

1. Countries challenge!

This week's lesson contains exercises based on information about various different countries.

Level

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

How to use the lesson

1. Ask your students to describe any foreign countries they have visited, and/or to say what countries they would like to visit in future. If they were able to have, say, a six-month, all-expenses-paid trip around the world, where would they go, what would they like to do, and why? You could perhaps introduce some of the lesson's glossary vocabulary – *population, flag, coastline, named after* etc – by helping the students to use it to describe their own country.
2. Put the students into pairs and hand out Worksheet A (only). As a preliminary exercise you could perhaps fold the worksheets so that the table at the top is hidden, and see if the students know any of the countries that are being described before unfolding the paper and seeing the names of the possible countries. Give the students sufficient time to read the information and, through discussion with their partners, to try to match countries in the table with the twelve descriptions. Make sure the students understand that four of the sixteen countries in the table will not be used. As this exercise is very challenging, stress that it is just for fun, and don't expect students to know all of the answers.
3. Check answers in open class. (When going through the answers you could also provide a little extra information so as to aid the students' understanding of how the countries match the descriptions – see the *Answers* section on the next page.)
4. Keeping the students in their pairs, hand out Worksheet B and ask the students to complete the crossword, which is based on the correct answers to Exercise 1.
5. Check answers in open class.
6. Ask the students to turn over their copies of Worksheet A or to hand them back to you temporarily. Keeping them in their pairs, hand out Worksheet C and give them at least another five minutes to find and correct the mistakes. Each description contains two mistakes. Point out that the mistakes are all grammatical or lexical, that most corrections only require the students to change a word, and that no correction requires them to write more than one additional word.
7. Check answers in open class.

Answers:

Exercise 1

1. Finland (The Finnish language is not closely related to other European languages, apart from Estonian and Hungarian. Outside Finland there are some Finnish speakers in Sweden, Russia and Estonia, but very few elsewhere.)
 2. South Sudan (Sudan, from which it split in July 2011, was Africa's largest country. It is now second-largest behind Algeria.)
 3. The Philippines (The country was a colony of Spain and its name comes from that of Prince Felipe of Asturias.)
 4. Burundi
 5. Cape Verde
 6. Georgia (The flags of England and Georgia are not identical but both have a red cross on a white background.)
 7. England (In geographical terms it is the *smallest* county to have won the World Cup, though the *least populous* country to have done so is Uruguay.)
 8. Cyprus
 9. New Zealand
 10. Algeria (Since the break-up of Sudan it is not only the largest Arabic-speaking country but also the largest country in Africa.)
 11. Switzerland
 12. Brazil (Brazil is the only Portuguese-speaking country in South America; the language of most of its neighbours is Spanish.)
- Countries not described: Angola, Sweden, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia

Exercise 2

1. larger 2. Portuguese 3. smaller 4. flags 5. Italy 6. Maori 7. second
8. Brazil 9. island 10. population 11. independent 12. Finland

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

Exercise 3

1. This country, although one of the largest in Europe, has a population of only about five and a half **million**. It has lots of lakes. Its language is one that not many foreigners speak.
2. This is the world's **newest** country as it has only **been** independent since July 2011. It was previously part of Africa's largest country.
3. This country consists of more than 7,000 islands and has a population of almost 95 million. It used to be a colony of a **European** country and was named after a **prince** of that country in the 16th century.
4. This is one of the smallest and poorest countries in Africa. Its official languages **are** Kirundi and French. One of the countries it has a **border** with is Rwanda.

5. This is a very small country consisting of a few islands in **the** Atlantic Ocean, about 600 kilometres from the coast of Africa. **Its** people speak Portuguese.
6. This country has a coastline on the Black Sea, one of the countries it **has** a border with is Turkey, and its flag is quite **similar** to the flag of England.
7. This is the smallest country ever to have **won** the football **World Cup**.
8. This country is **an** island whose coastline is popular with **foreign** tourists. Its flag is very unusual because the shape of the country appears on it.
9. This country is English-speaking and its most **popular** sport is rugby. The people living there before the first Europeans, the Maori, **are** now about 15% of the population.
10. This is the **world's** largest Arabic-**speaking** country.
11. French, German and Italian are this country's three **main** official languages. The two colours on its flag **are** red and white. It has lots of mountains.
12. This is the **fifth**-largest country in the world and has the fifth-largest population. Its people speak a different language **from** the people of any of the nine countries it has borders with.

2. Related websites

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

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/country_profiles/default.stm

The 'Country Profiles' section of the BBC website. Challenging for Pre-intermediate level.

<http://www.worldatlas.com>

One of numerous online world atlases. Challenging for Pre-intermediate level.

<http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/travel/countries>

The *National Geographic* website's country section, which includes photo galleries and country quizzes. Accessible to Pre-intermediate level.