

A boyhood home

Topic

The National trust, the restoration of John Lennon's childhood home and the life of Lennon

Aims

- To develop reading skills
- To practice speaking about past memories and life histories
- To review past tenses

Age group

Teens

Level

B2

Time

60 – 90 minutes

Materials

1. A Boyhood Home Student worksheet
2. Internet links: <http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/> - website of The National Trust
<http://www.merseybeat.ndo.co.uk/> - a source of articles and images of The Beatles and Lennon
<http://www.lennonworld.com/> - a comprehensive resource with downloadable sound files and information on John Lennon
<http://www.thebeatles.com/home> - the official Beatles website

Lesson plan

Introduction

This lesson consists of two texts which explore the relationships between buildings and famous people who lived in them. The texts here focus on John Lennon and 'Mendips' where he grew up. The first describes the work of The National Trust on a 'mystery house' in Liverpool.

Procedure

1. Introduce the topic	<p>The element of suspense and prediction or anticipation are important to this theme so do not reveal the identity of Lennon straight away, if you can help it. The second text sets the house in context and focuses on the childhood memories of Lennon as seen through the eyes of his Aunt. The follow up work includes an information gap on the life of John.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It would be useful to bring a visual element to this lesson. The internet links will help you as well as these teacher notes.
2 Famous Places	<p>If you have visuals of some of the famous places in task 1, give groups students a selection of them to describe so that you can get suggestions for words. Otherwise write the buildings on the board. Ask pairs to think of what they have in common and get suggestions of a couple of similar buildings in your host country.</p>
3. Describing buildings	<p>This exercise anticipates the language they will need and also develops expectations. People usually associate this language with a stately home, not a small house.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put students into pairs or groups to study these phrases. Answer their questions about meaning or allow dictionary use and give a sentence as an example. If you have images from the previous exercise higher levels can practice making sentences about these pictures with the phrases. Discuss the questions with the whole class, but do not let it drag on for too long. You will see from the second question if they have any difficulties talking about historical periods. Plan your next step based on this.
4 The Language of Time	<p>Task 3 is very useful for preparing lower levels to talk about the text. For some students it will just be a reminder. However, bear in mind that even higher levels might stumble on the dictation of dates as writing down numbers is very challenging for all levels. Keep this task down to 5 minutes. For the dictation activity, read out some of the examples from Task 3 or similar examples, which the students should write down – then check their answers on the board.</p>
5. A boyhood home – part 1	<p>If you are able to print up images from the tour inside 'Mendips' paste them in sets on cards. Give groups of 3 students a set of images and ask them to complete the notes before they read. Get descriptions and speculation from the class - for example:</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>It looks quite modern,</i> - <i>It doesn't look very old</i> - <i>It looks post-war / 1950s</i> - <i>It doesn't look like a big house</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An alternative is to use the pictures after reading to satisfy their curiosity and to continue speculation. • If you don't have images of Mendips, try to get one or two of semi-detached houses in suburbia and clarify the difference between a semi, detached, and a terraced house with a simple diagram on the board. • You may wish to give a bit of background to The National Trust as this point. See their website for the numbers of properties etc. in 'Facts and Figures'
6. Guess Who	<p>Put students into pairs or groups to draw up a visitor profile – tell them to include sex, age, occupational level, interests etc. They will find out in the next text that the house appeals to all ages and types of people due to the sheer influence of Lennon and his perceived importance to our cultural heritage.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students might be close to guessing that it is Lennon or McCartney if they know about the Beatles, but don't say anything at this stage but ask them why they think it is who they think it is.
7. Find out	<p>In this task, the students get to find out who lived in the house. Get Students to write questions to ask you about the person who lived in the house. The rule for the first question is that they cannot ask the name of the occupant.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They can ask: Is he still living in Liverpool? Has he seen his house restored? Can visitors take photos? Etc. • Put students into pairs to do the reading task. If the group are able to discuss in detail ask them to consider why people might spend their free time looking at other people's homes.
8. Your childhood home	<p>The first two questions are based on the text and can be discussed in pairs. They help prepare the ideas for the third question which can be done individually. Do some example notes on the board for yourself and elicit questions about your childhood home from the class using the headings.</p>
8. All About John	<p>If you need to, use a whole class task with just a bit of practice in making questions you could give the whole class one version with question words as prompts: What, Where, When, Who, Which etc.</p> <p>Then get suggested questions round the class and answer them yourself.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy enough texts of 'A' and 'B' versions and give out to each half of the class. Put two student 'A's together and two student 'B's together to write some

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questions for their missing information. Then mix up the class and put a student 'A' and 'B' to work together. They must not look at each others texts. They have to finish with a complete text.

- You could give the gapped texts and question making as homework preparation for the next class. They make the questions and then do the above sharing of information at the start of the next lesson. This could then lead to doing a Lennon song, like 'Imagine'.

8. Icons

This can be done in groups. The final question can be turned in to a group ,pair or individual project leading to a short presentation.

- If your higher level students use the internet give them the task of finding out more about The Beatles and their contribution to UK culture and world music culture and why was their music so special?

Contributed by

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