

Moonwalk: Teachers' notes and tips – upper intermediate

1 Pre-reading tasks

- a Put students in pairs and see which pair can answer these questions first:
- Where is the Sea of Tranquility, and
 - What's special about the place?
- b Feedback: The *Mare Tranquillitatis* is on the moon and is the site of the first lunar landing.
- c Can the students now tell you:
- the date of the landing, and
 - the name of the third astronaut who *didn't* walk on the moon?
- d Feedback: 21st July 1969 (0256 GMT, so 20th in the US), *Michael Collins*.
- e Give each pair of students a copy of the worksheet for them to answer more questions about the moon. Tell students that if any pair gets all the questions right they'll win a small piece of moon rock – show students a small stone you picked up on the way to work and insist that it's really moon rock!

Tip: use quizzes to create interest in a topic

It's easy to prepare pre-reading quizzes like these, students are then more interested in the text.

- f Feedback: (from the students of course) **a** grey **b** 3,475 km (12,756 km is the diameter of the Earth!) **c** 384,440 km **d** about 29.5 days **e** Only the same half all the time, this is because the time the moon takes to spin on its axis is exactly the same as the time it takes to orbit the Earth.

Tip: use your students

There's bound to be someone in the class who's interested in this. If they can explain some of these concepts in more detail, in English of course, that would be great.

- g Give the 'moon rock' to the winners – do the students believe it's real? What about the lunar landings – do the students believe that American astronauts really landed on the moon? Wait for their reaction and then explain that there are people who have a theory that the whole thing is a conspiracy, a plot to fool the world and, more importantly, the Russians.
- h Still working in pairs students look at the photographs on the worksheet which were taken during the moonwalk – can they see how conspiracy theorists would use these pictures to confirm it was all a hoax? Tell them there are four key points illustrated here.

Tip: don't rush the pre-reading tasks

Students will understand the reading better if they've had time to think about the content first.

2 First reading tasks

- a Now give each student a copy of the text. They need to skim the opening paragraph and the left-hand column *only*. They do this to identify which arguments supporting a conspiracy are shown in the pictures. Always encourage students to compare their ideas with each other.
- b Feedback: *the flag, the shadows, the background and the stars*.

Tip: provide real skimming tasks

Students can do this without reading everything in detail. Make sure they are reading quickly (perhaps put a two min time on this) and *not* reading the right-hand column.

3 Second reading tasks

- a Students read the text again more slowly, and also the right-hand column this time which has the response from the experts. As they read tell students they have to put a tick (✓) in the left or right-hand box for each argument depending on which one they prefer / believe.

Tip: provide real reasons for reading

When reading two sides of an argument in real life we usually decide which one we support.

4 Post-reading tasks – speaking

- a Let students compare their ticks and see if they have the same opinion. Encourage students to explain their choice if there are some disagreements.
- b Feedback: see how the students feel in general – are there any who agree with the conspiracy theorists?!

5 Post-reading tasks – writing

- a Ask students in pairs to come up with linking words that show addition and contrast and to write these on the worksheet along with the examples given. Collect their ideas which should include:
addition – *and, plus, in addition, as well, too...*
contrast – *whereas, yet, although, on the other hand, but, in fact...*
(There is one worksheet per pair but both students should have these words)
- b Students are now going to write a discursive essay. They choose one of two models.
The first model has five paragraphs:
one – introduction to the conspiracy theory
two – an example for, and the argument against
three – a second example for, and the argument against
four – a third example for, and the argument against
five – conclusion (the student's own opinion)
The second model has four paragraphs:
one – introduction to the conspiracy theory
two – three examples for
three – three arguments against these examples
four – conclusion (the student's own opinion)
- c The students choose which three arguments they want to use. They can of course choose to support the conspiracy.

Tip: use interesting for and against topics

Students often have to write uninspiring discursive essays, here there is an unusual topic with plenty of information to support both sides.

Tip: discourage plagiarism

Insist that students use the information given but that they present this in their own words. They should also write more formally than the informal style of the text.

