

Using photos and postcards in the language classroom!

Postcards and photographs can be included in the general 'culture box' relating to the target culture/s. They can be collected by students as well as teachers in the school. Although tourist postcards can give an unbalanced 'pretty and touristy' view of a country or location, they often contain the images of the target country/ies with which the children are most familiar and as such are a good starting point. If the use of postcards is complemented by photographs, the portrayal of the target country will potentially be more interesting. The advantage of using photographs is that you can select the aspects of the place and people that you wish to focus on and get behind the tourist 'façade'. Pictures and photographs are a powerful means of arousing interest in the target country/ies.

Activity	Strand
<p>Introduce a number of postcards of places/cities from the target country/ies and ask students to place them on a map. Ask them to give additional information e.g. 'It is on the coast', 'It is a small place', 'It is a famous monument' and so on.</p>	<p>Communicative Competence, Language Awareness, Socio-cultural Awareness</p>
<p>Use pictures/photos as a stimulus for discussion or to reflect on knowledge previously acquired. You could ask students:</p> <p>'Is this how you imagined the town would look?'</p> <p>'What do you notice about this place that we have already spoken about?'</p> <p>'Is there anything in the picture that surprises you?'</p>	<p>Communicative Competence, Language Awareness, Socio-cultural Awareness</p>
<p>Divide the class into groups and give each group a map of a city/town in the target country/ies. Show the class several postcards with landmarks of the city and give a brief description e.g. 'It is a statue.' Ask groups to find the location of one or two of the postcards on their map and write a few questions relating to the place that can not be answered from the postcard alone. Groups share their questions with the class.</p>	<p>Communicative Competence, Language Awareness, Socio-cultural Awareness</p>

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Activity	Strand
<p>Divide the class into groups and give them photographs and a number of captions and speech bubbles written in the target language. Ask the students to match the postcards with the captions or speech bubbles (if the images contain people). You can also ask them to create the speech bubbles for a photo or postcard.</p>	<p>Communicative Competence, Socio-cultural Awareness</p>
<p>Divide the class into groups and give them a number of photos/postcards - some taken in Ireland and some in the target country/ies.</p> <p>Ask students to classify them into two groups according to which country they were taken in and ask each group to explain their classification</p>	<p>Communicative Competence, Socio-cultural Awareness</p>
<p>Carry out an audit of photos/postcards. Divide the class into groups and give them a postcard or photograph. Ask each group to look carefully at the image and complete an audit based on the image.</p>	<p>Communicative Competence, Language Awareness</p>
<p>Divide the class into groups. Give each group a postcard/photo of their local area. Reflect on the image: what is the message being given about the area? Is the message an accurate one? Is any aspect/location omitted from the postcards and why?</p> <p>Give each group a postcard of a location in the target country/ies and reflect on the images using similar questions. Ask students to write down two questions they can not answer about the place from the image alone.</p>	<p>Communicative Competence, Socio-cultural Awareness</p>
<p>In groups, students discuss and prepare the story behind the photo: When was it taken? Why? Who is in it?</p>	<p>Communicative Competence, Language Awareness, Socio-cultural Awareness</p>