

e-lesson

Week starting: September 28, 2009

1. The Tube

This week's lesson is about the oldest and possibly the most famous underground train network in the world, the London "tube."

Level

Intermediate and above (equivalent to CEF level B1 and above).

How to use the lesson

1. If there is an underground train network in your students' country/city, ask them to describe its size and to say what they know about its history. Which cities' underground systems have they seen in movies or TV programs, and what have they noticed about them? Where would they guess the world's oldest underground train network is? What do they know about the London network?
2. Give your students five to ten minutes to read through Worksheet A, encouraging them to look up new vocabulary. Tell them they are going to answer questions on the text, but that they shouldn't write anything down at this stage.
3. Divide the students into pairs, hand out Worksheet B, and ask them to work together to complete the crossword.
4. Check answers in open class.
5. Keeping students in their pairs, tell them that for the second exercise they are going to look at some statements about the London tube and decide if they are true or false. They are then going to have to "bet" anything from 10 to 50 points on their guesses.
6. Give each pair a copy of Worksheet C, and ask them to read and discuss the statements. In the first column, after the statement, they should write *T* (true) or *F* (false). In the second column, they have to write the number of points they are willing to bet on their answer (10 points if they are forced to guess, going up to 50 if they are very confident about the answer).
7. After the pairs have given their answers, it's time to score. Each pair calls out their answer and how many points they have bet. If they have answered correctly, students enter their points in the final column (points won). If they have answered incorrectly, they should enter their points in the third column (points lost). At the end, students subtract the total of the third column from the total of the fourth column to give the total number of points they have won. The pair with the most points wins.

Answers

Exercise 1

1. grumble 2. maintenance 3. tunnels 4. underground 5. loudspeaker 6. map 7. hours 8. eleven 9. ridiculous 10. complaints 11. passengers 12. signs

If the sentences have been completed correctly, *Metropolitan* will read from top to bottom.

Exercise 2

1. **False.** British people usually refer to the London underground train network either as the “underground” or the “tube”: “metro” has never been in common usage.
2. **True.** The Central Line, connecting the western and eastern edges of London, is 74 kilometers long.
3. **False.** Though most British homes are carpeted, London tube trains aren’t!
4. **False.** Leicester Square and Covent Garden stations on the Piccadilly Line, for example, are less than 500 meters apart.
5. **True.** There are more than 400 escalators.
6. **False.** There are more than 13,000 staff.
7. **True.** Smoking is not permitted on any form of public transportation in Britain.
8. **True.**
9. **True.** The newest of the eleven, the Jubilee Line, opened in 1979 (and the second newest, the Victoria Line, opened in 1968).
10. **False.** There is no new line scheduled for 2011, and even if there were, it probably wouldn’t be named in honor of David Beckham!

2. Related websites

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

<http://www.tfl.gov.uk/modalpages/2625.aspx>

The London Underground section of the Transport for London website. Accessible to intermediate level.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/London_Underground

The Wikipedia entry for the tube, which contains a link to a separate entry about its iconic map. Challenging for intermediate level.

<http://www.thelondonpaper.com/thelondonpaper/news/london/news/boris-johnson-orders-thames-to-be-reinstated-on-tube-map>

A recent article (September 2009) from a local newspaper, *The London Paper*, on the mayor of London’s participation in the outcry at changes to the tube map. Challenging for intermediate level.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/london/8020042.stm>

An article on the BBC website (2009) about the tube having been voted the best underground train network in Europe. Challenging for intermediate level.