

LIFE IS A JOURNEY

VOCABULARY

Do you know the meaning of all these words? Check with a partner. If there are some that you don't know, check in a dictionary. You will need to understand these words for the next activity.

PATH

FOREST

CHURCH

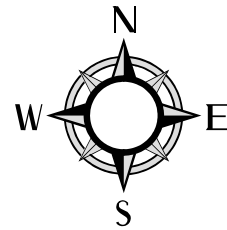
CROSSROADS

LAKE

BRIDGE

A PICTURE DICTATION

Listen to the teacher and draw the route.



LIFE IS A JOURNEY

In English, there are many words and phrases connected to life that use the metaphor of a journey. Life is like a journey, and your experiences are like different parts of a journey. Look at these spoken expressions. All of them use the key idea of journey while talking about life. First, underline the words which convey the key idea of travelling (an example has been done for you). Which expressions did you hear in the picture dictation?

The baby arrived at
6 o'clock this
morning!

I don't know where I'm
heading. My life has no
direction at the moment.

You can't just go
through life with
your eyes closed!

I set out to be a doctor,
but I liked English so
much that I became an
English teacher!

You want to know where we are
going to be this Christmas?
We'll cross that bridge when
we come to it; it's only July
now!

After university I
was at a crossroads,
and I didn't know
which way to go.

You have to move on
and forget about
what has happened.

His life took an
unexpected direction
after he met her.

My father passed
away last night. He
went in his sleep.

Her parents don't
understand her at all.
They're over the hill!

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Work with a partner or a small group of people. Choose a question and explain your answer to the others.

WHAT AGE IS "OVER THE HILL" FOR YOU?
DO YOU KNOW ANYONE WHO GOES THROUGH LIFE WITH THEIR EYES CLOSED?
HAS YOUR LIFE EVER TAKEN AN UNEXPECTED DIRECTION?
IS IT BETTER TO PLAN AHEAD IN LIFE OR TO CROSS BRIDGES WHEN YOU COME TO THEM?
HAVE YOU EVER FELT YOU WERE AT A CROSSROADS IN LIFE?
HAVE YOU EVER SET OUT TO DO SOMETHING IN LIFE, BUT THEN DONE SOMETHING COMPLETELY DIFFERENT?
HAVE YOU EVER FELT THAT YOUR LIFE WAS GOING NOWHERE?
DO ANY OF THESE METAPHORS FOR LIFE EXIST IN YOUR LANGUAGE?

LIFE IS A JOURNEY TEACHING NOTES

By Lindsay Clandfield

This is a vocabulary and idiom lesson for pre-intermediate students and above. The aim is to highlight the metaphorical meanings of several words and phrases describing life experiences. The emphasis is on meaning, with an activity to incorporate these expressions into use.

VOCABULARY

This activity is to pre-teach the vocabulary the students will need to understand to do the picture dictation. You may decide it is not necessary to spend a lot of time on this, but it is worthwhile to cover it quickly even with higher intermediate classes.

PICTURE DICTATION

Tell the students they are going to draw the map of a journey that you will dictate to them. They must continue drawing the path and add any other features of the landscape that you say. Read the dictation out slowly.

Set out from point A and take the path north. Go through the forest, and follow the path as it changes direction east. On your right you see a church, move on past it. You come to a crossroads. Head south. You come to a bridge. Cross it. You will go through a small village. After the village you pass a small lake on your left. On your way past the lake, the path goes uphill. Follow the path until you are over the hill. You come to another crossroads. Go west a little. Make a point "B" where you have arrived.

Tell students to compare with a partner. Are there many differences in their maps? Ask them to tell you the route they drew.

LIFE IS A JOURNEY

The introduction to this part of the activity highlights the metaphorical roots of many expressions about life. Go over this with the students. Then look at the speech bubbles. First ask students to go through them all quickly. Do they recognise any expressions from the picture dictation (e.g. over the hill, cross the bridge, at a crossroads)? Tell students to underline all the expressions that have a connection to the idea of travelling. The first one has been done for them. Working with another partner, ask them to speculate on what each could mean. Check back with the class. If you have a monolingual class, you could ask them to translate some of these expressions into their own language and compare translations (use the ones in boldface from the answer key below for this as these are particularly idiomatic)

ANSWERS: *where I'm heading; has no direction; go through life; set out to be a doctor; **cross that bridge when we come to it**; I was **at a crossroads**; you have to move on; took an unexpected direction; **passed away**/ went in his sleep; **over the hill**.*

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Students can work on these questions in pairs or groups of three. An alternative procedure is to cut them up and give each group a set. Each student takes it turn to take a paper at random and asks the question to someone else in the group.