

Seeing Seattle

The feature article in this issue of *English Teaching Forum* focuses on the city of Seattle, Washington. Reading that article will give you useful background information that will prepare you for using this lesson with your students. The activities in this lesson are designed to help your students learn some basic information about Seattle.

Level: Intermediate

Focus: Reading, writing, discussion

Materials: Seattle fact sheet (provided); “Must-See Places in Seattle” text (provided) black/whiteboard

Activity 1

Warm-up: Word Race (7–10 minutes)

1. Have students form pairs or small groups. Each group will need a piece of paper and a pencil.
2. In the middle of the board, write the words *Seattle, Washington*.
3. Tell your students that they will have five minutes to make as many words as possible using the letters in the two words that you’ve written on the board. For each word that they write, they can use a particular letter as many times as it appears in the words *Seattle* and *Washington*. For example, the letter *l* appears only once, so students could write a word with one *l*, such as *tale*, but not two, such as *shell*. Remind students to use only English words and not to use proper nouns. Some examples of acceptable words are: *eat, ate, was, wash, let, letting, not, tone, sale*.
4. After five minutes, ask students to stop writing. Have one member of each group go to the board and write the words their group found.
5. Check (or have students check) to make sure the words are spelled correctly and do not use any extra letters. The group with the most words wins.

Activity 2

Reading: Scanning for Key Information (15–20 minutes)

Preparation: For the reading activity, you will need one copy of the Seattle fact sheet (at the end of this lesson) for each student (or group of students). Also, write the following outline on the board before you begin the activity:

Fun Facts about Seattle

State:

Population:

Founded (year):

Climate:

- a. Average low temperature in January:
- b. Average high temperature in July:
- c. Average rainfall:
- d. Average snowfall:

Top companies:

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.

Landmarks:

- a.
- b.

Arts and Entertainment:

- a.
- b.
- c.
- d.

1. Tell your students they will have five minutes to read the fact sheet and find information that can be used to complete the outline. (This time limit can be increased or decreased according to your students' reading ability. However, to make sure students are forced to truly scan, there should be some time pressure. Another option is to make this activity a race, to see which student or group of students can complete the outline first.)

Note: You can assign specific parts of the outline to various groups; for example, one group will be responsible for top companies, another for landmarks, and so on. Students might find it easier to scan the fact sheet if they are not responsible for so much information.

2. After five minutes, stop your students to check their progress. Have students take turns going to the board to fill in the outline. Remind them to write only key words and phrases in the outline.
3. Once the outline is complete, go through it and ask the class to offer any corrections as necessary.

Activity 3

Post-Reading: Variety is the spice of life (15–20 minutes)

In the next-to-last paragraph of the Seattle fact sheet (at the end of this lesson), a common English idiom is used: “variety is the spice of life.” As happens with most idioms, the meaning of this expression may not be immediately clear to your students. (The idiom refers to the idea that life is more interesting or exciting when you try many different things, such as different hobbies, foods, and activities.)

1. To begin this activity, have your students work in small groups to figure out what the idiom means. Students may initially try to look up the meanings of each word in the idiom (i.e., *variety*, *spice*, *life*), but unless there is an idiom in their native language that is similar (both semantically and lexically), this approach may not be helpful. It can, however, illustrate that the meaning of the idiom is not immediately clear from the words that form it. If your students get stuck, point out the contextual clues in the paragraph that can help them decipher the meaning of the idiom. Specifically, the paragraph states that there are “a number of cultural festivals” and lists several *different* festival themes (e.g., films, food, books, and children’s activities).
2. After your students have uncovered the meaning of the idiom, ask them to consider (individually or in groups) whether they agree that life is more interesting when you try different things.
 - If they agree that variety is the spice of life, have them give specific examples that illustrate this idiom.
 - If they disagree, ask them to explain their opinion and give examples to illustrate how too much variety might not be good.

Note: This speaking activity can be set up as an informal discussion, where students simply share their ideas, or as a formal debate, where students take sides and present arguments for or against variety.

Activity 4 Researching Cities: Compiling a "Best of" List (45–60 minutes)

Preparation: Make enough photocopies of the text on “Must-See Places in Seattle” for each student (or small group of students) to have a copy. Or, before class, list the names of the “must-see” places on the board.

Pre-Reading

Each year, many newspapers, and websites, compile lists that highlight readers’ favorite things to see or do in their city. Typical “best of” or “must-see” lists focus on such things as the most popular tourist attractions, the best restaurants, or the most interesting museums. In this activity, students will compile their own “best of” lists for their city, region, or country.

1. To begin the activity, ask students what is meant by *must-see*. (The adjective *must-see* modifies something so remarkable that it really *must*, or should, be seen.)
2. Make a link from Activity 2 to Activity 4 by eliciting the two landmarks mentioned in the Seattle fact sheet: Space Needle and Pike Place Market. Use them as examples of must-see places. Elicit a description of each landmark from the students.

Reading

Have students read the text on “Must-See Places in Seattle.” Or, if students do not have their own copies of the text, read the description of each “must-see” place aloud as you point to its name on the board. Before you begin reading, ask students to listen carefully to decide which one of the eight places they would most like to see. Tell them they can take notes as they listen. (If you are reading the list aloud, you can read the first two items quickly, to reinforce the information, or you could begin with the Woodland Park Zoo, as students will already have discussed the first two items.)

Post-Reading

1. After students have finished reading (or listening to) the text, ask some students to tell the class which one place they selected as their “must see” place from the list. Ask students which details in the description of each place made them want to see it for themselves.
2. As a whole class, have students decide how they wish to organize themselves to create their own “best of” lists. If students come from different cities or regions, they may wish to divide into several small groups, with each group working on a “best of” list for the city or region they come from. If everyone in the class comes from the same part of the country, students may wish to form groups by topic (e.g., one group will write about landmarks while another one works on arts and entertainment). Some students may wish to create alternative lists that better reflect their own interests (e.g., best local Internet cafe, best places to find free entertainment, best places to go for a hike/swim/bike ride).
3. Once the class has been divided into groups, have the students in each group agree upon a list of four to six “best of” places for their region, city, or topic. After they have selected the places they want to write about, they should begin working on their descriptions. For each place, students should include the information listed below.
 - a. The name of the place
 - b. Location or address
 - c. Two or three sentences that describe:
 - what the place is
 - what visitors can do there

- what makes this place special. (Remind students to be as specific as possible in their descriptions and to include unique and interesting details about the places they have chosen to write about.)
4. Once each group has finished its list, have the groups compile their work to create the class's complete "best of" list. If possible, post the "best of" list in shared space in the school for others to add to the list or comment on it. Alternatively, if the school will allow, students can post the "best of" list to a wiki or blog.

Optional Online Mapping Activity

Students with Internet access may enjoy the following activity.

Each of the entries in the text ("Must-See Places in Seattle") includes a street address. Students should imagine that they will have only one day to visit Seattle. Using an online mapping site such as Google Maps (<http://maps.google.com/>) or MapQuest (www.mapquest.com/), have students plan their day in Seattle. They will have to decide:

- Which of the eight must-see places will they visit?
- Which route will they take to make the most efficient use of their time?

If students have included street addresses in their own "best of" lists, they could use the same websites to map a route for visitors to follow to the must-see places on their lists.

Optional Online Listening Texts

Several news stories found on the Voice of America website report on locations and events in Seattle. Readers interested in adding a listening skills component to this unit on Seattle can check out the stories listed below. The webpage for each includes a written transcript of the story and a link to a sound file of the original radio news report, which can be downloaded for free.

Seattle, an Export Center for Aircraft, Software, Coffee

www.voanews.com/english/archive/2007-10/2007-10-15-voa46.cfm

Providing a broad overview of Seattle's leading industries, this story would be of particular interest to ESP Business or Economics students. The webpage for this story includes links to video and sound files.

Seattle Becomes an Electronic Game Center

www.voanews.com/english/archive/2007-10/2007-10-03-voa43.cfm

This story reports about how Seattle, already home to software giant Microsoft, is also attracting a new generation of video game companies.

Seattle Neighborhood Builder Jim Diers Takes Improvement Project Around the World

www.voanews.com/english/archive/2006-06/2006-06-05-voa16.cfm

One man's efforts to support neighborhood improvement projects around Seattle are described in this report. One segment of the report talks about the Fremont Troll, which students heard about in Activity 4.

Seattle Museum Highlights Popular Music, Science Fiction

www.voanews.com/english/archive/2007-10/2007-10-18-voa64.cfm

This report gives details about the Experience Music Project | Science Fiction Museum and Hall of Fame, which students heard about in Activity 4. The webpage for this story includes links to video and sound files.

Must-See Places in Seattle

1. Pike Place Market

1st Avenue at Pike Street, Seattle, WA 98101

Many people consider Pike Place Market to be the heart of Seattle. The market was originally a place where farmers and fishermen could sell their goods directly to the people of the city. Today, it is a protected historic district that is the number one attraction for many visitors.

2. Space Needle

400 Broad Street, Seattle, WA 98109

Built in 1962 for the World's Fair, the Space Needle has become a symbol of Seattle that many people recognize. Visitors will enjoy the breathtaking views from the tower's observation deck and the delicious food of its famous revolving restaurant.

3. Woodland Park Zoo

5500 Phinney Avenue N, Seattle, WA 98103

One of the most popular zoos in the United States, Woodland Park Zoo attracts over a million visitors annually. Covering 65 acres, it is home to more than 1,000 animals representing more than 200 different species.

4. Museum of Flight

9404 E Marginal Way S, Seattle, WA 98108

Seattle was the original home of the Boeing aircraft company and is sometimes called "Jet City." So it makes sense that the city's Museum of Flight provides a wealth of information about the history of aviation. Visitors can walk through a simulated air traffic control center, see an early Air Force One presidential plane, and catch a glimpse of an SR-71 Blackbird, the fastest plane ever flown.

5. Seattle Art Museum Downtown

1300 1st Avenue, Seattle, WA 98101

The famous Hammering Man sculpture stands guard at the entrance to this museum, which features displays of Native American, African, and Asian art. In addition to the various art exhibitions, visitors can enjoy regularly-scheduled lectures, classes, and live performances.

6. Klondike Gold Rush National Historical Park

117 S Main Street, Seattle Unit, Seattle, WA

When gold was discovered in the Yukon Territory in 1897, thousands of people passed through Seattle on their way to the Yukon. Exhibits and guided tours of the park explain the history of the gold rush and Seattle's role in it.

7. Experience Music Project | Science Fiction Museum and Hall of Fame

325 5th Avenue North, Seattle, WA 98109

This museum is the perfect place for people who love American pop and rock music, for people who love science fiction books or films, or for people who just can't decide what they love! With a wide variety of interactive and informative exhibits, there is something for everyone to enjoy.

8. The Fremont Troll

N. 36th Street at Troll Avenue N., Seattle, WA 98103

Seattle's Fremont Troll offers a striking example of public art. This humorous outdoor sculpture stands over 5.5 m high and weighs more than 1800 kg. and is holding a real Volkswagen Beetle. Despite the Troll's immense size, visitors may not be able to locate him—unless they remember that trolls often live under bridges (in this case, the Aurora Bridge)!

Fact Sheet: Seattle

State: Washington

Official Website: www.seattle.gov

Population: 572,000

Area: 142 square miles (369 sq. km.)

Elevation: sea level to 520 feet (0–158 m)

Average temperatures

January:

Low 36°F (2°C)

High 46°F (8°C)

July:

Low 55°F (13°C)

High 75°F (24°C)

Average annual rainfall: 37.1 inches (940 mm)

Average annual snowfall: 13 inches (330 mm)

Nicknames: The Emerald City, Jet City, the Queen City of the Northwest

History

The first European settlers arrived in Seattle in 1851, but Native Americans have lived in the area for more than 4,000 years. In fact, the city is named after one of their leaders, Chief Sealth (also known as Chief Seattle).

Seattle is located on forested land on the shores of Puget Sound (an inlet of the Pacific Ocean). The most important industries in Seattle's early days were timber and fishing. Today, a Seattle resident is more likely to work in a knowledge-based industry. Seattle is home to many leading companies such as Microsoft, Amazon.com, Boeing, and Starbucks, but the city's largest employer is the University of Washington.

Landmarks

Seattle's most famous landmark, the Space Needle, was built for the 1962 World's Fair. The Space Needle is 605 feet (184 m) high. Although visitors cannot go all the way to the top, they can stop for something to eat at the restaurant 500 feet (152 m) above the ground or climb another 20 feet to the observation deck to take pictures and enjoy the view.

Possibly Seattle's most popular tourist destination, Pike Place Market is one of the oldest farmers' markets in the United States. Like most farmers' markets, Pike Place Market offers farmers, craftspeople, and merchants space to sell their goods. It is also home to a number of restaurants and shops.

Arts and Entertainment

Seattle's arts and entertainment scene is one of the liveliest in the country. The Seattle Symphony, the Seattle Opera, and the Pacific Northwest Ballet are all top attractions, as are the city's numerous art galleries and museums. Seattle has also achieved international recognition for launching rock-and-roll artists, such as Jimi Hendrix and Kurt Cobain.

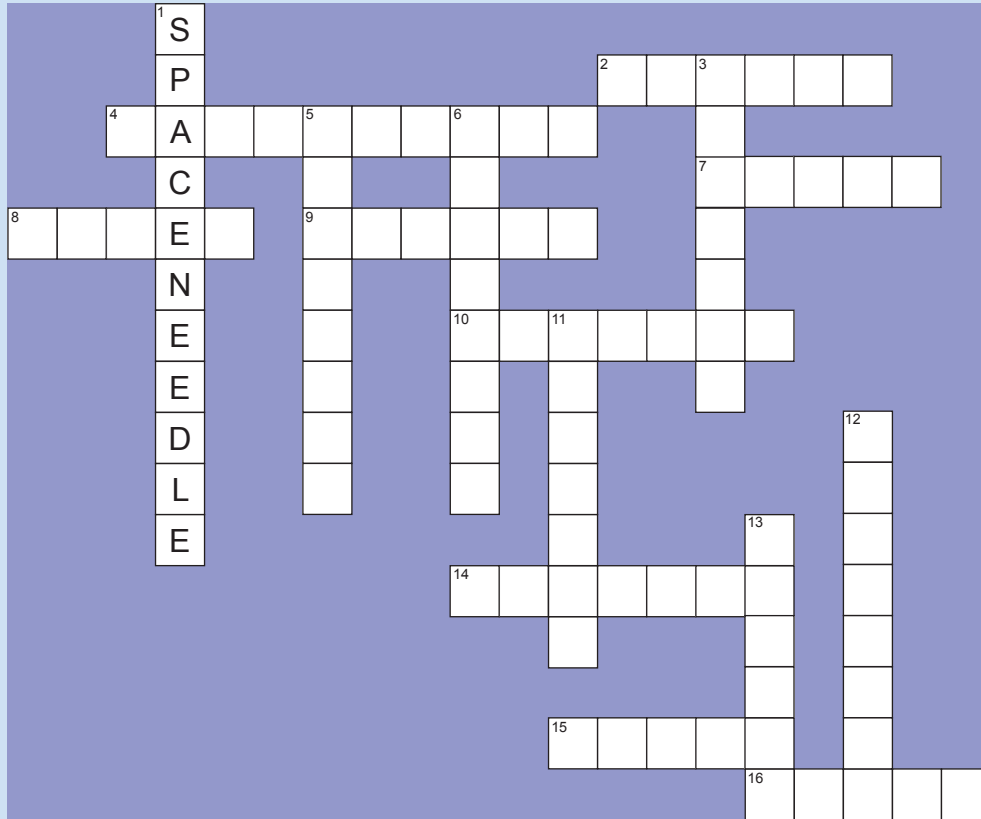
For those who believe that "variety is the spice of life," Seattle hosts a number of cultural festivals each year, including the Seattle International Film Festival, the Bumbershoot Arts Festival, the International Children's Festival, the Bite of Seattle food festival, and the Northwest Bookfest.

Sports fans can also find plenty to do in Seattle. The city is home to several professional teams, including the SuperSonics (basketball), the Seahawks (football), and the Mariners (baseball). For those who like to participate in sports themselves, Seattle's natural surroundings encourage outdoor activities such as hiking, mountain biking, and sea kayaking.

KATE TORRE

Seattle Crossword Puzzle

Using the clues below, fill in the spaces of the crossword puzzle. The answer to each clue starts in the box with the same number as the clue. If the clue is under *Across*, write the letters from left to right. If the clue is under *Down*, write the letters down the column. Place one letter in each box. The first response is given. (Answers to the puzzle are on page 19.)



Across

- 2. A hot, caffeinated beverage that people often drink in the morning.
- 4. The ground shakes and pictures fall off of walls when this event occurs.
- 7. Adjective describing damp, wet weather.
- 8. In Seattle you can take a ferry boat along the many _____ ways of the city.
- 9. Baseball, basketball, and soccer are types of ____.
- 10. A place where books are available for loan to the public.
- 14. A cone-shaped mountain that spews lava, debris, and steam when it erupts.
- 15. Floating homes on lakes and rivers are known as house_____.
- 16. A connected line of railroad cars.

Down

- 1. Most recognized landmark in Seattle.
- 3. Type of market that sells locally grown fruits and vegetables.
- 5. The oldest area of most cities is known as the ____ district.
- 6. When you fly from one place to another you travel in an _____.
- 11. A self-powered vehicle with two wheels, handlebars, and a set of pedals.
- 12. A collapsible device you use to stay dry when it rains.
- 13. A dense growth of trees and underbrush is known as a wood or a _____.