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What makes a trip an adventure?

Maya Moore, ELS Language Services

It's the end of the day. You have a class of 15-18 predominantly male students in their mid to late 20's. They are sleepy, their eyelids threatening to close at the slightest provocation, and a bit irritable. They are also college bound, which means they want an engaging class, but they don't want to feel they are wasting their time. What kind of course should you create?

A few years ago I made the mistake of putting together a heavily academic journalism class and found my students on the verge of mutiny. This time I chose the theme of "adventure," dividing the topic into three modules: adventure sports, adventure travel, and adventurous people. We began by carving out a general definition of the word adventure, then followed with a combination of structured conversation, interviews of native speakers, team presenta-

tions, *Globe Trekkers* videos, reading, and vocabulary. Some learning objectives are below and a possible syllabus for the class is in Table 1.

Type of class: Theme-based conversation

Target Audience: Intermediate to advanced EFL students

Skills: Listening, speaking, vocabulary development, writing questions, research and working in teams

Learning Outcomes:

At the end of this class students should be able to:

- Provide a general definition of the word “adventure.”
- Converse easily with native speakers about various extreme and outdoor sports and the equipment required.
- Demonstrate general comprehension of a guided travel video, including physical and mental challenges involved, geography of the region, and destination.
- Name at least two explorers/ adventurous people who are famous in the United States and describe why they are legendary.

Assessment and materials

Assessment can include comprehension and vocabulary quizzes, and all presentations can be

graded using rubrics for consistency. To help with debriefing you can ask students to make charts, fill in worksheets, and for discussion activities, engage in retelling (where a student tells another student’s story to a third student).

Although I chose the *Globe Trekkers* series, any guided travel video would work, as long as it is lively or even humorous (Dave Barry comes to mind). For the jigsaw I found a wealth of resources (including books, maps and photographs) on Lewis and Clark, Amelia Earhardt, and Sir Edmund Hillary, among others.

Resources mentioned

Globe Trekkers videos: www.globetrekktv.com/
Pencil-Bot : <http://www.pencilbot.com>

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Table 1. Possible syllabus			
	Week 1& 2	Week 2&3	Week 4
Theme Group Discussion topic	Adventure sports Describe an adventure that you had.	Adventure Travel What makes a trip an adventure?	Adventurous people Who is the most adventurous person you know, and why?
Activity #1	<u>Listening comprehension</u> Pencil-Bot video about rock-climbing with worksheet	<u>Listening comprehension</u> Globe Trekkers “Great Treks” video series, with teacher-created cloze worksheets	<u>Jigsaw & presentation</u> Students look through teacher-prepared resources and give a five-minute overview of an adventurous person.
Activity #2	<u>Research & presentation</u> Students do research on a specific outdoor/extreme sport, conduct community interviews, and give a presentation.	<u>Travel agency role-play</u> In teams, students create a travel package to a specific destination.	<u>Interview</u> Students write interview questions, then interview students from another class.