

Activity Template

- **Title:** Vacation Postcards
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- **Proficiency level:**

____X____ Beginning ____ Intermediate ____ Advanced
- **Grade level:** This is basically a reading activity that caters for the needs of upper beginning 12-14 year-old young learners at the American Center, Casablanca, Morocco.
- **Purpose of the activity:** Learners will be able to talk about, read, and answer questions about postcards. The wrap-up activity- a postcard writing and making activity- aims to get learners to learn by doing, in a relaxed, light-hearted way.
- **Type of activity:**
 - ° Individual work
 - ° Group work
- **Objective:** Students will be able to scan a text (3 postcards) for specific information. The focus grammar item is the Simple Past of regular and irregular verbs. Obviously, students have already learned the Simple Past in a previous lesson.
- **Duration:** Approximately 2 hours, including a 10-minute break
- **Materials and technology:**

Whiteboard; markers; coloring crayons; postcards; pictures to pre-teach key vocabulary.
- **Source:** This is an original activity.

ACTIVITY

1. **Vacation Postcards (See image next page) (If you can't view image, please click on blank space.)**



- Class is split into 4 groups
 - Postcards with the names of cities written on them are put on the desk. Each student has to pick up a postcard. Please see picture above.
 - Each student looks at his/her postcard and pretends that he/she spent a vacation in that place.
 - The other members of the group keep asking that student questions about his/her vacation. The student has to use his/her imagination as much as possible while answering his/her teammates' questions, making his/her vacation sound as exciting as possible.
 - After they have finished, the members of each group vote for the most exciting vacation and share their ideas with the members of the other groups.
- Before students start doing the activity, make sure to provide them with cues for the questions to be used.

Where/you/go/last/summer?

How/you/go/there?

Who/you/go/with?

How/be/the weather?

Where/you/stay?

What/you/do/there?

How long/you/stay?

With the help of the teacher, students make grammatically correct questions using the cues above. The questions are written on the board. Teacher models the activity with a good student in front of the whole class. This way, students will have a clear idea about they're supposed to do.

2. Pre-teaching of key vocabulary: matching (See images below)

(If you can't view images, please click on blank space)



1) an indoor snow ski resort



2) dunes



3) sunset



4) surfing



5) coast



6) silver jewelry



7) handicrafts



8) a desert safari



9) a cathedral

Some students are handed out the pictures; others have the words. Students mix and mingle to match the pictures with the words.

-Teacher monitors students' work and asks them questions to check their comprehension after they have done the matching activity:

- What do Christians do at a cathedral?
- Can you give me examples of handicrafts?
- Where are dunes?
- etc.

3. Reading Activity 1: Vacation Postcards

-Class is split into 3 teams.

-Teacher distributes copies of the postcards below to the 3 teams (If you can't view images, please click on blank space)

- Teacher asks the students who have copies of Postcard 1 to form Team 1, those who have copies of Postcard 2 to form Team 2, and those who have copies Postcard 3 to form Team 3. That makes 3 teams.

POSTCARD 1

SKI DUBAI



Dear John,
I'm in Dubai, a modern desert city in the United Arab Emirates. I arrived here a week ago. Two days ago, I went on a desert safari. I saw wonderful dunes and took a lot of beautiful pictures. I watched the sunset. It was fantastic. I had a Bedouin-style dinner in the middle of the desert. I ate camel meat! Yesterday, I went to Ski Dubai, an indoor snow ski resort located in the Mall of the Emirates. Imagine skiing in summer! I had a great time. It's a pity I'm going back home tomorrow.
See you!



Lisa

POSTCARD 2

Amanda,
Essaouira is a wonderful small city on the west coast of Morocco. I'm having a good time here. Last Saturday, I got up early in the morning and went to the beach. It's beautiful. I went swimming and surfing. The weather was perfect for surfing. Yesterday, I had delicious fish for lunch. I went shopping for souvenirs. I bought silver jewelry, handicrafts, and Gnawa music CDs. Gnawa is the name of a local style of music. I also visited an art gallery for paintings by local artists.
Take care, Susan.



POSTCARD 3



Dear Alice,
I arrived in Valladolid, a Spanish city on the River Pisuerga, 12 days ago. Valladolid is a fantastic city. It is famous for its old buildings. It has beautiful houses, palaces, and churches. I visited a lot of historic monuments. Ten days ago, I visited Catedral de Valladolid. It's a very famous cathedral. I loved its architecture. Last week, I attended the Valladolid International Film Festival. It lasted for 9 days. I watched a lot of films and saw a lot of actors, actresses, and filmmakers. Yesterday, I had dinner at a famous restaurant. I ate delicious Spanish food.
Take care, Sarah.

- The students on each team read their postcards and share their understanding of their contents.

The members of each group are provided with two focus questions to answer as a group:

Where did she go?

What did she do?

Students should read and answer the question in 10 minutes.

- Teacher regroups the students into groups of threes, this time making sure that the students in each have copies of postcards 1, 2, and 3. Each student has a different postcard and should tell his/her teammates about it.

3. Reading Activity 2: Reading Race

-Post the chart below on the board. Please see image below: (If you can't view image, please click on blank space)

Who ...	
saw a lot of actors, actresses, and filmmakers?	
saw dunes?	
visited a cathedral?	
took a lot of pictures?	
spent her vacation in a Spanish city?	
did water sports?	
went skiing in summer?	
visited an art gallery?	
ate camel meat?	
attended a film festival?	
bought souvenirs?	
had fish for lunch?	

-Split the class in 3 teams.

- The students on each team read the postcards quickly, run to the board write the name of the person who went to Hawaii, was a group of university students, etc., and write the number of their team next to the answers.

Teacher models the first question in front of the class.

When students have finished, teacher helps the class with correction. The team that has the most correct answers is the winner.

Key:

Who ...

saw a lot of actors, actresses, and filmmakers?	Sarah
saw dunes?	Lisa
visited a cathedral?	Sarah
took a lot of pictures?	Lisa
spent her vacation in a Spanish city?	Sara
did water sports?	Susan
went skiing in summer?	Lisa
visited an art gallery?	Susan
ate camel meat?	Lisa
attended a film festival?	Sarah
bought souvenirs?	Susan
had fish for lunch?	Susan

4. Post reading: Discussion questions

- In groups again, students answer these questions:

1. Which of these vacations do you think is the most exciting?
2. Which of these places would you like to spend a vacation in? Why?
3. Do you ever send postcards to your family or friends when you go to a place on vacation?

Before students start doing the activity, teacher provides model responses:

1. I think Susan's vacation is the most exciting one because she went to Essaouira. It's a very beautiful place. She bought souvenirs, went to an art gallery, and did water sports.
2. I'd like to spend a summer vacation in Dubai. . I really would like to try skiing in summer. It sounds fun.
3. When I go to a place on vacation, I don't usually send postcards to my family or friends, but I take a lot of pictures to show them when I get back home

5. Making/writing postcards:

Using coloring crayons, each student makes his/her postcard, supposes he/she was in the place depicted in the postcard and writes briefly about what they did there to another student. The students put the postcards they have written on the desk. Each student picks up the postcard(s) that his/her classmates have written him/her. The student to whom most of the postcards have been written is the winner. He/she has to tell the rest of the class about the content of the postcards he/she has received.

Example:

Ahmed: Leila sent me this postcard from Switzerland. She went mountain climbing and biking. She had fun.

Below is a sample postcard that Leila sent to Ahmed. (If you can't view image, please click on blank space)

Dear Ahmed,

I'm in Switzerland.
It's a beautiful
country. I went
mountain climbing
yesterday. I also
went hiking. I had
fun.

Leila



01 01 2004