

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

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 for*; *charity*. Students answer the comprehension questions true or false.

Answers

- False – the East End is a poor part of London.
- False – People born in the East End of London are called Cockneys.
- True.
- False – Pearly Kings and Queens raise money for charity.
- True.
- True.

2 Vocabulary

- Allow students time to read the introduction to Cockney Rhyming Slang. Ask the class the following questions to check comprehension: *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*; *china plate = mate*; *bread and honey = money*. (Note – *mate* means *friend* in British English.)

- Ask students to 'translate' what the person is saying. Answer: *I'm at home when the phone rings. It is my kids. They want some money so they can buy their mum some flowers.*

3 Speaking and writing

- Put the students into teams of four or five depending on your class size. Ask them to write three simple sentences using the Cockney Rhyming Slang they have been studying.
- Monitor and check that the sentences are correct.
- Each team should choose a name for themselves. Ask the teams to come to the front of the class one by one and read out their sentences. The other teams must guess the translation and bang on the table or make a noise when they have the answer. For each correct translation the team gets one point. Continue until all the sentences have been read out 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. If your students have a good dictionary on CD-Rom, like the Macmillan English Dictionary, they will be able to search for words using a pronunciation search facility. If they don't have one, they can try one of the online versions listed under the websites below. (Answers: *boat race = face*, *runner beans = jeans*, *bacon and eggs = legs*, *lemon and lime = time*.)

Websites

<http://www.unscramble.net/rhyme.html> – online rhyming dictionary
<http://www.wordcentral.com/> – online rhyming dictionary
http://www.fun-with-words.com/crs_example.html – more examples of Cockney Rhyming Slang. <http://www.cockneyrhymingslang.co.uk/> – a good dictionary of Cockney Rhyming Slang, but you may not want to send your students to it as it does contain words of an adult nature. <http://www.historicuk.com/CultureUK/PearlyKingsQueens.htm> – you can download pictures of Pearly Kings and Queens from here to show your students. <http://www.citynoise.org/article/930> – more pictures and information on Pearly Kings and Queens.