

THE NATURAL WORLD teaching notes – by Lindsay Clandfield

Level: Intermediate

Aim: To present around twenty items of vocabulary pertaining to the Natural World. This vocabulary lesson also includes an activity to help students remember new difficult items of vocabulary as well as a task for them to try and incorporate some of the new words into use. As with many of the American Vocabulary Lessons, there is a cultural sub-aim to the lesson. In this case, the cultural aim is to familiarize students with some of America's most famous geographical landmarks.

Warmer

Tell the class to think about the geography of their country. What are the main geographical features? Ask them to picture a map of their country with the main geographical features on it. When they are ready tell them to turn to a partner and describe their map. You could board the following expressions to help them:

In the north/south/east/west there is/are

Circulate. Are there any words they don't know in English? Make a list of them in one corner of the board. Don't give the translations yet.

Stage one

Tell the students they are going to complete a little puzzle about the geography of the United States. Write the letters E V R I R in a circle on the board. Then say the following: Mississippi, Delaware, Potomac. Can the students guess what the scrambled letters in circle spell? The answer: river. Give out the handout and tell students to do the first exercise. Check back answers at the end.

Note: These items of vocabulary should be familiar to students. If after the exercise they still don't understand, either explain by making a small drawing on the board or give an example of one in their country.

Answers: river, mountain, lakes, island, forest, valley, ocean, desert, waterfalls

Stage two

This stage is to expand the vocabulary. Mime the verbs climb, walk and swim. Ask what you can do in a river; or a mountain? Get students to work in pairs and do the next exercise. Have dictionaries on hand for this part. Check back answers and drill pronunciation of all the words.

Answers note: There is a slight amount of subjectivity in this exercise, so more than one answer is possible in some cases. For example, you can climb a canyon or walk in a canyon. You can conceivably walk in all of the places. If the students point this out, that's fine as long as they understand the word.

When you have finished this stage, go back to the words you wrote in the Ss language from the warmer. Do they know all of them now? If not, translate the others.

Stage Three

This activity is an *aide memoire* to retain more difficult words. Do the example given with the class (you don't really need to give students this page, it can all be done on the board). Give students index cards or post-its and tell them to do the same with difficult words. When they have finished, put them around the class.

Stage Four

Write on the board: *inline skating, snowboarding, mountain-bike downhill racing, ice climbing, glacier skiing*. What are these? They are all extreme sports. Do any of your students practise extreme sports? Would they like to?

Explain the situation on the worksheet and divide the class into groups for the task. You could get them to make a poster of their extreme sport, and then present it to the class. Who gets the contract from the wealthy American company?