

e-lesson

Week beginning: 24th July 2006

Bhutan

The subject of this week's lesson is Bhutan, a small Buddhist country in the Himalayas. It is distinguished by its geographical and cultural isolation: it has only had television since 1999, and its capital city, Thimphu, has the distinction of not containing a single traffic light. The country celebrates its independence day on 8th August.

Level

Pre-intermediate and above

How to use the lesson

1. Brainstorm what your students know about Bhutan. (It might not be much, so be prepared to widen the net by asking about the Himalayas, Buddhism, etc!)
2. Divide the students into pairs and give them 5-10 minutes to read through the text on Worksheet A. Tell them they are going to have to fill the gaps with appropriate words. You could perhaps encourage them to guess what those words might be.
3. When the time is up, hand out Worksheet B and give the students another 5-10 minutes to fill the gaps using the correct words from the box. Make it clear that (a) there is only one possible word to fill each gap, and (b) there are sixteen words in the box but only twelve gaps in the text, meaning that four of the words should not be used.
4. Once the students have finished this activity, check answers in open class. Then give students at least 10 minutes to complete the second exercise on Worksheet B, in which they have to refer to the text on Worksheet A in order to formulate the questions that would produce the eight answers given. Note that it is possible for there to be slight variations for each question.
5. Check answers in open class.

Answers

Part A (gap-fill)

exists
between
size
as
smaller
disasters
culture
allowed
guide
amazing
looks
only

(Unused words: mountain, Buddhists, animal, idea)

Part B (provide questions to produce the answers given)

1. What is the national sport of Bhutan?
2. Are there any traffic lights in Thimphu?
3. Where is Bhutan?
4. When did the internet arrive in Bhutan?
5. What can tourists/visitors do in Bhutan?
6. Where do most Bhutanese people live?
7. Can foreign tourists/visitors travel around Bhutan independently?
8. How big is Bhutan?

2. Related Websites

Send your students to these websites, or just take a look yourself.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/country_profiles/1166513.stm

Comprehensive Bhutan country profile from the BBC. Lots of basic information about the country, plus links to some interesting BBC articles. Intermediate level and above.

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/4332357.stm

A BBC article about the introduction of television in Bhutan. Intermediate level and above.

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/worldguide/index.cfm?objectid=A94839DD-F692-2F8E-DF2FB0037FF45B17>

Lonely Planet pages on Bhutan. Intermediate level and above.

<http://www.kingdomofbhutan.com/>

Official website of the Bhutan Tourism Corporation. Contains a few good photos, as well as conveying a sense of the government's ambivalence towards tourism! Upper-intermediate and above.