

Lesson description

In this lesson you will write an informal email about a visit to a city. You will read some emails and focus on how to avoid repetition. You will also learn about the informal language used in emails to friends.

Aim

To write an informal email about a visit to a city.

Language

- Avoiding repetition.
- Informal language.

Task

The task for this lesson is for students to write an informal email about a recent visit to a city.

Materials

Handout.

Images on IWB or flashcards of: the Little Mermaid, Copenhagen; the Alhambra, Granada; The Eiffel tower, Paris; The Tower of London and Big Ben, London.

Suggested running order

Lead-in	Group quiz on cities and culture, then personalisation of the topic.
Input	Students read an informal email and answer two questions in pairs / groups.
Language focus	Students read part of a reply to the email and identify repetition. They then identify how repetition was avoided in the first paragraph of the <i>Input</i> text and use these features to improve the reply. Students identify informal language and rewrite sentences using formal language.
Task	Students brainstorm content and write an informal email about a city they have visited.

Lead-in

1 Students work in groups and do a quiz in teams on cultural cities in Europe. Images of the Little Mermaid, the Alhambra, The Eiffel tower, The Tower of London and Big Ben could be displayed on the whiteboard during correction, or to help if students get stuck.

Answers

- a* Copenhagen *c* Eiffel tower *e* The bell in the tower
b The Alhambra in Grenada *d* Tower of London

2 Students discuss in groups what they like doing when they visit a city and discuss the appeal of the different activities.

Input

1 Students read an informal email about a recent holiday and answer two questions.

Answers

- a She asks her friend how she is and talks about her own family. In the last paragraph she asks her friend to write and sends love to her family members. She does this because it's polite to show an interest in the people you're writing to and typical of informal emails between friends
- b Students' own answers.

Language focus

1 Students read part of the friend's reply and identify what isn't correct.

Answer

Repetition of language.

2 Students read the different ways of avoiding repetition and identify how they have been used in the first paragraph in Jane's email. Point out that ellipsis is also a common feature of informal language.

Answers

a using pronouns

John and I are very proud obviously, but we're also...

Emily is working hard trying to finish her MA dissertation, and when she does, she's off to the States ...

What about your two? What are their hopes ...?

b using an auxiliary verb to replace a full verb

Hope you're well and not working too hard. Our kids are ...

... trying to finish her MA dissertation, and when she does she's ...

c using alternative words with the same or similar meaning

plans for the future ... hopes for the future

your two... the kids

d ellipsis (i.e. omitting words)

(no subject) *Hope you're well and* (omission of subject and auxiliary) *not working too hard.*

The mosque is absolutely huge, ... but very cool and airy inside. (avoids repetition by omission of *it is*)

your two (omission of *kids*)

A totally magical city (no verb) – (no verb) *full of relics ...*

A special place. (no verb)

3 Students read sentences taken from the second paragraph and rewrite avoiding repetition.

Suggested answers

- a John and I are just back from a holiday in Edinburgh and we were really impressed.
- b It's a much smaller city than London so much quieter but it still has a real cultural buzz.
- c If you ever go, you should visit in August like we did, during the International Arts Festival.
- d It's one of the biggest arts festivals in Europe and we saw the London Symphony Orchestra and the Kirov ballet.
- e They were really impressive – we've never had such an intensely cultural experience as we did during this holiday / trip / visit.
- f If you do go, try to visit the Castle and the Royal Mile – they're full of history.

4 Students rewrite the first and last paragraphs of an email in an informal style.

Answers

Hi Harry,

How are you? Sorry I haven't written for ages but I've been really busy.

Well, that's all for now. Dying to hear what you've been up to. Write soon,

Dave

Task

- 1 Students read the task.
- 2 In pairs, students brainstorm content about a city they both know and make notes.
- 3 Refer students to the assessment criteria. Students write their email. Feedback on their writing so far and review the learning objectives.