

To the Teacher

Where in the World is an integrated skills activity book for beginning-level ESL students. It features visits to 30 well-known places around the world. As the learners “travel” from place to place, the complexity of the language increases until in the last few places, the learners are working at a low-intermediate level. The book can be effectively used with upper elementary school, high school, college and adult learners. In addition to language development, it deals with historical and cultural content, and selected current issues throughout our contemporary world.

The book, in essence, is a vicarious adventure for your students. Some of the places in the book are in your students’ native countries, places in which they, of course, take great pride and pleasure. Others are places they would really like to see. It is a book that features interesting, unusual, and beautiful places and different cultures to enjoy, talk about, and learn from.

High-level ESL books on interesting topics are common. But low-level books can also be interesting and enjoyable. This book presents accessible topics and a variety of interactive activities. In addition to the pictures, which are lessons in themselves, the book includes speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills as well as pronunciation practice, vocabulary development, and grammar review. It’s all there.

As teachers have long known, understanding and forming questions are among the most difficult challenges for the beginning ESL student. At the very lowest levels of learning, students are required to answer questions such as, “Where were you born?” and “When were you born?” and ask questions such as, “Where is the bus station?”

For that reason, one of the aims of this book is to teach students to ask and to respond to questions, especially to the five W’s of *what*, *where*, *when*, *who*, *why*, and even *how*. When coupled with discussion of interesting historical and natural sites around the world, the task is more enjoyable.

Adding to the interest, each lesson has a choral rap/chant that will have students clapping, “singing,” and even “acting out,” bringing the house down. The units begin and end with a “phone call” with Igor, who travels around the world with the students. As the lessons progress, the phone calls become increasingly idiomatic — the kind of language that native speakers use in everyday conversation. So until you and your students actually go around the world, enjoy the pictures, travel virtually with Igor — and bon voyage!

Finally, have your students ever brought pictures of their countries to class? Have you noticed the immediate response of other students, the genuine interest and spontaneous questions? “What is this place?” “Where is it?” “Have you been there?” The connection with the pictures and with each other is immediate. And they can’t stop talking. It’s a teacher’s dream. From such experiences, repeated many times over, *Where in the World* was born. • AS

How to Use the Book

Introduce the book.

Use the map on page viii to introduce the places and countries in the book. Let the students work in pairs or groups to try to identify the location of the places. Then briefly describe the parts of the book, using the first unit as an example.

Begin with the picture.

Stimulate the students' interest. Get them to say anything they can about it. Ask them questions: What is it? What do you know about this place? Where is it? What's special about it? Has anybody been there? Show its location on the map. Bring in other pictures.

Practice the WH questions.

Use the questions and their responses under the picture. Consult the reading if necessary. Model the WH questions and answers, and then have the students give a response. This reinforces the meaning of the WH questions and also prepares the students for the reading.

A. Where's Igor?

Each dialogue introduces the site. Find out what's going on. Where is Igor? What's he doing there? The dialogue may need to be modeled, then practiced again and again to get the right rhythm and intonation.

Play Part A on the CD (optional).

Have the students listen to part A at least twice. Then have them read along aloud at the same pace to practice the rhythm and intonation of English.

B. Introduce the new words of the text.

Show pictures, explain, act out, and write translations into native languages. Do anything to establish meaning. Say the words and have the students repeat. Add stress marks where necessary.

C. Read the text.

Read to the students. Read slowly, stopping when necessary to explain the content. Let them read with you a second time. Ask for volunteers to read singly. Note that the number at the end of the reading is the number of words in the reading. The readings progress from 50 to 175. The passage is also on the CD.

D. Answer the questions individually or in pairs.

This is a comprehension check to be sure the students understand the content. Notice that they are asked to respond with a variety of answers (there's more than one way to say true or false).

E. Have the students write answers to the WH questions.

You can also have them practice orally. Student A asks the question. Student B says the answer they have written.

F. Grammar check.

Have the students do this individually. This can be a diagnostic check to see what aspects of the grammar may need more work.

G. Word check.

The words are key words from the reading. Have the students do this individually, then pair up to compare answers. The answers are in the back of the book if they disagree.

H. Dictate sentences.

The sentences are at the end of this book, progressing from short to longer. They are broken into breath groups, usually in groups that correspond to basic English phrase structure: Subject, Verb, Object, Adverbial. Sentences are available on a supplemental CD.

I. Write.

Write a "Wish you were here" postcard. First, write a model paragraph. Point out capitalization and punctuation. Make sure the students practice writing at every lesson, no exceptions. Practice does make perfect. From time to time, copy a blank postcard and have them "send" one to you.

J. Pronunciation check.

The linguistic purpose of this activity is to work on the stress, intonation, and rhythm of English. Model it, clap your hands, stamp your feet, snap your fingers, make some words louder, softer, stretch them out – anything that celebrates the topic that you have studied. Put students in groups and let them compete for the most original presentation. Note that the chant is in two columns so you can have half the class speak the left column and the other half respond with the other column and then switch. Or, just have everybody speak the whole chant. You can also have the students mark the primary stresses.

K. Talk about it.

In small groups, have a student lead an informal, unstructured conversation about the questions and others that may arise. Students can compare the famous place with places they know about. One person can report to the class on their group's findings.

L. Checking up on Igor.

One more time, let Igor speak about his travels — where he's been and where he's going. Usually there is an "information gap." Discuss it. What's happening? This conversation is also available on the CD.

M. Check the Internet.

This can be an overnight assignment, if the students have access to the Internet. The language on the web sites can be challenging, but the student will find some familiar words, and they can have access to many pictures.

Supplementary Materials and Activities

Review vocabulary from previous lessons from time to time.

Show videos of the famous places, readily available at libraries.

Put up a wall map of the world and chart Igor's progress with pins and thread.

This is one approach to *Where in the World*. Feel free to change, amend, add, and improvise. We'd love to hear what works for you. But keep in mind the most common frustration of beginning-level students, "please, teacher, too fast." So take your time, repeat, review, recycle, reinforce, and learn right along with your students about this great big, beautiful world of ours.