

1. Jeans

This week's lesson is about the enormously popular denim trousers, worn almost everywhere in the world, whose name in English originates from the fact that they used to form part of the uniform of Genoese sailors.

Level

Pre-intermediate and above (equivalent to CEF level A2–B1 and above)

How to use the lesson

1. There is little scope for prior discussion, as the first task will be for the students to guess the subject of the lesson by reading the main text.
2. Tell your students that they are going to have to identify the subject of the lesson by reading a text. Then divide the students into pairs, hand out Worksheet A, and give them between five and ten minutes to read through the text, encouraging them to look up new vocabulary. When the time is up, ask the students what the text is describing. (A small piece of information missing from the text is that the French word for Genoa is *Gênes*: it was omitted because it would have been a giveaway!)
3. At this point, you might want to discuss jeans with the class. How often do your students wear jeans? In what situations, if any, would they never wear jeans? Are jeans truly international, or are they much more popular in some countries than in others? Are there any places/situations in the students' country in which nowadays people might wear jeans, but in the past they would have worn something more formal?
4. Divide the class into two teams, A and B, and tell the students they are going to prepare a quiz for each other. 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 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 turns asking and answering 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 score on the board; the team with more correct answers at the end of the quiz wins.
7. Before the next exercise, you need to cut Worksheet C into two halves. Divide the students into pairs, Student A and Student B, and hand out the halves of the worksheet so that Student A's grid has the words that Student B's grid is missing, and vice versa. The idea is for the students to *describe* the words they have in their grids so that their partners can guess what they are, and then fill them in. It is therefore vital that they don't show their grids to their partners. Tell the students to describe the words one by one, and to take turns speaking. You could let the students continue describing the words for as long as it takes for their partners to identify them, or you could impose a time limit. Before the students begin, point out that all the missing words feature in the text on Worksheet A.
8. Check answers in open class.

Answers:

Exercise 1

Team A

1. Where does the word “jeans” come from?
2. How many pairs of jeans does the average American have?
3. What were jeans called before/until about 1960?
4. What is indigo?
5. What is denim?
6. Where is Nîmes?
7. When were jeans associated with rebellious young people (in the United States)?
8. Why do some factories damage some denim/jeans?

Team B

1. What uniform were jeans part of (in Genoa and the United States)?
2. What are jeans made from?
3. What did sailors / farm workers / cowboys / prisoners use jeans for?
4. What do some factories use to damage denim/jeans?
5. Where is Genoa?
6. What region/country did jeans use to be associated with (during part of the twentieth century)?
7. Where does the word “denim” come from?
8. When/Where would you probably *not* wear jeans?

Exercise 2

1. sailor 2. worker 3. rebellious 4. sand 5. navy 6. dye 7. factory 8. hole
9. pair 10. leisure 11. average 12. casual

When the grid has been completed correctly, *skinny* and *flares* will read from top to bottom. You should perhaps explain what the words mean: skinny jeans are narrow, hugging the leg tightly all the way down to the ankle; while flares become wider at the bottom. An exaggerated version of flares, “bell-bottoms,” were popular in the 1970s.

2. Related websites

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

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jeans>

The Wikipedia entry on jeans. Accessible to Pre-intermediate level.

<http://www.madehow.com/Volume-1/Blue-Jeans.html>

An educational article about how jeans are made. Challenging for Pre-intermediate level.

<http://www.newint.org/features/1998/06/05/facts/>

The negative side of the manufacture and consumption of jeans, from *New Internationalist* magazine. Challenging for Pre-intermediate level.