

Flags: Teachers' notes and tips – upper intermediate

1 Pre-reading tasks

- a Give each student a copy of the handout and ask them to draw their national flag. If students come from Vietnam, Venezuela or Mozambique suggest they draw a flag from a neighbouring country.
- b When they've finished ask students in pairs to compare their flags, if they're from the same countries are the flags drawn the same? Can they explain the significance of the colours or symbols used?
- c Open class: Do they like their flags? Do they feel patriotic about it? Are they happy to use it for special occasions including sporting events? Or on a daily basis (eg do they have one in the house/garden)?

Tip: be culturally sensitive

Although it's always good for students to personalize topics flags can be very political so keep the topic on a positive note – avoid discussing flags which students dislike.

2 First reading tasks

- a Tell students that the reading doesn't just focus on national flags, but refers to flags for other purposes too. Divide the students into groups of three. One student is A, one is B and the third is C. Give each student their appropriate reading (A, B or C) but face down so they can't see the text yet.
- b When all the students have a (face down) reading explain that they are now going to do task 2 on the task sheet. Start all the students reading at the same time.
- c When all 3 students are finished they tell each other the answers and then put their hands up. (Although in groups of 3 all the reading is done individually – they can't ask another team member to help them find the answer!) When most students have their hands up you can ask those who were first to give the answers – do the others agree? Feedback: **AF BNG CF**

Tip: encourage students to read more quickly through competitions

These tasks aim to promote faster reading, especially at this level. Having a competitive task helps – students will want to find the answer(s) as quickly as possible.

Tip: give reasons for your tasks

Explain to students, especially those who may feel these tasks are a bit immature for them, the importance of reading quickly (this helps them to get a global understanding of the text – stopping and working out unknown words or phrases will prevent students getting the overall meaning) and that you're helping them to do this. Don't leave students wondering why they're doing something. Notice which students were taking a long time over this – they need extra support.

3 Second reading tasks

- a Make sure that the students don't show each other their texts – they're still working individually (but in teams) for the next task.
- b You need to have cut up the questions which are at the end of these notes, and put them in a box or hat. There are 18 questions, 6 from each text although students do not know which question is from which text. They have, of course, read their texts already and should have an idea.

- c Decide the best way to do this according to your class: either you can take out a question, read it and the first one who puts their hand up can answer, or teams can take it in turns to answer. Or different students can read out the questions. Whatever – just make sure the rules are clear! The main aim though is that, unless students can remember, they read their texts really quickly to get the answer – no pausing over unknown words! You may want to take points away for a wrong answer to discourage students from guessing – the answers are all in the texts.

Tip: keep an eye on sleepy students!

If all the students had the same text some students wouldn't be motivated to join in. By having 3 different texts, and teams, means that the other students will be making sure all their team members are participating – that's the idea, anyway!

- d Consider a fun reward for the team with the most correct answers – perhaps miniature flags of the country you come from!

4 Post-reading tasks – speaking

- a Students have only read one text each. Get them to choose two or three interesting points and tell their team members. They may want to explain some of the questions and answers from the quiz. If there's any vocabulary they didn't understand they can ask a team member to explain.

Tip: link the reading to a speaking activity

Asking students to swap information about a text is a real-life activity.

5 Post-reading tasks – vocabulary

- a (4i) Still working in teams of 3 students find the three verbs (*wave*, *fly* and *raise*, the opposite being *lower* which is not in the texts). (4ii) Students first guess, and then find , the missing verbs. Feedback: **a** considered **b** indicates **c** features **d** signals **e** consist **f** rotate **g** influenced **h** adopted **i** assumed.

- b (4iii)    

Tip: consider different ways of helping students with vocabulary

Asking students to look at verbs after having seen them in context is often more helpful than pre-teaching them before a reading. Likewise for many students a visual explanation is much easier to remember than a verbal or written one.

For information: An AK-47 is a Russian assault rifle, also called a kalashnikov. The section of flag in picture B is from Venezuela; it was changed in March 2006 from 7 stars to 8 stars. The ICRC is the Internal Committee of the Red Cross which is partnered with the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. The new red crystal symbol looks like this:



Cut along the dotted lines and put the questions in a box.

<p>Is the chequered flag in motorcar racing used at the start and the finish? <i>No, only at the finish</i></p>	<p>What's a saltire? <i>A cross like an 'x'</i></p>
<p>Does a white flag only mean "I surrender"? <i>No, it can also be used at funerals</i></p>	<p>Which <i>state</i> has the oldest flag? <i>Denmark</i></p>
<p>What's an ensign? <i>A flag flown on a ship to show which country it belongs to</i></p>	<p>Which country's flag has more than four sides? <i>Nepal</i></p>
<p>How many ensigns should a ship arriving in a foreign port have? <i>Two</i></p>	<p>Do Morocco and Vietnam have their matching flags for the same reason? <i>No, one is Islamic and one communist</i></p>
<p>Look at picture A - the flags are red and yellow so where is the person? <i>At sea</i></p>	<p>Look at picture C - which country's flag is partly shown? <i>Mozambique's</i></p>
<p>Why would you be happy to be on a beach in Spain that has a blue flag? <i>Both the water and beach are clean</i></p>	<p>What's so unique about Libya's flag? <i>It's the only national flag that is just one plain colour</i></p>
<p>What's particular about the world map on the UN flag? <i>It's centred on the North Pole</i></p>	<p>Look at picture B - is this part of the European flag? <i>No, the stars are rotating</i></p>
<p>Who first used the red crescent as a protection symbol? <i>The Ottoman Empire</i></p>	<p>At which Games was the Olympic flag first used? <i>The Antwerp games of 1920</i></p>
<p>How many stars are on the European flag? <i>12</i></p>	<p>When was the third protection symbol introduced? <i>2005</i></p>