

Across Turkey by train: riding the Mesopotamia Express

Level 1: Elementary / Pre-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 country's east.

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.

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.

Key:

- | | |
|------------|-------------|
| 1. runs | 6. route |
| 2. border | 7. tiny |
| 3. berth | 8. derelict |
| 4. cabin | 9. expense |
| 5. hotspot | 10. option |

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

Key:

- | | |
|-------------|----------|
| 1. berth | 4. route |
| 2. derelict | 5. tiny |
| 3. hotspot | |

3. Comprehension check

- a. Ask students to work individually to answer the questions and then compare their answers in pairs or small groups. The answers given are just examples. Students may say something different that is correct. For example, in item 6, they may say 'air-conditioning' or similar.

Key:

1. Diyarbakır
2. fifty-two times
3. 8,000 lira (£194)
4. near the border with Armenia and Georgia
5. 2019
6. air-conditioning, a sink, a door key and a fridge
7. the Great Mosque
8. because the train was late
9. the music in the dining carriage
10. three

4. Key language

- a. Ask students to compare their answers in pairs. Then ask them to check their answers in the text.

Key:

- | | |
|-------------|-------------|
| 1. Turkish | 4. Iraqi |
| 2. Armenian | 5. Georgian |
| 3. Syrian | |

- b. Have students work individually and complete the sentences using words from task A. Check answers as a class.

Key:

- | | |
|-------------|-------------|
| 1. Georgian | 4. Armenian |
| 2. Turkish | 5. Iraqi |
| 3. Syrian | |

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5. Discussion

- a. Allow students time to note down their ideas and encourage them to explain their answers.

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.