

Dubai's new giant

The subject of this week's lesson is the world's tallest building, the 828-metre Burj Khalifa tower in Dubai, which was officially inaugurated in the first week of January this year.

Level

Upper-intermediate and above (equivalent to CEF level B2 and above)

How to use the lesson

1. Ask your students to name some famous buildings around the world, and to say what they know about them. Do they know what the tallest building in their country is? What about the tallest building in the world? Have any of your students ever been to the top of a particularly tall building? If so, what was the view like?
2. Give each student in the class a copy of Worksheet A and give them five to ten minutes to read through it, encouraging them to look up new vocabulary. Tell the students it is important that they try to remember as much of the information as possible.
3. Tell the students they are going to prepare a quiz for each other. Then divide the class into two teams, A and B.
4. Cut Worksheet B in half and give each member of each team the corresponding half. Explain that each team has to work together in order to formulate the questions that produce the answers given, based on the text on Worksheet A. Note that it is possible for there to be slight variations of each question.
5. When both teams have finished preparing their questions, ask them to turn over Worksheet A and the glossary so that they can't see them.
6. The two teams now take it in turns to ask and answer the questions. Encourage the teams to confer before answering, but make it clear that once they have given their answer they cannot change it. You should only accept answers given in correct English. Keep the score on the board; the team with more correct answers at the end of the quiz wins.
7. Ask the students to keep their copies of Worksheet A turned over so that they can't see the text. Then divide the students into pairs and ask them to attempt Exercise 2 on Worksheet C, which contains the text from Worksheet A with twenty incorrect words that they have to identify and correct. The words containing the mistakes are all in bold, as are five other words that are correct. Point out that the mistakes are all grammatical or lexical, and that no correction requires them to write more than one additional word.
8. Check answers in open class.

Answers:

Exercise 1

Team A

1. In what part/region of the world is Dubai situated?
2. What began in 2004?
3. How tall is the Dubai Khalifa tower?
4. From how far away is it possible to see the tower (on clear days)?
5. How many floors does the tower have?
6. What two countries is the United Arab Emirates next to?
7. How many territories make up the United Arab Emirates?
8. (Approximately) how tall is the Great Pyramid of Giza?

Team B

1. Where is the Taipei 101 tower?
2. What was the tallest building in the world 100 years ago?
3. What country is Dubai part of?
4. What was the tallest building/man-made structure for 4,000 years (between about 2,500 BC and the 14th century AD)?
5. What was the Burj Khalifa known as while it was being built?
6. What will there be on the 158th floor?
7. What were there hundreds of on the night when the tower was inaugurated?
8. (Approximately) how tall is the Taipei 101 tower?

Exercise 2

1. fireworks 3. make up 4. situated 6. measures 7. base 8. former 9. latter
10. according to 12. mosque 13. thanks to 14. lifts 15. ensure 16. stable
17. engineers 18. higher 20. France 21. Pyramid 22. man-made 23. BC
25. alongside

Words in bold that are correct: 2. territories 5. inaugurated 11. in honour of
19. inhabited 24. AD

2. Related Websites

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

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

The official website of the Burj Dubai/Khalifa. Intermediate level and above.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/business/8439618.stm>

A BBC News report on the tower's inauguration (January 2010), including a video of the fireworks display. Intermediate level and above.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/artanddesign/2010/jan/04/dubai-tower-opening>

An article in British newspaper *The Guardian* from shortly before the opening of the tower, with a link to a collection of photographs. Challenging for intermediate level.