

Across Turkey by train: riding the Mesopotamia Express

Level 2: Intermediate – Teacher's notes

Article summary: The article describes a journey on one of the new tourist trains linking the Turkish capital, Ankara, with the east of the country.

Time: 45–60 minutes

Skills: Reading, Speaking

Language focus: Vocabulary

Materials needed: One copy of the worksheet per student

1. Warmer

- a. This activity aims to introduce the topic of railway travel. Students can answer the questions in pairs or small groups.

Key:

1. the UK (from Stockton to Darlington in the north-east of England)
2. China (to the capital of Tibet, Lhasa)
3. Russia (the Trans-Siberian railway from Moscow to the Pacific)
4. China (the train from Shanghai airport to the city)
5. the USA (many of the lines are freight only)
6. the USA (Grand Central station in New York)

2. Key words

- a. Ask students to do the exercise individually and compare their answers in pairs or small groups. Note that students may answer *semi-derelect* for item 8. This would also be correct, but it means *half-derelect*. *Crooked* may be used with any linear item that should be straight. Note that it is pronounced as two syllables.

Key:

- | | |
|-------------|----------------------|
| 1. launch | 6. perk |
| 2. berth | 7. pull into |
| 3. tier | 8. derelect |
| 4. roll out | 9. crooked |
| 5. hotspot | 10. pressed for time |

- b. Give students time to complete the sentences using the words from task A. Check answers as a class.

Key:

- | | |
|------------|-------------|
| 1. berth | 4. derelect |
| 2. crooked | 5. hotspot |
| 3. perk | |

3. Comprehension check

- a. The answers given are only suggested, and students may correctly answer the questions in different ways, e.g., in item 3, students may say, 'It only stops four times while the other train stops 52 times,' or similar.

Key:

1. True
2. False. Once a month.
3. False. It's the other way around.
4. False. It's much more expensive.
5. True
6. False. He travelled in the opposite direction.
7. True
8. True
9. True
10. False. He loved it.

4. Key language

- a. Students could be asked to do this exercise individually and then compare their answers in pairs. Encourage them to do the exercise without looking at the text but to check their answers in the text.

Key:

- | | |
|------------|---------|
| 1. between | 4. to |
| 2. at | 5. in |
| 3. for | 6. over |

- b. Give students time to reread the phrases and understand the given contexts. Remind them that different words can mean different things depending on the context they are used in. Check answers as a class.

Key:

- | | |
|-------------|----------------|
| a. 2 (at) | d. 1 (between) |
| b. 4 (to) | 5. 3 (for) |
| c. 6 (over) | 6. 5 (in) |

Across Turkey by train: riding the Mesopotamia Express

Level 2: Intermediate – Teacher's notes

- c. Allow students to write personalised sentences using the prepositions in tasks A & B. Elicit examples as a class and verify the prepositions are being used accurately.

5. Discussion

- a. Allow students time to note down their ideas about each statement and encourage them to say why they agree or disagree.

6. In your own words

- a-b. Students will use internet search engines to gather information about the Trans-Siberian Railway and present their findings to the class. Encourage them to write down key facts, interesting details, and questions.

The task could also be done as homework, and students could present their reports to the class. Summarise the key points discussed during the presentations and allow time for questions and discussions after.