

explore /ɪk'splɔ:(r)/ verb ★★★

Level: Upper Intermediate - Advanced

Suggestions for use in the classroom

This dictation is appropriate for classes at Upper Intermediate level or above. Although the dictation is only about 1 minute long, the ideas below will need about one hour of class time if you use them all!

The news item is a true story and refers to events that took place in May 2006.

1. Lead-in

You can prepare the students for the dictation by using one or both of the following activities:

Organise the class into small groups. Read out the questions below one at a time. Give the students enough time to discuss and decide their answers.

1. Approximately how high is Mount Everest?
2. In which country is it?
3. When was it first climbed?
4. Approximately how many people have climbed it?
5. Approximately how many people have died attempting to climb it?

Ask the class for their answers and discuss any differences before giving them the correct information.

Answers:

1. It is 8,848 metres high.
2. It is on the border between Tibet (China) and Nepal.
3. It was first climbed by the New Zealander Edmund Hillary and Sherpa Tenzing Norgay from Nepal in May 1953.
4. Approximately 2,500.
5. Approximately 200.

Teacher's notes

Write the following groups of words on the board:

**amputee double Everest history makes
Inglis Mark New of on the top world Zealander
climber dead Everest for left
blame British climber's death for Inglis not to**

Ask the students to rearrange the groups of words to make four related newspaper headlines.

Answers:

Double amputee makes Everest history
New Zealander Mark Inglis on top of the world
Everest climber left for dead
Inglis 'not to blame' for British climber's death

2. The dictation

It is usually best for students to listen to the complete text at least once without stopping before they are asked to take notes. When they listen again, you will need to pause from time to time to allow students to write. The script above has suggested pause marks. One of the values of dictations is to train the students' short-term memory, so the sections between pauses should be short enough for the exercise to be do-able, but long enough to be challenging.

You can use one of the suggestions below to vary this procedure.

Allow a student / the students to decide when to pause the recording.

Tell the students not to attempt to write down every word. Ask them simply to write down the most important words. They will recognise these words because they are given additional stress / prominence. Do not worry if students find this difficult at first: most students need lots of practice and training before they can do this with confidence.

If your students find this too difficult, you can give them the important words. They are:

**New Zealand double amputee Mount Everest, thousand metres
Mark Inglis below the knee snow storm Mount Cook ice cave
rescued frost bite carbon fibre limbs outdoor life silver medal
Sydney Paralympics criticised come across not helped difficulties
died little could have been done hard keeping yourself alive
helping someone else lack of oxygen affect on behaviour clouds our judgement**

Teacher's notes

If you have not given the students the key words, ask them to compare their notes in pairs or groups. Then tell them, in their pairs or groups, to attempt to reconstruct the text. Point out that their text does not need to be exactly the same as the original. The only thing that matters is that it makes sense.

When students have completed their texts, distribute copies of the original script and ask students to compare it with their versions. Discuss any language points that arise.

3. Follow-up

You can use one or both of the exercises below to explore some of the language in the dictation.

HOMOPHONES

Tell students to underline the following words in the text.

peak medal ascent team descent died higher affect

Tell the students to check in their dictionaries how these words are pronounced. Then explain that these pronunciations are homophones – i.e. another word with a different spelling is pronounced in exactly the same way. Ask them in pairs or groups to use their dictionaries to try and find the homophonic words. If they have the CD-ROM version of the dictionary, they can do this using the 'Sound Search' function.

Check their answers:

peek / pique meddle assent team dissent dyed hire effect

Students should now work in pairs, one with a dictionary, one without. The student with a dictionary should select one of these homophones and look it up in the dictionary. They should then read aloud an example phrase or sentence to their partner who must say how the word that has been read aloud is spelled.

US and UK spelling

Tell the students that the text has been written in British English. Tell them to underline the following examples of British spelling in the text:

metres fibre criticised defence behaviour judgement

Ask the students to use their dictionaries to find the American spellings.

Answers:

meters fiber criticized defense behavior judgment

Tell the students to look at the British and American English pages of the Language Awareness section in the middle of the dictionary. Ask them how many more words they can add to the categories -our / -or and -nce / -nse in the spelling lists.

Conduct feedback with the whole class.

Possible answers:

-our / -or

colour / color, honour / honor, flavour / flavor, neighbour / neighbor

-nce / -nse

offence / offense, pretence / pretense, licence / license

Note: the other categories listed in the dictionary are relatively rare.