

Lesson plan | Countryside is **GREAT**

Topic: The countryside, National Parks and UK rural attractions

Learning outcomes:

- Use vocabulary related to describing landscapes
- Explain the function of national parks and give some facts about national parks in the UK
- Identify specific details in a spoken text about national parks in the UK
- Identify specific details in a written text about a countryside attraction in the UK
- Write a text about a countryside attraction

Age and level: 13-17, Adults (B1+)

Time: 55-70 minutes + optional extension activity

Materials:

- Presentation OR student worksheet
- Task 3 texts (1 x 4 students)
- Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-zDNMqeeQrc>
- Photos of peat bogs, heaths and moors (optional)
- Photos of Loch Ness, Giant's Causeway, Powis Castle, Stonehenge (optional)

Introduction:

This lesson is about the countryside and, in particular, national parks and rural attractions in the UK. Students begin by comparing a picture of a UK landscape to familiar landscapes, then think about the role of national parks. They watch a video and learn some information about UK national parks, then read texts about four different countryside attractions in the UK. They can finish by researching and writing a text about a local or UK-based countryside attraction. Suggestions are made for a potential project.

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Teachers can use either a presentation or student worksheet for this lesson. They will also need copies of the four reading texts for Task 3 (1 x four students).

Procedure:

Lead-in (10 mins)

- Show **slide 2** of the presentation or refer students to the **Lead-in** activity in the student worksheet. Ask them to describe what they can see in the picture. Note that the structure is a viaduct – a bridge which supports a railway or road.
- Explain that the picture shows a scene in Scotland. Ask how the landscape in the picture is similar or different to the landscape where students are from or live.
- Show **slide 3** of the presentation or refer students to **questions 1-4** in the student worksheet.
- Students discuss questions 1-4 in small groups. Invite some students to share their answers for questions 3 and 4 with the class. Elicit some factors which threaten rural areas e.g. construction, pollution, some farming practices, pesticides, climate change etc. Elicit ideas for how we can preserve the countryside.
- Suggest that national parks help to preserve the countryside. Explain that students will learn about national parks in the UK in this lesson.

Task 1: Introduction to UK's National Parks (10 mins)

- Show **slide 4** of the presentation or refer students to **Task 1** in the student worksheet.
- Students read the sentences and guess the mistakes. Check answers:
 1. There are 15 National Parks in the UK, 10 in England, **2** in Scotland and **3** in Wales.
 2. **All** the parks are designated protected landscapes, but each park is different and administered by its own authority.

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3. People live and work in the parks, and anyone can visit **at any time of the year** for free.
4. The UK's National Parks receive more than **100** million visits a year.

Task 2: Video (10-15 mins)

- Explain that students will watch a video showing the UK's National Parks. In the video, each second of a walk through the parks represents one second of how they appear from above.
- Show **slide 5** of the presentation or refer students to **Task 2** in the student worksheet. If you are using the presentation, ask students to quickly copy the table into their notebooks.
- Explain that the left-hand side of the table lists the kind of landscapes in the UK's National Parks. The figures in the right-hand column represent the percentage of each different type of landscape. Students must match them as they watch and listen to the video.
- Review the kinds of landscape in the left-hand column as this may not be familiar to students. If possible, show pictures of peat bogs (a type of wetland made up of decayed plant materials), heaths and moors (open landscapes with no trees).
- Play the video 'UK National Parks in 100 seconds':
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-zDNMgeeQrc>



- Have students compare their answers and if necessary, play the video again. Check answers: crops = 6%; peat bogs = 12%; woods and forests = 14%; grasslands = 15%; heaths and moors = 22%; pastures for sheep and cows = 24%

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- Invite students to respond to the landscapes in the video. Again, they can compare with landscapes they know, and say if they would like to be one of the 100 million visitors.
- If there is time, students can discuss the following questions in groups or as a whole class:
 - Are there any national parks in your country (i.e. areas which are protected)?
 - What are they like? Have you visited them?
 - Do you think it is important for a government to spend money on national parks?

Task 3: Preparing for reading and information-gap activity (5-10 mins)

- Show **slide 6** of the presentation or refer students to **Task 3** in the student worksheet.
- Explain that apart from national parks, there are many other countryside attractions in the UK. They will learn about four of them: Loch Ness, Giant's Causeway, Powis Castle and Stonehenge. If possible, show some photos of the attractions. This will help students to understand the texts more.
- Before they read, give students time to read questions 1-16 and check that they understand them. Some students may have some answers at this point.

Task 4: Reading and information gap activity (20-25 mins)

- Divide the class into four groups: A, B, C, D. Give each group the corresponding text i.e. Text A to Group A, Text B to Group B and so on.
- In their groups, students read the text (using a dictionary if necessary) and find and answer the questions that relate to their text. Walk around the room and help where necessary. Note: Text A = questions 1, 6, 8, 15; Text B = questions 5, 9, 11, 12; Text C = questions 2, 4, 7, 13; Text D = questions 3, 10, 14, 16
- Now make new groups. Each group should include a representative from Group A, Group B, Group C and Group D. In their new groups, students ask and find answers for all 16 questions.

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- Check answers with the whole group: 1 37 kms long; 2 nearly 200,000 a year; 3 1986; 4 deer, foxes, badgers; 5 walk around rocks, have a guided tour, watch birds; 6 golf, fishing, hiking, marathon, boat cruise; 7 see collections in the house and museum, explore the gardens; spot animals; 8 lake, it's in the Scottish Highlands; 9 volcanic activity; 10 the sun lines up with the monument; 11 a giant built a bridge across the Irish Sea to Scotland; 12 north coast of Northern Ireland; 13 central Wales near the border with England; 14 in Wiltshire, south of England, 4000-5000 years old; 15 the legendary Loch Ness monster; 16 the Crown (institution including the monarch and government)
- Review any problematic vocabulary in the texts.
- Ask students to consider which of the attractions they would most like to visit and why. They discuss in their groups. When they are ready, ask everyone in the class to vote to find out the most popular attraction.

Task 5: (Optional extension activity) Write a text or make a leaflet

- Ask students to think about the texts they read in Task 4. Elicit the kind of information included: the name and location of the attraction, its history / creation, statistics (e.g. size); wildlife living there; activities for visitors; popularity; interesting facts including myths and legends.
- In pairs or small groups, students choose a countryside attraction. This could be a local one or one in the UK. They research the attraction and write a text about it, similar to the texts they read in the lesson. They could carry out research for homework and write the text next lesson.
- Students read each other's texts. They could add pictures and make a display.
- Alternatively, if you have time and your students are interested in the topic, they could create a leaflet or webpage about a countryside attraction. Look at some leaflets / webpages before they begin and elicit the kind of information on such pages. Students could add pictures to the leaflet / webpage and share it with classmates.