GOING PLACES

by Ewa Krzywicka-Dzioch

Zespol Szkol w Ostrowie Lubelskim,

Ostrow Lubelski, Poland

ewakdz@interia.pl

Introduction

Although the usefulness of the Internet materials for English teaching is beyond all dispute, the overwhelming amount of information and the difficulty of the authentic language may appear to be discouraging for students at an early stage of learning. It is not easy to find a website that would offer simple language, brief information and be attractive for teenage learners in terms of its subject. When I encountered www.virtualtourist.com/vt/ website I came up with the idea of a lesson for pre-intermediate students based on this website.

VirtualTourist is driven by its members, people from many countries who share interests and experiences to help each other to travel smarter. It delivers valuable and interesting information about places you may want to visit, you can find photographs, comments, detailed tips, reviews, forum as well as create your own web page and share your pictures and tips with friends and fellow travellers. The website looks professional, is well-organized and easy to search. The English used by its members seems to be quite simple and without obvious errors.

My intention was to find material for a 45-minute lesson as it is often the case that teachers have no time or possibility for 2-hour lesson in the computer lab. The lesson has been thought as a follow-up stage for further practice of 1st conditional inspired by Opportunities pre-intermediate, Module 5, lesson 19.

Aims:

- to practise searching information on the website and scanning it
- to revise vocabulary related to tourism
- to find out about interesting places to visit
- to practise the use of 1st conditional
- to practise writing an informal letter/e-mail

Technical requirements:

One computer with Internet connection per 1-2 students, word processor, multimedia projector desirable.

Anticipated problems:

Ss may get lost on the webpage if they click the wrong links or do not listen to the teacher's instructions. Also, the language of the website may be too difficult to some of them.

Pre-stage activities (7-8 mins)

1. Ask Ss which country and which particular places they would like to visit if they could go anywhere in the world. Tell them to give reasons for their choice. Before you ask some of them to speak in front of the group allow them to practise in pairs.
2. Ask Ss what things they would have to consider if they were planning a weekend trip. Try to elicit such as accommodation, food, transport, places to visit, things to pack, dangers, etc.
3. Ask Ss where they can get information that could help them to plan their trip. Ss may point at travel agencies, media advertisements, the Internet. Tell them about the site they are going to search.(see introduction)

While-stage activities (25 mins)

1. Ss type the website address: www.virtualtourist.com/vt/
2. Ss choose a place to visit from the drop-down list on the right of the map. If the destination they would like to visit is not on the list, they may type the name of the place into the search box or click the continent on the map and the list of countries that will lead to most popular places will appear. Because such searching is very time-consuming, it is better to encourage Ss to choose a place available from the list.
3. Ss complete the worksheet (see below) with the following table by clicking a few options in the Show Me check box:

Place:…………	Name	Why?/Why not?
1. Hotels & Accomodation	**Jan III Sobieski**	*huge buffet, great choice of food*
	1. *Palace of Science and*	*the most beautiful panoramic view of the*

2. Must See Activities	*Culture*………… 2. ………………… .. 3. ………………… ..	*city*
3.Restaurants		
4.Tourists traps		
5. Things to pack		

When Ss click one of the options, they are linked with a page where they can find lots of reviews and tips from tourists who have already visited the places. After scrolling down they will see a list of the most reviewed places. Ask them to choose any of them at random as their names will not be probably meaningful to them. The task requires scanning the text for finding some information, e.g. why it is useful or not worth visiting the place. If a multimedia projector is available the teacher can show the stages of work to Ss so that they save more time for practice.

4. Once completed the table Ss make sentences in 1st conditional on their worksheets using the collected information according to given patterns, e.g.: *If you stay in Jan III Sobieski, you'll have great choice of food in the hotel buffet. If you want to see the most beautiful panoramic view of Warsaw, visit the Palace of Culture and Science.*

Post-stage activity (12 mins)

1. Ask Ss to write a letter or an e-mail to their pen pal who is going to visit a place they have already been to. They are expected to advice on a weekend trip using as many conditional sentences as they can. The letter can be typed in the word processor and sent to the teacher's e-mail account as an attachment. If you are short of time, set the task as a home assignment.

GOING PLACES - STUDENT WORKSHEET

I. Type in the following URL: www.virtualtourist.com/vt/, choose a place you would like to visit from the checks box, read one or more reviews and complete the table:

Place:………	Name	Why?/Why

		not?
1. Hotels & Accommodation		
2. Must See Activities	1. ……… 2 …….. 3. …….	
3.Restaurant		
4.Tourists traps		
5. Things to pack		

II. Using the information from the table write 6-8 sentences in your notebook according to the following patterns:

1. If you **(Present Simple)**…….., you **(will +verb)**……………..
2. You **(will+verb)** ……….if ….**(Present Simple)**…………….
3. If you **(Present Simple)**…………, …**(infinitive)** ……………
4. **(infinitive)**………….., if …**(Present Simple)**………………

Example: If you visit Poland in winter, take warm clothes with you.

III. You have received an e-mail from your pen pal who wants to go for a weekend trip to a place you have been to recently. Recommend to him/her the interesting places to visit and give advice on accommodation, food, etc. Use as many conditional sentences as you can.