

TECHNICKÁ UNIVERSITA V LIBERCI

FAKULTA PEDAGOGICKÁ

Katedra anglického jazyka  
Dálkové studium

VYUČOVÁNÍ ANGLO–AMERICKÝCH REÁLÍÍ  
NA STŘEDNÍCH ŠKOLÁCH

TEACHING LIFE AND INSTITUTIONS  
AT SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Autor: Ing. Marie Steblová  
Adresa: Na Radouči 1 076  
293 01 Mladá Boleslav

Vedoucí práce: PaedDr. Zuzana Šaffková, CSc.

Počet	Stran	Obrázků	Tabulek	Příloh
	69	0	0	4

V Liberci dne 8. ledna 1988

## Abstract

### Prohlášení o původnosti práce:

Prohlašuji, že jsem diplomovou práci vypracovala samostatně a že jsem uvedla veškerou použitou literaturu.

V Liberci dne 8. ledna 1998

Tento profesionální projekt je založen na změně přístupu k výuce amerických reálií na středních školách. Tento předmět má na středních školách doplňkový charakter. Pokud se vyučuje, tak jenom s cílem připravit k maturitě. Profesionální projekt prokázal, že studenti mají zájem o americký jazyk a studium a tento projekt by měl být využit k daleko efektivnějšímu vyučování tohoto předmětu.

Děkuji paní PaedDr. Zuzaně Šaffkové, CSc. Za její pomoc a trpělivost při zrodu této práce.

## Abstract

This Professional Project is based on changing the approach to teaching Life and Institutions at secondary schools. Teaching Life and Institutions has rather a marginal character. If it is taught, its main goal is to prepare students for "maturita". This Professional Project confirmed that students are interested in the countries whose language they study. This project should be used for a more effective approach to teaching this subject.

Tento profesionální projekt je založen na změně přístupu k výuce angloamerických reálií na středních školách. Tento předmět má na středních školách spíše doplňkový charakter. Pokud se vyučuje, tak jenom s cílem připravit studenty k maturitě. Profesionální projekt prokázal, že studenti mají zájem o země, jejichž jazyk studují a tento projekt by měl být využit k daleko efektivnějšímu systému výuky tohoto předmětu.

Dieses professionelle Projekt beruht sich auf den veränderten Zutritt zu dem Unterricht der angloamerikanischen Landeskunde. Diese Fachrichtung hat zur Zeit an den Oberschulen mehr Ergänzungscharakter. Falls sie unterrichtet wird, dann nur mit dem Ziel, die Schüler zum Abitur vorzubereiten. Das professionelle Projekt hat nachgewiesen, daß bei den Schülern das Interesse für die Länder, deren Sprache sie studieren, vorkommt. Dieses Projekt sollte zum wesentlich effizienteren Unterrichtssystem dieser Fachrichtung verwendet werden.

## Thesis Statement

A suitable choice of materials, interesting topics and variety of activities based on skill work in teaching Life and Institutions can contribute to increase of students' motivation and thus better understanding of the subject.

Chapter I. Academic	1
A. Subject	1
1. The importance of the knowledge of foreign languages after the year 1989 in our country	1
2. Lack of knowledge of English speaking countries at secondary commercial school	2
3. Evaluation of students' knowledge of the English speaking countries	4
B. The purpose of my Professional Project	5
1. Textbooks and other materials	6
2. My experience	8
C. Theory	9
D. Methodology	12



Chapter II: Professional Project	17
A. Basis for the project design	17
B. Practical implementation of the project	19
1. Description of the students	19
2. Lesson plans and reflections on them	20
Chapter III: Conclusion	47
A. The theoretical basis of the practical investigation	48
B. Summary	53

## Chapter I: Academic

### **A. SUBJECT**

#### 1. The Importance of the Knowledge of Foreign Languages after the Year 1989 in Our Country

The importance of learning foreign languages has increased enormously in harmony with huge economic, political, and cultural changes since 1989. After 40 years, contacts with the Western world were resumed and our country opened to the world.

Before 1989 nearly 75% of foreign trade operations were made among so-called Eastern Block countries (Poland, Hungary, Bulgaria, Romania, East Germany and the USSR). Now the ratio is opposite: 25% - 30% of our business contacts are made with the post-communist countries and the rest make up about 75% with the West European and overseas countries. Our economy became more and more connected with European Economic Community countries. Foreign capital investments have been put in joint ventures in our country.

This situation requires a completely new view of the preparation of experts who would be able to operate either political, economic, or social matters of our society. Education is one of the most important spheres of such preparation and teaching languages is its inseparable part.

First of all, a foreign language, mainly the English language, has become a necessity for people to communicate with foreigners due to the huge boom in

travel. Then, the English language has become a precondition for the provision of the international trade, banking and finance. Finally, the knowledge of a foreign language enables people to learn more about the culture, the history and the life of other countries.

In secondary commercial schools, where students are prepared for working in trade and banking, teaching the English language should meet the requirements both of the primary and secondary functions of language acquisition. It means that secondary commercial school students should master the language so that they could communicate it and use it in their future professions as well.

## 2. Lack of Knowledge of the English Speaking Countries at Secondary Commercial School

What is the main content of the English language teaching at secondary schools? First of all, students become familiar with the grammar of English language, they systematically extend their vocabulary, they read and write in English, and practise conversation and speaking. After that students get some knowledge about the countries the language of which they study. However, teaching the life and culture of the English speaking countries should not be a marginal subject at secondary schools. Especially commercial school students, who are supposed to work in foreign trade and other similar businesses, should know basic facts of politics, economy, culture and life-style of these countries.

During my teaching practice at secondary schools, I realized that the general



knowledge of the English speaking countries is not sufficient. The subject commonly called Life and Institutions is taught at secondary commercial school mainly as a preparation for the school leaving exam. Moreover, there are not many suitable materials for learning Life and Institutions. Students are trained mostly in grammar, writing and other skills but Life and Institutions is taken as a “necessary evil.”

For the purpose of this diploma thesis I decided to find out the average knowledge at an “average” secondary commercial school class and thus support my assumption that the subject Life and Institutions is quite neglected.

I decided to draw up a questionnaire in order to know more about the level of knowledge of my students (see appendix 4). I chose several basic facts from geographical, historical and political spheres. I asked the students to complete the questionnaire, which was anonymous, thus nobody had to be afraid of bad grades.

I questioned 29 students from the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. I helped them with the translation of some expressions from the questionnaire. Students’ responses differed and despite a few correct answers, their knowledge was erratic and limited as it is obvious from the following:

- 29% of students were mistaken in the question where the Statue of Liberty is.
- They either did not know or they thought it is in London (see appendix 4).
- On the other hand all students responded correctly to the question what the capital of Canada is.



- 28% of students thought that the first American president was Abraham Lincoln.
- Very few students knew where Stratford-upon-Avon is. 46% thought that it is in Ireland, New Zealand or other countries of the British Commonwealth.
- 43% of students did not know that Hyde Park is in London.
- Only 55% and 53% of students did not know the capital cities of Northern Ireland and Wales.

### 3. Evaluation of Students' Knowledge of the English Speaking Countries

Two conclusions from the evaluation of the questionnaire can be drawn:

First of all, it is evident that students have some knowledge about the English speaking countries. They travel abroad, they watch geographical TV programs, films etc. For example, nearly all the students knew that Congress belonged to the U.S.A., the House of Lords to Great Britain, Grand Canyon and Rocky Mountains to the U.S.A. Surprisingly, all the students knew that the capital of Canada is Ottawa and they placed Buckingham Palace and Washington Monument to the "right" countries.

On the other hand, the evaluation of the questionnaire proved that their knowledge was scattered and incomplete. They did not know some basic facts and their responses were unbalanced. For example, nobody knew where the Southern Alps are, 64% of students did not know where the Twins are. 53% of students did not know that the Conservative Party belongs to the British political

system.

These findings do not correspond with the required profile of commercial school graduates. Commercial school students are supposed to be equipped with such knowledge that would enable them to orientate themselves in the modern world in a professional way.

## **B. THE PURPOSE OF MY PROFESSIONAL PROJECT**

The purpose of my professional project stems from my experience as a secondary school teacher. I began to think about the ways of teaching Life and Institutions and about their efficiency. Not too good results of the questionnaire showed that the approach to teaching this subject does not seem to be too effective. Quite bad results obtained from the test can be explained by several ways.

First of all, the school subject Life and Institutions is not taught at basic schools. Children are given some information but it depends on a teacher how much time (if any) he or she devotes to this topic.

Then, lack of time is one of the biggest problems at secondary schools. There are only 3 lessons of English per week. At the beginning of secondary school studies teaching and learning of English language are focused on grammar, writing, reading and speaking in English. Only at the end of the studies students are taught the facts about the English speaking countries in order to be prepared



for the school leaving exam. Finally, the reason of not so good results in the questionnaire can be caused by the students' approach to this subject. Being aware that some knowledge of the English speaking countries is necessary only for passing the school leaving exam, students are not personally motivated to this subject.

The school leaving exam consists of 25 topics (questions). 10 of them are focused on Life and Institutions of the English speaking countries such as: London, New York, Washington, the system of Government in Great Britain and the U.S.A., Australia, New Zealand, Great Britain, etc.

These 10 questions represent about 40 % of all topics. The rest of questions deals with other special topics, such as My daily program, Leisure time, My hobbies, Banking system, Business correspondence etc.

All these topics contain lots of facts. Some of them are quite difficult to understand even in Czech. For example, the system of government in Great Britain and America. There are too many details in these difficult topics. How to explain everything and not to bore students? The teacher has to face this question. When I began to think of my Project, I asked the question: How is the topic Life and Institutions taught at secondary schools? Which materials and textbooks are available.

### 1. Textbooks and Other Materials

My students use the textbook The Cambridge English Course 1 and 2. This textbook is designed "for adult students who are learning English for general

practical or cultural purposes“ (The Cambridge English Course, 1990. Introduction, p. VI).

However, when I analysed this textbook, I found out that there are very few facts about the English speaking countries. There are some data in the second volume, but they are scattered and incomplete and usually subordinate to the particular grammar structures or functions of each topic.

There are some examples from The Cambridge English Course 2:

U8A - basic information about Britain, currency, transport, food, medical care

U8B - basic information about the U.S.A., currency, railways, buses, travelling in the U.S.A.

U12A - natural resources in the west part of the U.S.A.

U16A - British household expenditure

U24A - government in Britain and the U.S.A.

U31B – traffic regulation in Great Britain and the U.S.A.

The Cambridge English course 1 does not contain nearly any information about the English speaking countries, either.

Most of the topics in The Cambridge English Course 2 are presented as short articles (scanning reading). Some of them are supplemented with comprehension questions, maps or listening tasks and pictures, which make reading quite interesting, but some facts are a bit obsolete. For example the theme British household expenditure in Unit 16A deals with financial and price data from 1983 which can cause confusion comparing to the present situation.



It is evident that the brief information about the English speaking countries presented in The Cambridge English Course 1 and 2 is not corresponding. Therefore, I use other supplementary materials. I make a choice of materials from *Hello* and *Friendship* magazines. I also use other textbooks such as *The English Speaking Countries* by Karel Vesely, *Some Basic Facts about the English Speaking Countries* by Tomas Chudy, Jana Chuda and *Reading about the English Speaking Countries* by Jana Odehnalova. The first one is quite difficult for secondary school students. Originally, it used to be a textbook for university students and I have to adapt the texts I use with my students. The others are more suitable but I try to complete them with other supplementary materials like pictures, maps, cuttings from newspapers etc. as will be described in the methodology part.

## 2. My Experience

Although there are only 3 English lessons a week in each class and now there is even a tendency to reduce them, requirements of the knowledge of English language are steadily increasing. Students should have good knowledge of grammar, they should be good at listening and comprehension, they should react quickly in conversations. In addition, they should know basic facts about Life and Institutions in the English speaking countries

The lack of time sometimes leads to the fact that teaching and learning Life and Institutions is taken as a second-class area which is taught by means of reading and translation only. Students are afraid of numbers of facts they should

remember and usually they repeat them without any connection with reality, their interests, and needs. The main goal is, as I have already pointed out, to prepare students for “maturita.”

To conclude, three main causes of insufficient students’ knowledge of the English speaking countries at commercial secondary schools became the basis for my Professional Project and can be classified into three groups:

- a) ineffective ways of teaching Life and Institutions
- b) lack of students’ motivation to this subject
- c) lack of materials suitable for teaching Life and Institutions

### **C. THEORY**

In order to incorporate effectively the subject Life and Institutions into the common lessons of English language at secondary schools, and thus to equip students with proper knowledge about the English speaking countries, it is necessary to define the term Life and Institutions. What is Life and Institutions? What subject is it and what does it contain? How do teachers and experts understand this subject? Vesely assumes that “the subject Life and Institutions deals with history, geography, the national economy and the political systems in the countries concerned” (Vesely, 1983: 6). This definition is clear but does not show the whole complexity of the subject, especially from the point of view of



teaching.

Professional literature offers a wide spectrum of various approaches to teaching and learning Life and Institutions. Susan Stempleski, for example, speaks about the presentation of culture “when many teachers present culture in terms of fine arts, geography and history, some focus on sociological behavior. Others emphasize patterns of verbal and non-verbal communication. Still others focus on values and attitudes” (Stempleski, 1993: 11).

This summary implies many approaches to teaching of this subject and proves a lack of uniformity of this issue. Stempleski and Tomalin do not talk about Life and Institutions. They introduce the term “cultural awareness.” They point out that “cultural awareness is the term we have used to describe sensitivity to the impact of culturally-induced behaviour on language use and communication. Cross-cultural awareness ... covers the knowledge of British and American life and institutions, beliefs, and values, as well as everyday attitudes and feelings conveyed not only by language, but by paralinguistic features such as dress, gesture, facial expression, stance, and movement” (Stempleski and Tomalin, 1994: 5).

Allen and Smith support Stempleski and Tomalin’s ideas about the great breadth of this subject and stress the difficulty for teachers to incorporate all that “no matter what area of culture teachers choose to include, the important information into the English language syllabus: “Life and Culture. Two big words, which encompass virtually the whole of human existence. How

is it possible to distil the essence of a society or a civilization into a brief survey, designed for non-native speakers? A daunting task, since one soon becomes lost in a maze of quasi-philosophical speculation, to which little time can be allotted in an already crowded language syllabus“ (Allen and Smith, 1995: 2).

All these definitions indicate that the universal concept of Life and Institutions does not exist. Each conception varies according to an author's view of the issue in question. The current situation in teaching Life and Institutions corresponds to these conclusions. There is no special subject “Life and Institutions“ taught at our secondary schools. There is no curriculum of this subject, no universal syllabus or a suitable textbook. As Stempleski says, “classrooms vary widely with respect to what is taught in the name of culture“(Stempleski, S. 1993: 11).

Teachers make their own decisions what to teach and how to teach. They choose the topics from various books so that they meet the requirements of the school leaving exams. In my opinion Life and Institutions should be taught at secondary schools in a more structured and effective way. But how to manage such a difficult task? How to realize effective teaching and learning of Life and Institutions? Stempleski is aware of the variety of this subject and suggests one important precondition of effective teaching of Life and Institutions. She says that “no matter what area of culture teachers choose to include, the emphasis should be on development of culture awareness skills rather than on the transmissions of cultural facts“ (Stempleski, S. 1993: 11). Her idea of skills



development in teaching/learning about the English speaking countries was included in the lesson plan designs in my Professional Project.

#### **D. METHODOLOGY**

Secondary school students, aged from 15 to 19 have specific features typical for this group of young people: they are very lively, curious and open on one hand and critical and demanding on the other hand. They learn when they are prompted properly to receive certain information.

My own teaching experience proved that the use of one method to teach Life and Institutions is not motivating enough for the students. Reading about facts concerning the English speaking countries, for example, when it is used as one activity in the whole lesson, is considered monotonous and tiresome by students. Traditional approach to memorizing facts about Life and Institutions makes students think that Life and Institutions is a needful school requirement they have to cope with.

One way to break this approach is the use of a variety of teaching strategies and techniques that would react on the students' needs and the subject requirements as well.

As Celce-Murcia supports, “introducing variety into learning activities is a more external form of motivation. If the teacher can use some variety in each lesson to make the class more enjoyable and less routine, this will also motivate students to learn “(Celce-Murcia, M. 1984: 25). Students can better perceive new information, they can better remember new facts.

However, what methods can contribute to better understanding and effective learning during the lessons? Murdoch says that “in many schools and centers of language learning it has become common pedagogical practice to devote separate teaching sessions to developing particular language skills. Unfortunately, this rigid separation of the study of oral, reading, writing, and listening skills is, in many instances, not helping our students to achieve a well-rounded linguistic competence. Indeed, this approach may actually be holding back students from realizing their full potential as language users“ (Murdoch, G. S. 1986: 55). In other words, Murdoch suggests incorporating all four skills into English language lessons and says that “we must work toward a situation where the students can relate one skill to another. Any competent language user has to be able to read a passage, extract the information he needs, then be able to integrate it with his previously acquired knowledge, and finally communicate that knowledge to others. Such process clearly makes demands on a complex variety of linguistic, study and behavioral skills“ (Murdoch, G. S. 1986: 55).

“Skills work is not something to add in at the end of a five-year course in English“ says Scrivener, J. (1994: 22) and stresses its incorporation in every



lesson from the start. There are two basic effects of the use of skills work in English classes, including teaching Life and Institutions. First of all, the development of language proficiency as a basis of primary function of a language. Then, skills work can also contribute to gaining information, to the extension of students' general knowledge.

This conclusion became a basis for my Professional Project when I incorporated reading, speaking, listening and writing activities and used a variety of teaching strategies. I presented authentic materials, pictures and materials prepared by myself such as worksheets with questions or grammar tasks, a quiz, a tapescript with gaps, etc.

Teaching reading is a very important activity because we can see it as a process between language and thought. Reading supports and develops thinking. Sandra McKay points out "that reading is not just a decoding of symbols but an interaction between an individual's background knowledge and the text"(McKay, S. 1984: 9). Reading as a receptive skill, involves comprehension, which is very useful in teaching Life and Institutions. When students read to improve, for example pronunciation, to practice grammar or study vocabulary, do not constitute reading. The basic feature of reading – comprehension – is used very often as an activity in English classes when certain information has to be introduced to students. Thus, teachers often resort to the use of reading activities to present some facts about history and culture of foreign countries. Moreover, as Chastain points out: "Reading can be an important basis for individual

learning about the country and its people. Reading can serve as a vehicle for entering into the belles lettres of the country's present and past civilization" (Chastain, K. 1988: 219).

Language students need to learn to speak the language to be able to communicate with other people, express their ideas, convey a message. This is the primary goal of practising speaking in English classes. However, speaking, when focused on a particular topic, can become a means of presentation or practice of facts and information about, for example, the English speaking countries.

Writing, as well as listening, is often slighted in language classes, or it is considered less important. However, writing is characterized by two important aspects necessary for the process of learning a second language. First of all, it is a unique means of learning a second language. Then, it can become an effective means of dealing with the facts about the English speaking countries. Teachers usually expect students to present a product that they can hear or see and thus they resort to activities they can control, such as writing. This may be the reason why listening is underestimated in language classes. Nicholas supports the idea of insufficient practice of listening skills when he says that "when we examine carefully the listening abilities of many learners of foreign languages, we will realize that they are not always as competent as they think. The situation usually becomes obvious when the learner makes his first contact with native speakers in their natural environment" (Nicholas, L. N. 1988: 86). The lack of listening



practice reflects also the lack of listening activities during teaching Life and Institutions. However, writing and listening can provide variety in classroom activities and can serve as a break from oral or reading work. "Exposure to the foreign language through more than one medium, especially if skills are properly integrated, appears to be more effective than relying on a single medium alone. Even at an elementary level there are many opportunities for activities that effectively integrate skills" (Byrne, D. 1988: 5).

From the above mentioned methodological conclusions we can see how broad the whole area of the subject Life and Institutions is. My teaching practice proved that a new approach to teaching this subject is an urgent need at secondary schools.

The following Professional Project attempts to demonstrate that a suitable choice of materials, interesting topics and a variety of activities based on skill work in teaching Life and Institutions can contribute to increase of students' motivation and thus better understanding of the subject.

## Chapter II: Professional Project

### **A. BASIS FOR THE PROJECT DESIGN**

When I started to think about my Professional Project I wanted to combine my personal experience from teaching English with the new methodological knowledge obtained during my studies. My personal experience told me that teaching Life and Institutions should be varied, motivating and closely related to children's mentality.

The study of TEFL methodology helped me to find one possible way to meet this requirement. First of all I chose such activities that would provide the practice of all 4 skills; secondly, I tried to vary the form of the activities (individual or pair work), I chose various material sources (pictures, tapes) and used different teaching strategies (filling gaps, solving problems etc.).

One basic requirement of best results in teaching foreign languages arises from my studies of various methodological books. It stems from the combination of visual, auditory, and kinesthetic methods when all human senses are gradually in action. No one student is exclusively a visual, auditory or kinesthetic type of personality. Students are mostly the mixture of all types. Visual learners tend to prefer reading and studying charts, drawings, and other graphic information, while an auditory style is characterized by a preference for listening to lectures and audiotapes. Tactile learners are those who prefer to learn "hands on" (Davis,



C. E. and others, 1994: 12). Davis, C. E. and others are aware of the difficulty to match instructions to every learner's needs, and they suggest that "a teacher should try to provide a variety of learning experiences to accommodate the various learning styles that exist in the average classroom" (p. 13).

To conclude, two basic criteria became a necessity precondition for my planned activities: 4 skills activities and variety of teaching/learning styles. This, however, could not assure students' involvement in learning. Thus, I had to consider what kind of materials would be interesting enough for my students.

The textbooks I use in my teaching – The Cambridge English Course 1 and 2 – do not provide enough suitable materials for teaching Life and Institutions as it was shown in my textbook analysis in Part B – Purpose of the Professional Project. That is why I decided to make up my own materials. I tried to choose such materials which would be suitable for my students' knowledge of English on one hand and interesting enough to motivate students to learn on the other hand. I designed activities based on a competition or a game, I found interesting up-to-date articles and topics about London, and I let students work in pairs, read and write individually, work with a map, etc.

At the beginning of my Project I hesitated about the choice of a topic. I wanted to use a topic which would both meet the requirements of the leaving exams and motivate students positively. Finally, I decided for London. This topic seemed to me interesting for students and I had a lot of materials which could be



used for this purpose. For example, a series of articles in Hello magazine or a brochure Spotlight on Britain by Susan Sheerin. Moreover, a lot of students have visited London already and so I was assured that we would talk about an item close to students. I had to adapt the material in order to fulfil the above mentioned criteria.

The following lessons plans based on the topic "London" may serve as a model for lessons where other topics can be dealt with in similar ways.

## **B. PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT**

### 1. Description of the Students

The practical implementation of the Project took place at the Commercial Secondary School in Mlada Boleslav. It was done with 16 and 17 years old students of the second and third grades.

Students in the 2<sup>nd</sup> class learn from the textbook The Cambridge English Course 1. This textbook is planned to be studied for the first two years. Students went through Present Simple, Past Simple, Present Progressive, Present Perfect, Passives, Comparatives and Superlatives of adjectives and adverbs and Prepositions as main parts of the curriculum. The students are also supposed to use these structures in asking and giving information, expressing obligation and opinions, making suggestions etc.

Students in the third class use The Cambridge English Course 2. The book is

“designed to accommodate a mixed-background class, and the first third of the book revises all important structures from the beginner’s level“ (The Cambridge English Course 2, Teachers Book, 1985:VI).

Both classes were mix-ability classes. The second class consisted of lower intermediate level students. The third class consisted of lower intermediate and intermediate levels. The structure of students did not cause any problems because the differences in their knowledge of English were not too significant.

## 2. Lesson Plans and Reflections on Them

My Professional Project was proved within the following 3 lessons.

### **LESSON PLAN 1**

Topic: London and some of its sights

Aims: - to give students some notion about several places of interest in London

- to give them basic geographical orientation in the centre of London

- to practise speaking, to revise prepositions

Objectives: - students should be able to read simple articles about London and make some notes about the main points

**Stage 2:** - students should be able to speak about the Tower, Tower Bridge,

Westminster Abbey, Whitehall and St. Paul's Cathedral

**Aims:** - to present some facts about London signs

Time available: - 45 minutes

**Materials:** - maps of London (see appendix 1)

- short articles about the Tower, Tower Bridge, Westminster Abbey,

Whitehall, St. Paul's Cathedral (see appendix 1)

**Step 1:** - pictures of these places of interest (see appendix 1)

I divided the class into two groups of four and one trio. Each student was given an

article with a picture of London (see appendix 1). They read the article silently

and tried to remember the basic facts

- blackboard

### **Stage 1: pre-activity**

**Aim:** - to elicit from students what they know about London

I informed students about their tasks - to prepare a short speech about London. At the beginning of the lesson I asked several questions and students responded to them. It was, in fact, a short discussion. My questions were these:

Which part of Great Britain is London in? Which of you visited London? What was the original name of London? What is London now? Can you name any places of interest that you visited? Is there a river in London? What is its name? How many people live in London? What is a double-decker? Have you ever heard about Hyde Park? What is typical for Hyde Park Corner?



## Stage 2: pair work

Aims: - to present some new facts about London sights

- to reveal locations of these sights on the map so that students obtain basic geographical knowledge about the centre of London
- to practice speaking about the topic to practice using prepositions of directions and structures "*there is*", "*there are*"

### Step 1:

I divided the whole class into 4 pairs and one trio. Each student was given an article with a picture of London. (see appendix 1). They read the article silently and tried to remember the basic facts.

### Step 2:

I informed students about their tasks – to prepare a short speech about the sights they had received. First they were asked to say where their sight is situated and then to describe the sight.

### Step 3:

I wrote the following structures and prepositions on the board:

There is, there are, in the south of ..., on the right, on the left, near, opposite, next to, beside, by, in.... street, on the bank of the river.

The purpose of this activity was to remind them of the use of the prepositions and structures “*there is*“, “*there are*“ when speaking about some places.

Step 4:

I asked students not to read their utterances from a sheet of paper but to try to use their own words. I gave them about a 6-minute limit for preparation. I asked each person in a pair to speak. They divided their speeches into 2 parts so that everybody could speak

### **Stage 3: students' performances**

Aim: - to practise speaking about the facts the students obtained in the stage 2

Step 1: *Bridge*

First I called an odd pupil from a trio to go to the blackboard and I asked him to make notes about main points from students' speeches on the board so that the other students could see and remember better the basic data about each sight.

Step 2:

Students started to speak about London sights. At the beginning of each speech I asked all students to circle the sight in their maps. During their speeches I did not correct any errors or imperfectness. I did not want to interrupt their speaking.

10 students spoke about the Tower, Tower Bridge, Whitehall, St. Paul's Cathedral and Westminster Abbey. During their speeches some mistakes occurred, and we corrected them later on at the end of the lesson. Students tried to use their own words. Some of them (3 or 4) followed the text.

During students' speeches an odd pupil made some notes on the board. These notes were as follows:

**Tower:**

*near Tower Bridge, built 11<sup>th</sup> century, museum, animals*

**Tower Bridge:**

*East of London, near Tower, opens in the middle, large ship*

**Whitehall:**

*is street, start Trafalgar Square to Parliamentary Square, on the left side the river, Whitehall Palace - in front of - 3 guards*

**St. Paul's Cathedral:**

*between Law Courts and Bank of England, Tower of London, Tower Bridge, built 17<sup>th</sup> century, Sir Christopher Wren, 1666 fire, destroyed*



## Westminster Abbey:

*in the centre of London, on left side of Thames, there is church, 11 century built,*

*Poet's Corner*

After the last speech we went through the notes. I called students to read these notes aloud and I corrected some smaller mistakes. For example: near the Tower, large ships, on the left side of the river, built in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, to the left side of the Thames, there is a church.

Then students were asked to copy down these notes to their exercise-books.

## Stage 4: quiz

At the end of the lesson the quiz was solved (see appendix 1). The quiz was based on the knowledge of the previous facts. It contained questions about Whitehall, St. Paul's Cathedral, Westminster Abbey, Tower Bridge and the Tower. Each section had 3 questions. Students had to circle the correct answer. They worked individually. 2 fastest students were winners.

I decided to arrange this "small" competition. Since the atmosphere in the classroom was lively, I was not afraid of the competition at the end of the lesson. Although only 2 fastest students could be the winners, other students could say their answers, too.

At the end of the quiz we explained all answers. Not only the winners had the right to speak or gave reasons for all answers. The competition did not influence

the correctness of answers as the results proved. There were only several small mistakes, for example: Westminster Abbey was built in the 17th century, Whitehall is the oldest part around St. Paul's instead of Westminster Abbey was built in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, *Whitehall is a street in London* (see appendix 1).

### Reflection:

Students were not bored during the lesson. They reacted quickly and lively. They were interested in the topic although only two of them visited London in the past.

In the 1<sup>st</sup> stage they were not able to answer one question – What was the original name of London (Londinium)? This question was too difficult for them. I gave them a short explanation. I also corrected some small mistakes made during their responses. For example: Thames – there must be a definite article in front of the name of the river.

We also had a small discussion about the colour of double-deckers. Other questions were responded briefly and correctly. Students named some places of interest, they knew some basic facts about the population of London, Hyde Park, and the Thames. Children generally like to work with a map. Thus the students were eager to find the sights in the map and they usually succeeded.

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage they prepared their speeches. They asked some questions during their reading and preparation which concerned pronunciation and the use of prepositions so I monitored the pair-work and helped them with difficult



words. During this stage they practised several prepositions of direction and structures such as “*there is*“, “*there are*“, too.

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> stage 10 pupils spoke about the sights mentioned above. There were some smaller mistakes in their speeches and I discussed them at the end of the lesson. Students made mistakes mainly in prepositions. For example: opposite *of* the Tower, *from* the left side, *on* Victoria street. Some other mistakes were: *marry* of prince Charles and Diana, *from* the centre of London. Wrong pronunciation also occurred in these expressions: *prison*, *museum*, *jewels*. I corrected only these basic errors and overlooked some minor ones.

Students tried to speak using their own words but some of them (especially weaker students) could not avoid having a look at their texts or notes. They did not make factual mistakes.

In the 4<sup>th</sup> stage they answered quiz questions (see appendix 1). This quiz was based on the knowledge of sights practised in the lesson. Some smaller mistakes occurred in the quiz, such as:

Westminster Abbey was built in the 13<sup>th</sup> century.

Whitehall is the oldest part around St. Paul’s.

However, the quiz proved that students had understood new facts quite well. All the students finished the test, and they were able to remember all the fact necessary for the quiz.

I exceeded the time limit by about 3 minutes. It was caused by my explanation of students' mistakes at the end of step 3 (stage 3) and writing prepositions on the board (step 3, stage 2).

Making notes at the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> step (stage 3) was useful not only for the following quiz but also for practising spelling of some proper nouns. Students also had an opportunity to practise writing.

A small competition (stage 4) contributed to a lively atmosphere in the class. The competition was done at the end of the lesson and it worked like an incentive to further work although there was no reward for them. They liked to be winners. It also served as a source of motivation and liveliness during the lesson.

The most difficult part for students was speaking. I could see that they had problems with expressing their ideas. They evidently knew the facts but were not sometimes able to use them in a fluent communication. This might have been a result of insufficient practice of speaking. The combination of practising skills – reading about sights, talking about them and listening to other students' short speeches – seemed to be an effective source of motivation for students. In addition, they were prompted to learn about London by a variety of strategies: visual prompts (pictures of London), tactile activities (working with the map), pair-work (reading about London), problem-solving (the test), etc. I had a short discussion on this theme with them at the end of the lesson and they said the



same. Despite students' uncertainty in expressing their ideas they were willing to speak because they knew what to speak about. The topics were clear to them and they could follow their notes both on the blackboard and in their exercise books.

If I taught the same lesson for the second time, I would not do anything in another way. I think that the aims of the lesson were fulfilled. Students learnt some new facts about London's sights, they read, spoke and wrote about them. They remembered basic facts as was proved by solving the quiz.

## LESSON PLAN 2

Topic: Who Was Madame Tussaud?

Aims: - to give students knowledge about Madame Tussaud and her museum

- to extend students vocabulary by means of the article about Madame Tussaud

- to revise and exercise the past tense by means of questions

- to revise subject and object questions

- to use the knowledge gained from the article in writing

- to practise translation a text from English to Czech

Step 1: Objectives: - students will be able to say the basic facts about Madame

Tussaud's Museum

- they will be able to write a short paragraph about Madame

Tussaud's Museum using a new vocabulary.

Time available: - 45 minutes

Materials: - article "Who Was Madame Tussaud"? (see appendix 2)

- worksheets for making questions in the past tense (see appendix 2)

- worksheets for filling the gaps (see appendix 2)

- maps of London (see appendix 2)

- board

### Stage 1: pre-activity

Aim: - to elicit from students what they know about Madame Tussaud and her museum.

Step 1:

I asked several questions first: Who was Madame Tussaud? Does anybody know where Madame Tussaud's Museum is? How old is Madame Tussaud's Museum? Where is it on the map?

## Step : 2

I told students that Madame Tussaud's Museum is one of the most frequently visited places in London although it is not a sort of so called "respectable art." It is waxworks which belong among London's famous places of interest. I wrote words "respectable" art and "waxworks" on the board because I noticed that students did not understand them. I explained these words in Czech.

### Stage 2: reading an article

Aims: - to discover where Madame Tussaud's Museum is situated

- to discover Madame Tussaud's autobiography and the origins of her museum.

## Step 1:

Each student was given one copy of an article and a map of London. I asked them to circle Madame Tussaud's Museum on the map. They did it immediately.

Then we started to read the whole article. I called individual pupils in turn. Everybody read 3 or 4 sentences. After reading we translated the article.

Then I asked them to turn their attention to words such as – *was born, went, opened, became, started, lived, set, had*. I asked them about the tense of these verbs. They answered that it was the past tense.



## Step 2:

During the translation I wrote these words on the board:

Opened, started, lived x went, became, had

And I asked the students:

What is the difference between these two groups of verbs? They answered in Czech: regular and irregular verbs. They were able to explain that regular verbs have the ending - ed, - d in the past tense and irregular verbs change their forms.

## Stage 3: making questions

Aim: - to practise knowledge about Madame Tussaud's life by asking and responding questions

## Step 1:

I divided the class into pairs and wrote the years 1761, 1767, 1770, 1795, 1802, 1850, 1835 on the board.

I asked individual pairs to prepare questions about these years according to the article. Students had 2 minutes for preparation, then I asked one person from a pair to go to the board and put the question down. After doing it, students were asked to help with the correction when necessary.

## Step 2:

I wrote on the board: Who saw you? – A subject question.

What did you see? – An object question.

I reminded the students of this rule we had already practised.

The revision of these questions was necessary for the following exercise. This exercise dealt with these sorts of questions. Then students were given sheets of paper with 6 statements (see appendix 2). All the statements were taken from the article. Each statement should have been changed into questions. They had 6 minutes to complete the task. They did it and we corrected all the questions.

## **Stage 4: closing activity**

Aim: - to revise basic knowledge about Madame Tussaud's Museum by

filling the gaps and by answering questions. The latter activity was

done orally.

## Step 1:

Each student obtained a copy of a filling-gap exercise. They filled the gaps with the information from the article. The completion was based on the knowledge of the article and the task was not difficult to fulfil. We checked the answers together (see appendix 2).

Step 2: with this grammar item. They were able to distinguish

and irregular forms of verbs. They even gave other examples of

In this closing activity we practised again the basic facts, this time by means of oral activity. I gave them these questions: *Where is Madame Tussaud's Museum situated? What did her uncle Dr. Curtius start making? Where (which country) did Madame Tussaud come from? How long does it take to complete a figure? What can you see at Madame Tussaud's exhibition? Is the Sleeping Beauty the animatronic or moving figure?*

Reflection: questions

Correctio

The primary activity of this lesson was to learn something new about a significant London sight – Madame Tussaud's Museum. I considered it to be useful because the 1<sup>st</sup> stage showed that they knew very little about this sight although most of them had visited this place. Nobody answered my question “*Who was Madame Tussaud*”? However, they tried to guess when the museum was founded: 25, 30, 50, 80 years ago. The first questions helped to raise students' attention to the topic of the lesson since the students were eager to know more about the museum.

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage (reading and translating the article) several unknown words such as *nostrils*, *graze* and *chest* were explained during translation. The second activity was a brief revision of the past tense. It showed that students were

quickly and correctly. In this lesson I wanted pupils to learn



familiar with this grammar item. They were able to distinguish between regular and irregular forms of verbs. They even gave other examples of irregular verbs.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> stage dealt with the main data of Madame Tussaud's life. Students made questions about the main points of her life and filled the gaps in the worksheets. This activity helped them to refresh the knowledge obtained in the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> stages. Several smaller mistakes occurred and we corrected them together. Here are some examples of them:

#### **Students' questions**

#### **Correction**

1761 – When did she born?

When was she born?

1770 – When was open the museum?

When was the museum opened?

1795 – When did she married?

When did she get married?

1850 – When did she died?

When did she die?

1835 – When did she very popular?

When did she become very popular?

In the 4<sup>th</sup> stage (closing activity) they filled the gaps using the facts from the article. At the end of the lesson students responded to my questions. As they knew the facts from the article quite well, they were able to answer the questions quickly and correctly. In this lesson I wanted pupils to learn something new

about Madame Tussaud's Museum and to speak, read and write as well. I also wanted them to actively contribute to the course of the lesson.

The article about Madame Tussaud was not difficult for students. But I decided to translate it with students in order to be sure that everybody understood the article including the weaker students. There were some smaller problems with the pronunciation. For example, the words such as *wax*, *figure*, *knee* were not pronounced correctly. I pronounced them correctly and students repeated them.

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage students knew the difference between regular and irregular verbs in the past tense. I wanted them to revise and exercise their previous knowledge I considered difficult. I thus put down subject and object questions on the board. Then, the following exercise of subject and object questions linked smoothly this short revision. It contained 12 questions. First, they make these questions in written form and then we checked them. Students read their responses. These questions were made according to the article (see appendix 2). Students concentrated on the facts about Madame Tussaud's Museum and at the same time they practised grammar (questions).

The connection between getting knowledge about Life and Institutions and practising grammar was set and it worked quite well. Students were involved in the topic of the lesson and wanted to know more about the museum. At the same time, they revised and practised grammar. This activity became in fact a means



to get knowledge about Madame Tussaud. In the same way they extended some vocabulary they needed for the lesson activities. Since the new vocabulary was repeated throughout the whole lesson (in questions, reading and speaking), students had enough opportunities to fix the new words.

In closing activity – filling the gaps – students used new words from the article. As they knew the article quite well, not only from the reading but also from the previous exercise (making questions), they did not have any problems with this task.

The topic about Madame Tussaud's Museum was a good motivation for students. They knew very little about the museum before and they wanted to know more about this bizarre and interesting place of interest. Despite some small imperfections I think this task was fulfilled. On the other hand, I underestimated the length of the lesson. The closing activity (oral questions) was done during the break. I did not want to omit the last activity – oral questions – because it gave students the possibility to speak and to close the whole lesson meaningfully. There were only 6 questions. It took about 2 or 3 minutes to answer them. I asked students to finish them so that we could complete our task. They did not object anything. It was their last lesson. The delay of the lesson was caused in Stage 3, step 1. We spent much time on the correction of mistakes. I wanted students to correct them and it took more time than I had expected. But on the other hand it was necessary to end the activity meaningfully and I wanted students to be active.



### LESSON PLAN 3

Topic: London Regional Transport, Trafalgar Square, Shopping in London

Aims: - to give students some new facts about London transport and the West End, Trafalgar Square and Covent Garden

- to practice listening and understanding native speech, which is one of the most difficult tasks in learning English
- to continue increasing students' knowledge of London
- to extend their vocabulary

Objectives: - students should be able to understand new information about London in a listening activity

- they should be able to use the acquired knowledge to solve comprehension questions, fill in the gaps and write a postcard

Time available: - 45 minutes

Materials: - additional material No 1 – questions: London Regional

Transport, Trafalgar Square, Shopping in London (see appendix 3)

- additional material No 2 – tapescripts: Trafalgar Square, Shopping in London (see appendix 3)

- additional material No 3 - Postcard (see appendix 3)

### **Stage 1: pre-activity**

Aim: - To elicit from students what they remember about London from the previous lessons.

I started the lesson with several questions. *Who built St. Paul's Cathedral? What is Whitehall? What is Tower Bridge and what do you know about it? What is the Tower of London and what is in the Tower now? What can you see in Madam Tussaud's Museum?*

Students' answers were generally correct. They named all these sights and they remembered quite a lot from the previous lessons. We had a short discussion about Madame Tussaud's Museum and about Whitehall.

### **Stage 2: pre-listening activity**

Aim: - to present some new difficult words in order to prepare students for the listening task.

All of these unknown words were written on the board: *queue, annoy, associate, commemorate, statue, market, restore, convert, entertainment.*

I told the students that they would hear all these words in the following listening text and I added the Czech meaning of some very difficult words on the board (for example: *associate, convert*). Students copied the words in their exercise books and practised pronunciation.



### **Stage 3: listening to London Regional Transport**

Aims: - to listen to some brief information about London transport

- to check the understanding of listening by answering questions

#### **Step 1:**

Students were given additional material No 1 (see appendix 3). They had 2 minutes to read questions in it.

#### **Step 2:**

Students listened to the tape about London Regional Transport, Trafalgar Square and Shopping in London twice. During the second listening I stopped the tape recorder several times so that they could think about the questions. They completed comprehension questions. Since they were able to complete almost all the questions, I was sure that they understood the text.

### **Stage 4: listening to Trafalgar Square and Shopping in London**

Aims: - to give students information about The West End

- to practice listening by filling the gaps

- to extend students' vocabulary

### Step 1:

I gave to students additional material No 1 (see appendix 3). This material was a tapescript about Trafalgar Square and Shopping. It contained 21 gaps. I told students that it would deal with the description of Trafalgar Square and shopping facilities in London.

### Step 2:

We listened to this tape twice. During the second listening I stopped the tape several times so that students could fill in the gaps. I noticed that some of the students sometimes looked at the board where the new words were written.

### Step 3:

After the listening we went through the whole tapescripts. Students were able to catch the missing words. They filled all the 21 gaps.

I pointed out some mistakes they made caused by wrong understanding of a particular expression. Then we discussed some of these mistakes. For example: instead of *more than forty shops* they had *more modern shops*, instead of 5.30 they had 5.

During reading the text that the students had just finished they asked several questions about the meaning of some phrases, for example: What is it *marchers unite for protest meeting*, or *you cannot afford the prices of Bond Street*, or it is *worth going*. We translated them into Czech. Then I told them that Trafalgar

Square is something like our Old Town Square or Wenceslas Square. Students did not know the spelling of Regent Street. We spelt it together and I wrote it on the board.

### Stage 5: post-listening activity

Aim: - to revise students' knowledge about London in a written exercise

Students were given additional material No 3 – the Postcard. I told them that they were in London in the West End and they would write a postcard from this place.

They filled gaps with suitable expressions and names of places. They made several mistakes, for example: *I am having a much time*, instead of *a wonderful time*. Or: *I am drinking and I write*, instead of *I am sitting and writing*, *I am sitting in a shopping presents* instead of *I am sitting in a shopping centre*.

In this postcard they could use names of Bond Street, Covent Garden, Oxford Street and Regent Street from this lesson, Baker Street and Whitehall from the previous lessons. I was glad that they did it and thus they proved they remembered these proper nouns.

### Reflection:

Listening is not an easy activity. However, it is a very important part of learning English and it cannot be omitted. I thought about the possibility to



present further facts about London just through listening activities. Therefore, I decided to use a tapescript about London, the topic we had talked about in the previous lessons. I wanted students to have the possibility to acquire knowledge about London in another way than only by means of reading, writing and speaking.

The tapescripts for this lesson was taken from the textbook Spotlight on Britain by Susan Sheerine. Despite several unknown words, the whole content of the article was not difficult, it was well understandable as the lesson proved.

In the 1<sup>st</sup> stage - pre-activity - I asked students several questions about London. Answering these questions attracted students' attention to the lesson. They started to think about London and fixed their attention to the lesson. The students could also show that they remembered new facts about London, which contributed to their positive approach to the lesson. This pre-activity served as a motivating introduction to the lesson.

In the 2<sup>nd</sup> stage I presented some new words. These words were difficult for students, they did not know most of them. The explanation lasted about 6 minutes. I tried to explain the new words in English but sometimes I could not avoid using Czech in order to be sure that everybody could understand.

I tried to help students with some other associated expressions they were interested in. For example: *market – free market economy, or Vietnamese market in Mlada Boleslav. Commemorate* - I asked the students if it reminded them of

anything. They answered - *memory*, which is similar in meaning. However I had to stop further discussion about other expressions since I wanted them to know mainly the words which were important for the whole comprehension of the listening task.

I do not think they remembered all the words for the first time immediately. However, after listening to some facts about London and a short discussion after the activity, they were able to use some of them either in discussion or the writing task.

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> stage students listened to the information about London Regional Transport, Trafalgar Square and Shopping in London. They answered questions, then read them and thus checked whether their answers were correct. I think it was easy for them. They were able to answer all 3 questions (see additional material No 1, appendix 3). I concluded this activity with the question if students had some problems with answering the questions. They did not have any. They understood listening well and they were given new information about London tube and its lines. They liked the word *queue-jumpers* since it sounded funny for them. Also the topic "London's underground" was interesting for them since they were curious about this famous means of transport and about the fare.

In the 4<sup>th</sup> stage students listened to the tapescripts about Trafalgar Square and Shopping in London again and filled the gaps. Then, we checked the correctness of students' responses by reading the whole text. I told them to ask questions if



they did not understand any expressions. Students got some new information about the West End, Trafalgar Square, Covent Garden and other places in this part of London. The tapescript was not as interesting for students as the previous one about London Regional Transport. Despite the fact that there was no plot, no people, no pictures, it yielded other information about London's sights. Students were fully concentrated on their work, they were calm, not noisy. Students liked filling gaps because they could show that they understood the text. They were eager to fill in the gaps.

Writing a holiday postcard from London in Stage 5 was a bit funny for students. They thought about who to write to: to a girlfriend, grandparents, friends or a teacher? I think that this writing activity proved that they remembered the new facts presented in the listening activities. They named places in London as well as the kinds of music which were mentioned in the tapescript about shopping in London (see additional material No 2, appendix 3). For example: *classical, folk, jazz and pop music*. By writing this simple postcard they could concentrate on these new expressions, as the basic scheme of the postcard was done for them. I chose this simple activity deliberately in order to encourage them to use their new knowledge in this simple way.

I think this activity was motivating for them because writing postcards is a very common activity and youngsters usually like to write them. The atmosphere in the classroom was very good. Students could use their own ideas in their writing and include the terms they acquired during the lesson.



At the end of the lesson I asked the students to give me all the sheets with the tasks since I wanted to look them over and check possible errors and explain all the mistakes next lesson.

If I taught this lesson for the second time, I would include a short introduction - working with a map. Although this lesson was based mostly on listening, I think that this topic would deserve a brief orientation in the map. When listening about the West End, Trafalgar Square and other places, students should have a basic notion where these places are.

The aims of the lesson were fulfilled since students extended their knowledge about London. Although the lesson was demanding students were successful in completing all the tasks in the time limit. The whole lesson was based on recorded materials therefore students had enough practice of listening. Since the listening material concerned some interesting places in London, they gained basic knowledge of the West End and London Regional transport as well. During listening students were acquainted with new expressions needful for the text. The names of places were revised in the writing activity. New expressions needful for the text were revised at the beginning of the following lesson (not included in this project) in a pre-activity by asking questions which contained these words.

Especially writing showed that students knew the main places of interest in the West End. They remembered both the names of these places and their correct

spelling. The character of the tasks when students had to prove their ability to catch particular words or information motivated students so that they were very tentative and concentrated on listening. They were content with the results of the activities since they were able to catch nearly all the expressions as the final task proved. Their positive results became an important source of motivation and an incentive stimulus for their further learning.

### Chapter III. Conclusion

In my thesis I tried to answer the question whether teaching and learning the subject Life and Institutions in the English speaking countries could be interesting for secondary school students and thus motivating enough for them so that they would acquire the knowledge from the subject as well as the command of English language in a more effective way.

During my teaching practice I realized that the students' knowledge of the English speaking countries is not sufficient. Teaching and learning Life and Institutions was taken as a "secondary-class" subject in comparison to grammar, reading, writing and speaking, or it was considered only as a necessary preparation for the school leaving exam.

My classroom teaching experience proved that the way I had decided to design my Professional Project was not wrong. I found out that the subject Life and Institutions can be taught creatively with the help of various adapted



materials. I tried to motivate my students to learn new facts about the English speaking countries with enthusiasm and interest.

Focusing on one topic (London) from the broad subject area (the English speaking countries) allowed me to incorporate the variety of activities into the lessons. Students practised reading, writing, listening and speaking, and they revised grammar and vocabulary that issued from the lesson topics.

## A. THE THEORETICAL BASIS OF THE PRACTICAL INVESTIGATION

**Motivation** became the primary precondition for my Professional Project design. I realized that the activities I was going to plan would not function if students were not involved in my lessons. As Brown points out “ success in a task is due simply to the fact that someone is ‘motivated’. It is easy in second language learning to claim that a learner will be successful with the proper motivation“ (Brown, H. D., 1994: 152).

Attractive choice of topics, variety of activities and focus on skill work became a basis for my Professional Project. These features were to contribute to the motivating stimulus of the activities. When I was to choose topics for the Professional Project lessons, I resorted to such areas that would be both close to students’ interests and offer them enough knowledge about the English speaking countries.

In the first lesson (London and some of its sights) students reacted lively and quickly. Some of them visited London in the past and it contributed to their



concern in the subject of a lesson. The work with a map helped also involve students into the topic since the students like working with a map.

In the second lesson (Madame Tussaud's Museum) students liked reading, speaking and writing about this museum. This sort of museums is very attractive for children because they can meet many historical personalities who are known from books and films. A lot of students had an opportunity to visit this museum, some of them at least had heard about this attractive place.

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> lesson students were tentative, calm and they enjoyed the lesson about London underground, Trafalgar Square and Covent Garden. The materials about London were written in a very interesting way. Students learnt the new name of the underground (tube). They also learnt something new about London transport. They may have been motivated by filling gaps. They could show that they were able to understand many things and write postcard from London.

The aim of **skill work** incorporated to the lesson was two-folded. First of all, the change in skills, from practising productive skills to receptive ones, served as a change in the character of a particular lesson that should have attracted the students' attention throughout the whole lesson.

Secondly, the students were provided with different skill-based exercises that should have contributed to the improvement of the command of the English language. Byrne, D. supports these ideas when he says that: "Exposure to the foreign language through more than one medium, especially if skills are properly

integrated, appears to be more effective than relying on a single medium alone“ (Byrne, D. , 1988: 5).

In the first lesson students read short articles about London sights and then spoke about them. They tried to speak using their own words. They spoke fluently because they concentrated on specific tasks. They were not bored during the lesson. They reacted quickly and lively.

Reading and speaking was also included in the second lesson where students read the article about Madame Tussaud's Museum and prepared short speeches. They had also an opportunity for writing. This sequence of activities seemed to be advantageous because they obtained some knowledge about this London sight and then they could use this knowledge in speaking. They were motivated in speaking because they knew what to speak about. Last but not least they were able to listen to each other.

Writing occurred in the second and third lessons. Their writing activities were based on the knowledge of the lesson topics. By writing activities they refreshed their knowledge about the topics. Writing was an enjoyable activity for the students especially writing postcards in the third lesson. The students had fun when they were thinking who they would write to.

Listening to recorded tapes was included in the third lesson. During the listening students were tentative and concentrated. They managed to catch



particular words and it motivated students to their next tasks. Listening to each other during students' speeches was included in all lessons.

TEFL experts recommend introducing **variety** into learning activities as a more external form of motivation (Celce-Murcia, M. 1984, Byrne, D. 1988, Murdoch, G. S. 1986).

In the first lesson reading the text individually was changed by pair work where students had to co-operate. This form of co-operation belonged to the effective activities because this reciprocal work helped them to fulfil the task. Even weaker students had the chance to contribute to this activity.

In the second lesson practising of subject and object questions was followed by filling gaps. Each student obtained a copy of a filling exercise. Students used new words from the article to complete the exercise, and they did not have any serious problems with the task. It was also a good opportunity to fix the new words when they had to write them in a meaningful text.

In the third lesson students guessed the meaning of unknown words at the beginning of listening. Then, the understanding of listening was checked by answering questions. It was revealed that students had understood the meaning quite well. Writing was a guided activity in this lesson. It was a bit funny activity for students. By writing the postcard they could concentrate on new expressions and fix them in a lively and real-like activity.



Although the focus of the present final paper concerns the ways of teaching and learning the subject Life and Institutions, the content of lessons offered also several opportunities for the students to revise grammar and vocabulary. At the beginning I was not sure whether practising grammar and vocabulary would not be too much for the students and whether this activity would not disrupt the flow of the lessons. However, since the grammar as well as vocabulary issued from the topic of the lesson and the students considered these short activities as help for understanding the tasks, it can be stated that the activities supplemented the lessons smoothly and logically.

In the first lesson we revised some grammatical structures and prepositions. All these expressions were in context with the topic of the lesson and they contributed to better understanding when we were speaking about some sights in London.

In the second lesson we also dealt with grammar and vocabulary. We practised subject and object questions and reviewed the Past Tense. In the closing activity student learnt new vocabulary by filling gaps and answering the questions concerning Madame Tussaud's Museum.

In the third lesson the students unintentionally extended their vocabulary by answering questions in a written form and by writing a postcard from London. All these activities contributed to the better understanding of the topics of the lesson.

## B. SUMMARY

Theory says that the universal concept of the subject of Life and Institutions does not exist. In practice there is no special subject Life and Institutions taught at our secondary schools. There is no curriculum of this subject as well as requirements of students' knowledge about the English speaking countries.

My Professional Project based on my long-term experience and experts' views proved that it was possible to teach this subject in another way: in an interesting way for students for through more effective strategies.

I did not have a possibility to test the effectiveness of my teaching activities so I cannot state that students really acquired the knowledge I supposed they should have had for a long period of time. But in my last lesson in a pre-activity I used students' knowledge from the previous lessons. I was pleased that almost all students remembered all the basic data and they were active to show them.

The connection between varied and interesting topics during the lessons contributed to a strong motivating impulse to students. They fulfilled their tasks actively and expected further activities eagerly. The students practised not only all four skills but also mental skills when they solved problems in groups or pairs. Moreover, they learnt how to co-operate in pairs and achieved certain results after agreeing with a partner.



All these principles mentioned in the conclusion could “bridge over” a gap between the required knowledge of Life and Institutions and the ways this subject is taught including insufficient material provision.

10. Principles of Language Learning and Teaching. Prentice Hall Regents, 1993, p. 152.

Byrne, D. Teaching Writing Skills. Longman, 1983, p. 5.

Celce-Murcia, M. 1984. Interaction and Communication in the ESL Classroom. A Forum Anthology, Volume IV, 1984-1988, p. 28.

Chavido K. HBJ Publishers, 1983, p. 219.

Davis, E. O. Helping Teachers and Students Understand Learning Styles. English Teaching Forum, July 1994, pp. 12-15.

Kerr, L. 1985. Pair Work - Some Practical Hints. A Forum Anthology, Volume IV, 1984-1988, p. 35.

Meady, S. 1984. Cultural Knowledge and the Teaching of Reading. A Forum Anthology, Volume IV, 1984-1988, p. 4.

Wardell, J. E. 1986. A More Integrated Approach to the Teaching of Reading. A Forum Anthology, Volume IV, 1984-1988, p. 81.

## References

- Allen, D. and Smith, P. 1995. Life and Culture in the English Speaking World. Milano: La Spiga Languages, p. 2.
- Brown, H. D. Principles of Language Learning and Teaching. Prentice Hall Regents. 1994. p. 152.
- Byrne, D. Teaching Writing Skills. Longman, 1988. p. 5.
- Celce-Murcia, M. 1984. Interaction and Communication in the ESOL Classroom. A Forum Anthology, Volume IV, 1984-1988, p. 28.
- Chastain K. HBJ Publishers, 1988. p. 219.
- Davis, E. C. Helping Teachers and Students Understand Learning Styles. English Teaching Forum. July 1994. pp. 12 – 15.
- Kerr, L. 1985. Pair Work – Some Practical Hints. A Forum Anthology, Volume IV, 1984 –1988, p. 85.
- McKay, S. 1984. Cultural Knowledge and the Teaching of Reading. A Forum Anthology, Volume IV, 1984 – 1988, p. 9.
- Murdoch, G. S. 1986. A More Integrated Approach to the Teaching of Reading. A Forum Anthology, Volume IV, 1984 – 1988, p. 85.



Nicholas, L. N. 1988. Teaching Listening Comprehension. A Forum Anthology, Volume IV, 1984 – 1988, p. 86.

Prodromou, L. 1992. From Cultural Background to Cultural Foreground. Practical English Teaching. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 27.

Scrivener, J. Learning Teaching. Heineman, 1994. p. 22.

Sheerin S., Seath J, White G. 1994. Spotlight on Britain. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 17 – 23.

Stempleski, S. 1993. Promoting Cultural Awareness. Practical English Teaching. Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 11.

Stempleski, S. and Tomalin, B. 1994. Cultural Awareness. Oxford University Press, p. 5.

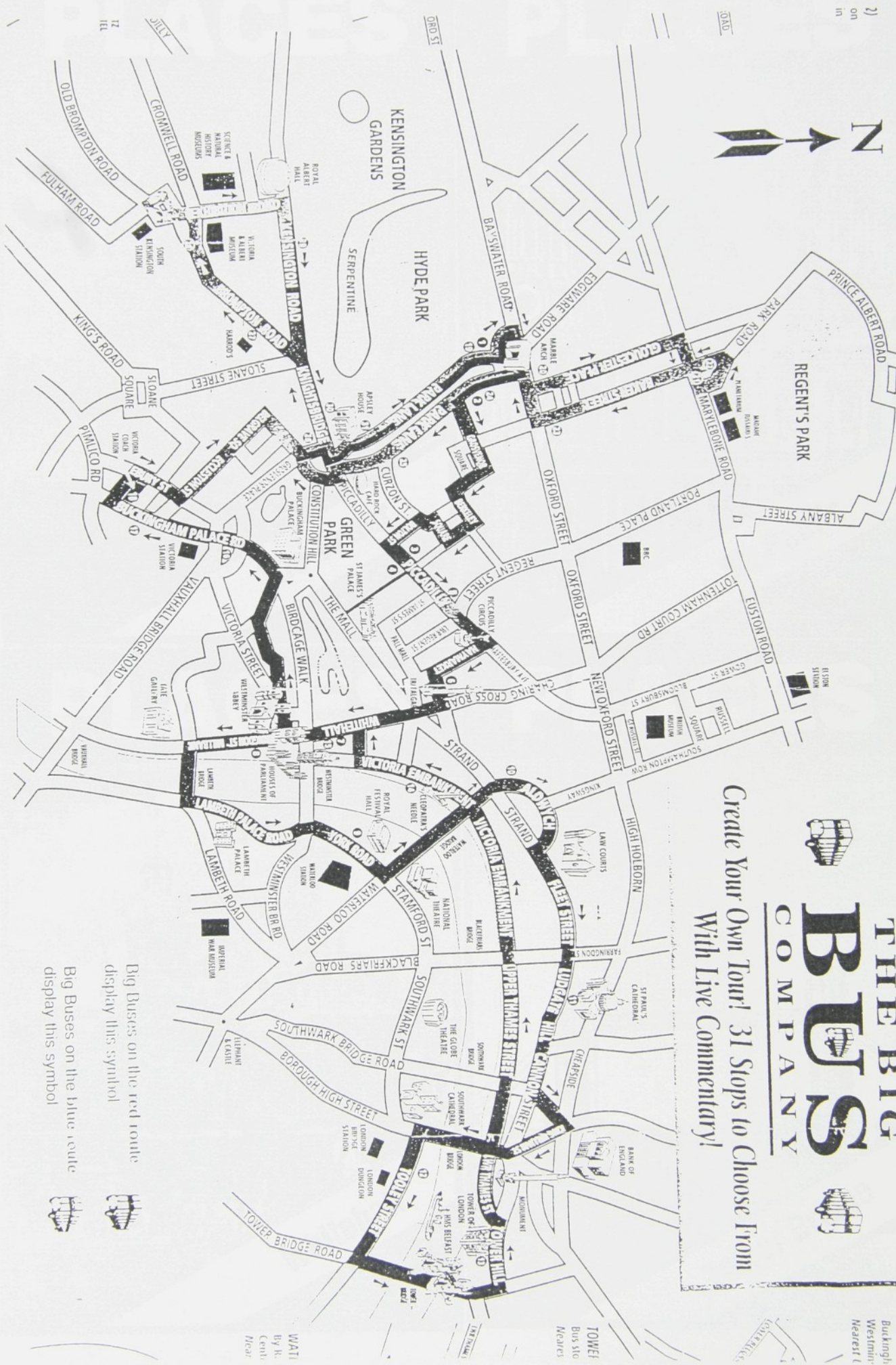
Vesely, K. 1983. The English Speaking Countries. Statni pedagogicke nakladatelství, p. 6.

Zaytoun, A. S. 1984. Different Techniques for Teaching Listening Comprehension. A Forum Anthology, Volume IV, 1984 – 1988, p. 81.

Hello, Foreign Languages Publication, Bratislava, 1 – 10/1995

# APPENDIX 1





Create Your Own Tour! 31 Stops to Choose From  
With Live Commentary!

# THE BIG BUS COMPANY



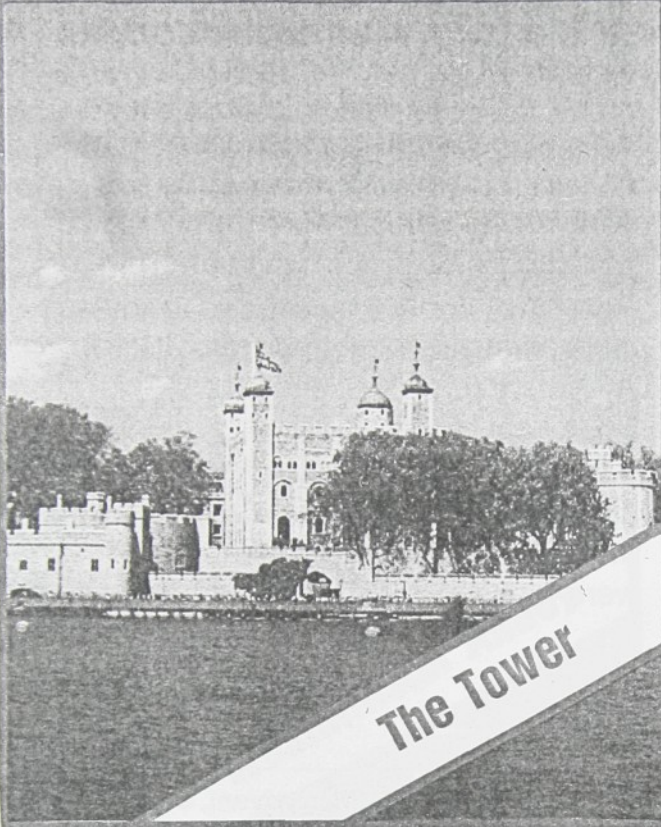
Big Buses on the red route display this symbol



LOWE  
BUS STO  
MEARES



# PLACES



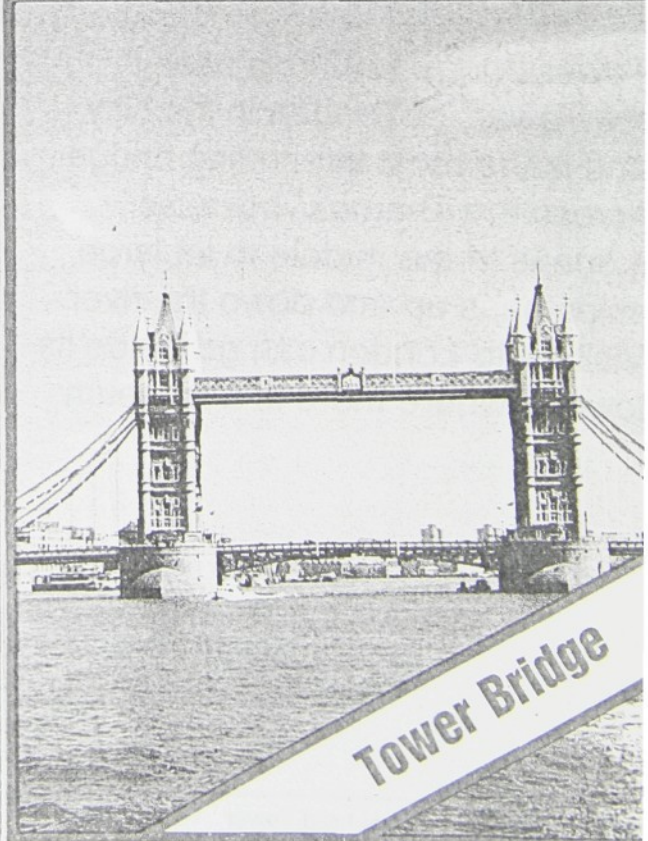
# PLACES



# PLACES

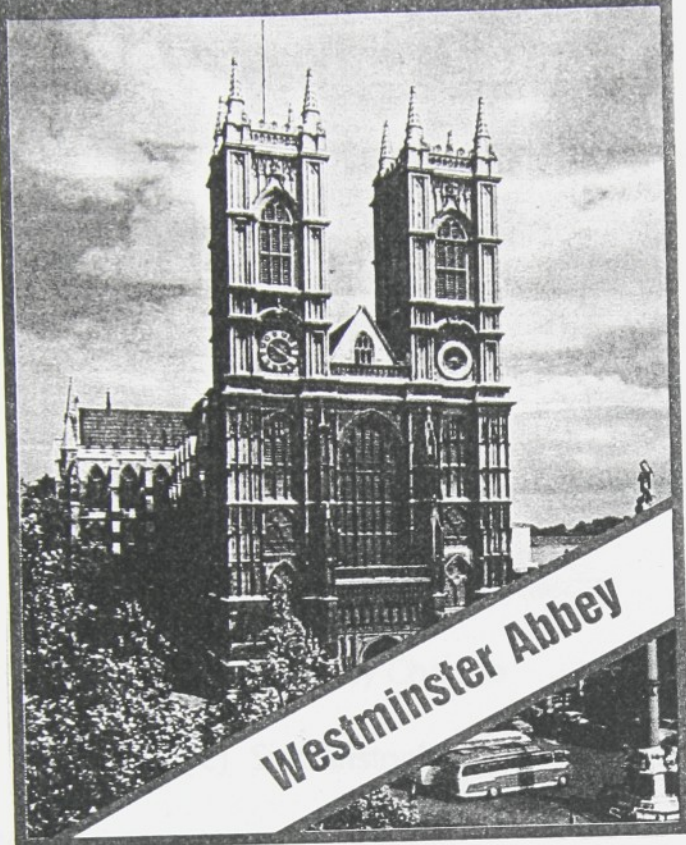


# PLACES





# PLACES



## Westminster Abbey

Westminster Abbey is a church in London. It is near the Houses of Parliament and Big Ben. Its history began in the 11th century. The Abbey is the place where kings and queens are crowned and buried. Memorials to famous British poets and writers are found here in Poet's Corner.

Lesson 1; stage 4:QUIZCircle the correct answer:

- 1) Whitehall is: a) The Queen's summer residence.  
b) A street in London.  
c) The gallery which houses a large collection of British paintings and sculptures.
- 2) St. Paul's Cathedral was planned by:  
a) Michelangelo Buonarotti  
b) Geoffrey Chaucer  
c) Sir Christopher Wren
- 3) Westminster Abbey  
a) Was built in the 13<sup>th</sup> century.  
b) It is the place where kings and queens are crowned and buried.  
c) It was destroyed by the Great Fire of London in 1666.
- 4) Tower Bridge  
a) The changing of the guard takes place there.  
b) It opens in the middle.  
c) You can see the crown jewels there.
- 5) The Tower  
a) It is the oldest part around St. Paul.  
b) Many famous poets and writers are buried there.  
c) It used to be a palace and a state prison.



# WHO WAS MADAME TUSSAUD ?

## APPENDIX 2



1. Madame Tussaud's Waxworks - London  
 2. Madame Tussaud's Waxworks - London  
 3. Madame Tussaud's Waxworks - London  
 4. Madame Tussaud's Waxworks - London

Madame Tussaud was born in Paris, France, in 1767. She was the daughter of a wax chandler. Her father, Jean Tussaud, was a famous wax chandler in Paris. He was the first to make life-size wax figures. Madame Tussaud's father was a famous wax chandler in Paris. He was the first to make life-size wax figures. Madame Tussaud's father was a famous wax chandler in Paris. He was the first to make life-size wax figures.

When she was 14, she moved to London with her father and her older son. When she was 14, she moved to London with her father and her older son. When she was 14, she moved to London with her father and her older son.

Madame Tussaud's famous exhibition of wax figures started in 1835. It started in 1835. It started in 1835. It started in 1835. It started in 1835. It started in 1835. It started in 1835. It started in 1835.

- They are very often dressed in historical costumes.
- The figure's hands are always made of wax, and are the person's real hands.
- To make the head, even the smallest details, the head must be measured.
- It takes about six months to complete a figure.
- When Boris Becker, the tennis player, was in London, he was 'in a crouch' on his knee - so he was 'in a crouch' on his knee.
- The earliest animatronic, or moving figure, at Madame Tussaud's was The Sleeping Beauty. It was made in 1840, and it looks as though she is breathing.



Madame Tussaud

# WHO WAS MADAME TUSSAUD ?

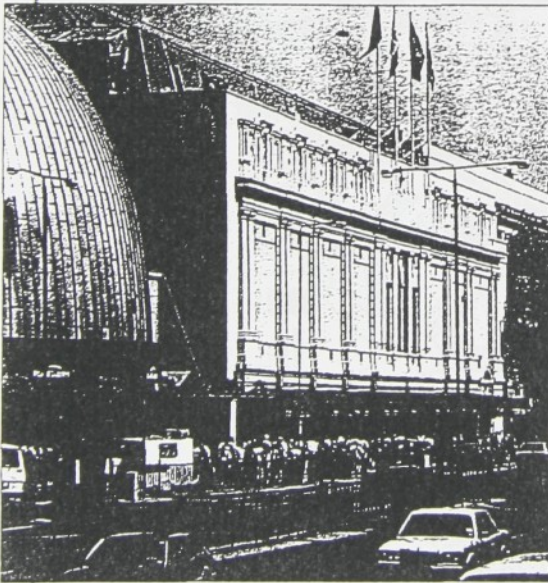


In 1761 Marie Grosholtz was born in France. She went to Paris at the age of six to join her German-Swiss uncle, Dr. Curtius. Three years later, in 1770, he opened an exhibition<sup>1</sup> of life-size wax<sup>2</sup> figures. Marie, who later became Tussaud, started making wax figures too. Aged 34 she married Monsieur Tussaud, an engineer from Mâcon in 1795. Two sons and a daughter were born in the seven years they lived together.

Then, in 1802, she moved to London with her Exhibition and her oldest son and when she died in 1850, her grandsons continued the business.

Madame Tussaud's famous exhibition of wax figures is very old. It started in 1835, and has been very popular ever since. Here you can see over 300 wax figures of famous people.

- They are very often dressed in their own clothes.
- The figure's hands are always moulded<sup>3</sup> from the person's real hands.
- To make the head, even the nostrils<sup>4</sup> and ears have to be measured.
- It takes about six months to complete a figure.
- When Boris Becker, the tennis star, sat for his figure, he had a graze<sup>5</sup> on his knee – so his wax figure has one too!
- The earliest animatronic, or moving figure, at Madame Tussaud's was The Sleeping Beauty. Her chest<sup>6</sup> rises and falls, as though she is breathing.

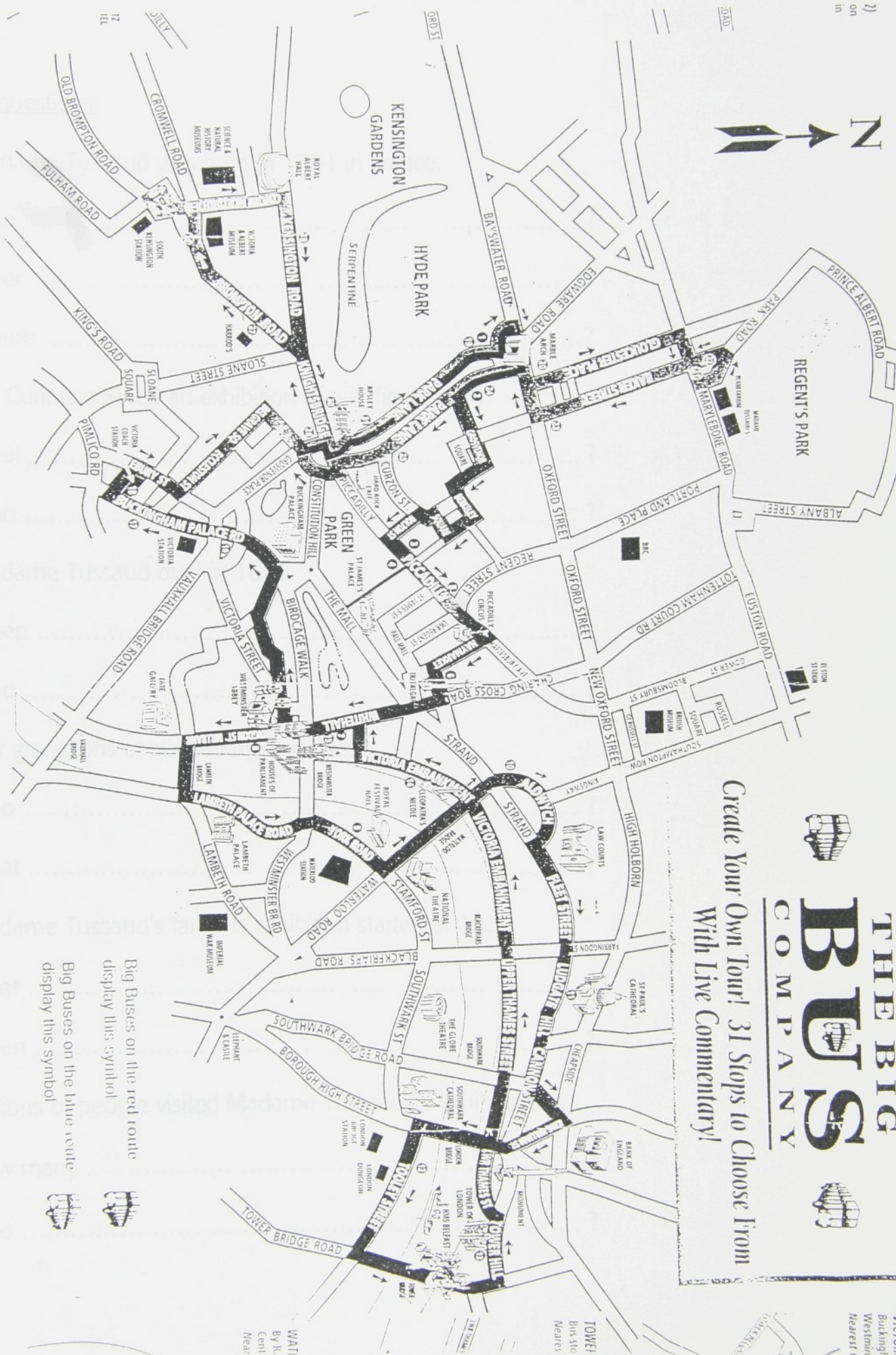


/ 1 ek'si'bišn – výstava, 2 wæks – voskové,  
 3 mouldid – vymodelované, odliaté,  
 4 'nostrilz – nosové dierky, 5 'greiz – odrenina,  
 6 čest – hrud' /



Madame Tussaud





# THE BIG BUS COMPANY

Create Your Own Tour! 31 Stops to Choose From  
With Live Commentary!

Big Buses on the red route  
display this symbol

Big Buses on the blue route  
display this symbol



Watling  
By R.  
Cent  
Near

TOWER  
Bus Sto  
Nearest

## Lesson 2; stage 3; step 2:

### Make questions:

1. Madame Tussaud was born in 1761 in France.

Who ..... ?

When ..... ?

Where ..... ?

2. Dr. Curtius opened an exhibition of wax figures.

What ..... ?

Who ..... ?

3. Madame Tussaud died in 1850.

When ..... ?

Who ..... ?

4. Her grandsons continued the business.

Who ..... ?

What ..... ?

5. Madame Tussaud's famous exhibition started in 1835.

What ..... ?

When ..... ?

6. Millions of people visited Madame Tussaud's exhibition.

How many ..... ?

Who ..... ?



Lesson 2; stage 4; step 1:

4<sup>th</sup> part of lesson (closure, culminating activity)

Fill in the gaps:

In 1761 Madame Tussaud was ..... in ..... . She .....to Paris at the age of ..... . Aged 34 she ..... Monsieur Tussaud, an ..... From Macon. In 1802 she ..... to London. She ..... In 1850. Her grandsons ..... The ..... .Madame Tussaud's famous exhibition ..... in 1835. When Boris Becker, the tennis star, ..... for this figure, he ..... a graze on his knee. The earliest moving figure ..... The Sleeping .....

## London

### London Regional Transport

I heard as it was all over around London is  
all London Regional Transport bus or  
or there are more. These run from the

## APPENDIX 3

Not all people are up when waiting for a  
bus or a lot of people think. They get  
very annoyed with some numbers - people  
who don't wait their turn in the queue.

The London Underground - or 'tube' - has  
nine lines. It's very fast, and in Central  
London you're never more than a few  
minutes' walk away from a station.



# The West End

## London

### London Regional Transport

The easiest way to travel around London is by a London Regional Transport bus or underground train. These run from the centre of the city right out into the countryside.

British people queue up when waiting for a bus (and lots of other things!). They get very annoyed with queue-jumpers – people who don't wait their turn in the queue.

The London Underground – or 'tube' – has nine lines. It's very fast, and in Central London you're never more than a few minutes' walk away from a station.

# The West End

The West End is the name given to the area of central London north from The Mall to Oxford Street. It includes Trafalgar Square, the main shopping areas of Oxford Street, Regent Street and Bond Street, and the entertainment centres of Soho, Piccadilly Circus, Leicester Square and Shaftesbury Avenue. Its name is associated with glamour and bright lights.

## Trafalgar Square

Trafalgar Square was built early in the last century to commemorate the Battle of Trafalgar. Admiral Lord Nelson's statue stands on top of a column in the middle of Trafalgar Square. The square makes a good place for people to meet – coaches pick up parties of visitors, marchers unite for protest meetings, and at Christmas time carol singers gather round a huge Christmas tree which is sent to Britain from Norway every year. Behind Nelson's Column is the National Gallery, an art gallery in which you can find many old masters.

## Shopping

Most of London's big department stores are in Oxford Street and Regent Street. They are always crowded, but at sale times, in January and July, there are so many people that it is difficult to move and it is usually safer to go in the direction of the majority! These days, it is often difficult to distinguish the goods in one large store from those in another.

If you are looking for something 'different' (but cannot afford the prices of Bond Street) it is certainly worth going to New Covent Garden. This used to be England's biggest fruit and vegetable market, but a few years ago, the market was moved to a new site on the other side of the River Thames. The old market, now called 'New Covent Garden', was restored and converted into a shopping centre. There are now more than forty shops of many different kinds, and there are several places to eat and drink. The opening hours are different from most other shops: they open at 10 a.m. and close at 8 p.m., whereas most shops open from 9 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. As well as shopping, there is entertainment with lunch-time theatre groups and classical, jazz, folk and pop music.



Lesson 3; stage 3; step 1:

Additional material No 1

Listen and answer the questions.

London Regional Transport

- 1. How many lines does the London Underground have?  
.....
- 2. Who are queue—jumpers?  
.....
- 3. What is the second name for the London Underground?  
.....

Trafalgar Square, Shopping in London

- 1. What does Trafalgar Square commemorate?  
.....
- 2. What did Covent Garden use to be?  
.....
- 3. Which country is a Christmas tree sent to Britain from?  
.....
- 4. What sort of music can you hear in Covent Garden?  
.....

Lesson 3; stage 4; step 1:

Additional material No 2

### **Trafalgar Square**

Trafalgar Square was built nearly in the last century to ..... the Battle of Trafalgar. Admiral ..... Statue stands on the top of a column in the middle of Trafalgar Square. The square makes a good place for people to meet – coaches pick up parties of visitors, marchers unite for protest ....., and at Christmas time carol singers gather round a huge Christmas tree which is sent to Britain from ..... every year. Behind Nelson's Column is ..... , an art gallery in which you can find many old masters.

### **Shopping in London**

Most of London's big ..... stores are in ..... Street and ..... Street. They are always crowded, but at sale times, in January and July, there are so many people that it is ..... To move and it is usually safer to go in the direction of the majority. These days, it is often difficult to distinguish the goods in one large store from those in another. If you are looking for something „different“ (but cannot afford the prices of Bond Street) it is certainly worth going to New Covent Garden. This used to be England's biggest fruit and vegetable ....., but a few years ago, the market was moved to a new site on the other side of the River Thames. The old market, now called ..... , was ..... and ..... into a shopping centre. There are now more than forty shops of many different kinds, and there are several places to eat and drink. The opening hours are different from most other shops: they open at 10 a. m. and close at 8 p.m., whereas most shops open from ..... to ..... p. m. As well as shopping, there is ..... With lunch-time theatre groups and ....., jazz, folk and pop music.



Lesson 3; stage 5:

Additional material No 3

**Postcard**

Write this holiday post-card.

Dear ..... ,

Well, I am in ..... . I am sitting in ..... Garden in a shopping ..... . I am drinking and ..... and listening to ..... music.

I am having a ..... time. Tomorrow I am going to ..... Street and .....

Street to do some shopping.

Love,

.....

1 of 10 Questions

## Questionnaire - Dotazník

1. Jak se jmenujete, a podepsat ho.



% of incorrect responses

2. Jaké jsou některé z hlavních měst těchto částí Britských ostrovů:

## APPENDIX 4

3. Jaké jsou některé z hlavních měst těchto částí Britských ostrovů:

4. Jaké jsou některé z hlavních měst těchto částí Britských ostrovů:

5. Jaké jsou některé z hlavních měst těchto částí Britských ostrovů:

6. Vložte tyto pojmy do těchto měst: Londýn, New York, Washington.

7. Vložte tyto pojmy do těchto měst: Londýn, New York, Washington.

8. Vložte tyto pojmy do těchto měst: Londýn, New York, Washington.

9. Vložte tyto pojmy do těchto měst: Londýn, New York, Washington.

10. Vložte tyto pojmy do těchto měst: Londýn, New York, Washington.

11. Vložte tyto pojmy do těchto měst: Londýn, New York, Washington.

12. Vložte tyto pojmy do těchto měst: Londýn, New York, Washington.

13. Vložte tyto pojmy do těchto měst: Londýn, New York, Washington.

14. Vložte tyto pojmy do těchto měst: Londýn, New York, Washington.

15. Vložte tyto pojmy do těchto měst: Londýn, New York, Washington.

16. Vložte tyto pojmy do těchto měst: Londýn, New York, Washington.

17. Vložte tyto pojmy do těchto měst: Londýn, New York, Washington.

18. Vložte tyto pojmy do těchto měst: Londýn, New York, Washington.

19. Vložte tyto pojmy do těchto měst: Londýn, New York, Washington.



Questionnaire–Dotazník

Dotazník je anonymní, nepodepisujte ho.

% of incorrect responses

1. Napište názvy hlavních měst těchto částí Britských ostrovů:

England .....	0
Wales .....	53
Scotland .....	43
Northern Ireland .....	53

2. Zařadte tyto pojmy do těchto měst: Londýn, New York, Washington.

Buckingham Palace .....	0
Central Park .....	43
Pentagon .....	11
Downing Street No 10.....	50
Wall Street .....	11
The Capitol .....	53
Albert Memorial .....	43
Washington Monument .....	0
Statue of Liberty .....	29
Hyde Park .....	43
The Metropolitan Museum of Art .....	68
Sherlock Holmes Museum .....	11
World Trade Center – the Twins .....	64

Lincoln Memorial .....	25
Empire State Building .....	28
Bronx .....	32

### 3. Vyhlášení nezávislosti Spojených států amerických bylo podepsáno – podtrhněte:

16. 12. 1773	
10. 4. 1775	
4. 7. 1776	39
19. 10. 1781	

### 4. Prvním americkým prezidentem byl:

Thomas Jefferson	
Abraham Lincoln	
George Washington	29
Henry Hudson	

### 5. Hlavní město Kanady je: podtrhněte

Montreal, Ottawa, Toronto, Vancouver	0
--------------------------------------	---

### 6. Přiřadte tyto výrazy k názvům zemí: konstituční monarchie, nezávislý člen britského společenství národů, republika

Kanada .....	71
Spojené státy americké .....	11
Austrálie .....	53
Nový Zéland .....	46
Anglie, Skotsko, Severní Irsko, Wales .....	21

## 7. Zařadte tyto pojmy k těmto zemím: U.S.A., Spojené království Velké Británie a

### Severního Irska

House of Lords .....	11
House of Representatives.....	50
Labour Party.....	32
House of Commons.....	39
Congress .....	11
Senate .....	21
Democratic Party .....	46
Houses of Parliament .....	50
Conservative Party .....	53
Republican Party .....	46

## 8. Zařadte tyto zeměpisné výrazy k těmto zemím: U.S.A., Velká Británie, Irsko, Austrálie, Nový Zéland

Grand Canyon .....	3
Southern Alps .....	100
Nevada.....	18
The River Thames .....	18
The Hebrides and the Orkneys .....	78
Tasman Sea .....	39
Stratford—upon—Avon .....	46
The River Murray and the Darling .....	43
The Rocky Mountains .....	11
Lake Ontario .....	7