

Describing a city

Topic

Regional geography / Cities

Learning outcomes

- Develop academic skills i.e. note-taking
- Identify key information in a short spoken and / or written academic text about a city
- Use vocabulary related to describing the geography, climate, population and economy of a city
- Write a text describing the geography, climate, population and / or economy of a city

Age and level

13-17, Adults (B1+)

Time

60-70 minutes plus 30+ minutes writing project

Materials

- Presentation OR
- Student worksheet and Reading text
- Photos of Vancouver, map showing location of Vancouver (optional)

Introduction

This lesson plan offers the teacher and learners the opportunity to develop both content and language knowledge to an appropriate depth over a single lesson or a series of class hours.

Learners begin the lesson by saying what they know about a city (Vancouver) and predicting language and information that is likely to be in short texts describing the city's geography, climate, population and

economy. They listen to and / or read the texts to check their predictions and make notes. They focus on the language used in the texts to write their own academic texts describing a city.

Teachers can copy a student worksheet and reading text to accompany this lesson. Alternatively, they can use a presentation for a no-printing option.

Procedure

Lead-in (5-10 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show slide 2 of the presentation, or a similar photo of Vancouver. Ask learners if they know which city it is. If they have no idea, you could give some clues e.g. it's in Canada, it's in British Columbia, it's on the west coast etc. • After the class has established that the photo shows Vancouver, ask learners to say what they know about the city, and / or what the photo tells them about the city. They can do this in groups or as a whole class. If they work in groups, ask each group to give some information about the city e.g. It's a major city in Canada, it's a port, it's surrounded by mountains etc. • If possible, show where Vancouver is on a map or online.
Task 1: Predicting content (10 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show slide 3 of the presentation or refer learners to Task 1 in the student worksheet. • Explain that learners will listen to / read texts about Vancouver. Before they listen / read they should make notes about what they think they will hear / read. They can make the notes in the framework provided or in any other kind of framework that they know (e.g. flow, tree or star diagram). You can find some examples here: https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/professional-development/teachers/knowning-subject/articles/graphic-organisers • Learners organise their notes according to the categories of location, climate, population and economy. They can write words, phrases or facts they expect to hear / read. If you have time, learners could compare their predictions in pairs.
Task 2: Listening / reading to confirm expectations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain that learners will listen to texts about the location, climate and population of Vancouver. As they listen, they should correct their predictions and add any information that they learn for each category in the table. • Read the following two paragraphs aloud:

<p>(10 minutes)</p>	<p>Location and climate</p> <p>Vancouver is located in the southwest corner of Canada in the province of British Columbia, at about 49° latitude and 123° longitude, next to the Pacific Ocean. Vancouver is surrounded by water on three sides and overlooked by the Coast Range mountains that rise abruptly to more than 1,500m. Its climate is one of the mildest in Canada. Temperatures average 3°C in January and 18°C in July. Vancouver's average annual precipitation is 1,219 mm. Most rainfall occurs in winter.</p> <p>Population</p> <p>With a population of about 662,248 (according to the 2021 census), Vancouver lies in an urban area of more than 2 million people. Vancouver is the largest city in the province of British Columbia and the third largest metropolitan area in Canada. The metropolitan area covers more than 900 square kilometres.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you prefer not to read aloud, you can show slide 4 or hand out a copy of the Reading text. Learners then read the paragraphs to check their predictions and add extra information to the table. • Again, learners can compare their notes.
<p>Task 3: Language focus (10 minutes)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show slide 4 of the presentation or hand out copies of the Reading text worksheet. • Ask learners to note or underline vocabulary or phrases which would be useful when writing a text about the location, population and climate of a city. Examples: is located in / is surrounded by / rise to more than / temperatures average / average precipitation is / most rainfall occurs in / lies in an urban area of / covers more than etc. • Check that learners understand these words and phrases, for example by asking them to use the phrases in relation to a city they know well. They do not need to provide exact facts.
<p>Task 4: Vocabulary (10 minutes)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show slide 5 of the presentation or refer learners to Task 4 in the student worksheet. • Explain that learners are going to read a text about the economy of Vancouver and the text has these words.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In pairs learners discuss the meanings of the words (in the context of a text about economy), using a dictionary if necessary. • Review the meanings: primary (main); expanded (got bigger, became more important), range (a number / an amount), domestic (relating to own country), network (system which connects things), output (amount produced), located (situated), diversified (including lots of different things), generate (create), partners (people / organisations you are involved with)
Task 5: Reading (15-20 mins)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Show slide 6 of the presentation or refer learners to Task 5 in the student worksheet. • Individually or in pairs, learners complete the text with the words in Task 4. If looking at the slide, learners just need to write the words in order. There is no need to write the whole text. • Review answers with the whole class. The order is: network, primary, diversified, partners, generate, domestic, output, expanded, located, range • Review unfamiliar vocabulary. Ask some questions to check understanding of the text e.g.: Why is the port so important? What kinds of companies have office space in the city? What kinds of businesses have been based in Vancouver in recent years? How does the river contribute to the economy? • Ask learners to check the information in the text against their predictions in Task 2. They should add some important facts about the economy to the table. They may also be able to add information to the other categories e.g. it has a river (The River Fraser) and is surrounded by forests.
7. Writing project (30+ minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This task could be the final task of a longer lesson or could be part of a second lesson. If this is the case, learners could carry out research for homework. • In this task, learners write about another city and present their information to the class or within groups (if you have a large class). • Depending on the level of your learners, they could choose a city and write about its location, climate, population and economy; or you could choose a city as a class and then different learners / groups write about different areas. It may be interesting to choose a port to contrast with Vancouver – a local one, or one of the most important ports in the world such as Shanghai, Singapore, Busan, Rotterdam, Jebal Ali etc.

- In pairs, groups or individually, learners research the city, and write about it. Remind them this is an academic text and should focus on factual information. Encourage learners to use vocabulary and phrases from the texts about Vancouver. Walk around as learners work and help where necessary.
- They could present what they have learned about the city. They could display their writing – perhaps with pictures – for others to read.

Adapted from a lesson contributed by

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