

*unspoilt and tranquil countryside*

*breathhtaking steep slopes*

*picturesque open-air museum*

*emerald valley*

*freshwater lake*

*vast open fields*

*dramatic rugged cliffs*

*rocky snow-covered mountains*

*spellbinding views*

*mysterious dense forest*

*grassy meadows*

*fast-flowing meandering rivers*

*magnificent historic monuments*

*cascading waterfall*

Worksheet 1

Look at the picture and imagine you are there. Write down as many sentences as you can to describe your impressions of the place. Use some of the phrases above.



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### 2 Reading

Read the article and choose the best heading.

- Where I live
- The history of Bled
- A place to remember

Worksheet 2

It's probably true that we all have places from our past that have special memories for us. Sometimes, this might be because of a special event that took place there, for example our first family holiday, a time when we broke a leg or our first kiss. For some places, it might simply be the unique natural beauty that took our breath away.

One such place for me was Lake Bled in Slovenia. The place is really one of a kind – a beautiful freshwater lake surrounded by grassy meadows and rolling hills. On a clear day you can see the peaks of some rocky, snow-covered mountains to the north, while to the west of the lake is the start of a mysterious dense forest.

The place is renowned for the tiny island in the centre of the lake with its picturesque church. To get to the church you need to take a small boat across the lake and then walk up the 99 steps that lead to the top. Crossing the lake is a beautiful experience in itself as the water is crystal clear and you can see the bottom of the lake beneath you.

Just to the north of the lake perched on dramatic rugged cliffs, overlooking the lake, is Bled Castle. From here there are some breathtaking views across the lake and the surrounding countryside. It is difficult not to fall under the spell of this unspoilt and tranquil place and it is this that makes the place absolutely unforgettable. I get the impression that it is somewhere that people love returning to relax and chill out. If you've never visited Lake Bled before, you really should plan a visit to this beautiful location.



Read the article again. How are the following things described?

- the lake at Bled
- around the lake
- the mountains north of the lake
- the forest to the west of the lake
- the church on the island
- where Bled Castle is situated
- the views from Bled Castle



## Nature and Environment

You have seen a competition in a magazine called 'Mother Nature.' Here is the competition information:



Over the last 100 years or so, much of our planet has been spoilt and destroyed by humans. We are trying to find those last few unspoilt places of beauty where people can enjoy the beauty of the natural world. We are looking for articles describing special places and why it's important to protect them. The winning entry will receive a holiday for two to the place they describe and €1,000 spending money.



Practice exam question

In your **article** you should:

- describe the place and suggest why it is unique
- summarize and explain why you find the place so spellbinding
- try to convince the reader why it should be protected

Write around **250-300 words**.