

Welcome to Cockney London Teacher's Notes

Aim

This lesson looks at the culture of the East End of London and the people who live there – Cockneys. Students will read about Cockneys and then learn about Cockney rhyming slang. Students will learn new vocabulary and work on pronunciation through some fun rhyming activities.

Warmer

Ask the students what the capital city of England is (London). Draw a circle on the board and write *London* in it. Ask students where north, south, east, and west are. Mark this on the circle. Highlight east and tell students they are going to learn about the people from the East End of London.

1 Reading

- Pre-teach any vocabulary you think your students won't know. Words may include the following: *investigate; suit; pearl buttons; orphan; orphanage; raise money; charity.*

Answer

Pearly Kings and Queens raise money for charity.

2 Comprehension

Students decide if the sentences are true or false, and rewrite the false sentences.

Answers

- False – People born in the East End of London are called Cockneys.
- False – the East End is a poor part of London.
- True.
- False – Their clothes had pearl buttons as decoration.
- True.
- True.

3 Vocabulary

- Allow students time to read the text. Ask the following questions: *Where did Cockney rhyming slang start?* (in the East End markets) *Who first used it?* (thieves and pickpockets) *Why did they use it?* (so people couldn't understand them).

- Hold up a book and ask *What's this?* Elicit *a fish*. Ask the students why – because *book* rhymes with *fish hook*. Draw some stairs on the board and ask *What are these?* Elicit *apples*. Ask students why – because *stairs* rhymes with *apples and pears*. Show a picture of Mickey Mouse and ask *What's this?* Elicit *house*. Ask students why – because *house* rhymes with *mouse*.
- Ask students to complete the matching activity. Answers: *April showers = flowers; plates of meat = feet; Britney Spears = tears; rabbit and pork = talk; dog and bone = phone; loaf of bread = head; teapot lids = kids; bread and honey = money*
- Ask students to "translate" what the person is saying. Answer: *I was at home when the phone rang. It was my kids. They wanted some money so they could buy their mom some flowers.*

4 Speaking and writing

- Put the students into teams of four or five depending on your class size. Ask them to read the instructions and write three simple sentences using Cockney rhyming slang.
- Monitor and check that the sentences are correct.
- Ask the teams to come to the front of the class one by one and read their sentences aloud. The other teams must guess the translation and knock on the table when they have the answer. For each correct translation the team gets one point. Continue until all the sentences have been read and you have a winning team.

Homework ideas

Here are some more examples of rhyming slang.

boat race runner beans
bacon and eggs lemon and lime

Ask the students to guess what they mean. Students can use one of the online dictionaries listed below. (Answers: *boat race = face; runner beans = jeans; bacon and eggs = legs; lemon and lime = time.*)

Websites

www.unscramble.net/rhyme.html – online rhyming dictionary

www.wordcentral.com – online rhyming dictionary

www.fun-with-words.com/crs_example.html – more examples of Cockney rhyming slang.

www.historicuk.com/CultureUK/PearlyKingsQueens.htm – you can download pictures of Pearly Kings and Queens from here to show your students.

www.citynoise.org/article/930 – more pictures and information on Pearly Kings and Queens.