YOUR FAVOURITE MEANS OF TRAVELLING AND WHY THE TUBE?
http://www.thetube.com
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Level: intermediate and above.

Time: 45-90 minutes (depending on the choice of activities).

Aims:

- to teach students how to choose suitable keywords for Internet-based searches
- to teach students how to find information on a webpage making use of its main section and SEARCH THE SITE facility
- to teach students some basic facts about London and London Underground
- to teach students how to extract factual information from authentic texts (through scanning)

Technical requirements: At least one computer per a group of 2 students, Internet access.

Knowledge: Students should possess basic typing/word-processing skills and know how to start search engines and make use of the basic operators.

Necessary preparation: The teacher should ensure that all the computers are correctly networked and have access to the Internet. As most webpages are updated, it is advisable that the teacher actually checks whether the answers suggested below are still correct.

Possible problems: English on the Tube webpage may at first 'overwhelm' students but the teacher should tell them that they will be able to answer all/most of the questions even though they may have problems understanding everything.

Procedure:

Pre-stage activity:

The teacher asks students about Internet search engines they use or know about (some links can be written on the blackboard or, better still, made available in an electronic form so that students can further explore them at home). The teacher explains that during the class students will be asked to find answers to a number of questions making use of the Google search engine.

Note: As each new question depends considerably on the answer(s) obtained from the previous one(s), questions should be asked (or shown to students) **one by one**. Before anything is filled into the Google window, students discuss and decide on the keywords to be entered.

While-stage activities:

1. The teacher demonstrates some of the possibilities offered by search engines (the two particularly useful for the purposes of this lesson are: varying the sequence of search words and making use of quotation marks while searching for phrases). The teacher presents the following list of questions gradually (one by one) and asks students to suggest the keywords (see the underlined words in the questions below). Students should be encouraged to experiment with varying the sequence of keywords and using quotation marks around different phrases and see how these can affect the results. As the questions are interrelated, some of the key words that were used in previous searches should be re-used while answering the remaining questions:

a) Where is the <u>world's oldest</u> <u>underground</u>? (**Answer:** In London)

b) What do <u>locals</u> <u>call</u> it? (**Answer:** The Tube)

c) What is the <u>busiest</u> <u>station</u>? (**Answer:** Victoria)

d) How many <u>passengers</u> travel through it every <u>year</u>? At <u>peak hour</u>? (**Answer:** 76.5 mln / 30,000+ at peak hour [official tube statistics say 30,000 while other webpages suggest up to 34,000])

e) What was the <u>first line</u> <u>opened</u> on <u>London Underground</u>? (**Answer:** Metropolitan [Railway])

2. Once all the answers have been found and discussed, the teacher asks students to go to The Tube Official Webpage and distributes (writes on the blackboard/sends to students by e-mail) a list of questions they are to find the answers to on the webpage. The webpage contains authentic material, but as most of the questions are factual, students should be able to find all the figures and names rather quickly. Students can either try to use the keyword technique (there is a very crude SEARCH THIS SITE facility on the webpage) or access the main sections on the page (can be found at the top of the webpage).

- *How many passenger journeys were made in 1999-2000?* (**Answer:** 927 million, see: history).
- *Are there any maps of the underground on the webpage?* (**Answer:** Yes, one of them can even be accessed with a mobile phone)
- *Which section gives answers to the commonest questions concerning the Tube?* (**Answer:** FAQs)
- *Where can you find the basic historical information concerning the Tube?* (**Answer:** history)
- *In which section can you find news articles about London Underground?* (**Answer:** press)
- *What jobs are currently offered to people thinking about working for London Underground?* (**Answer:** Customer Services Assistant, see: jobs)
- *How much will an adult pay to travel from Victoria Station to All Saints Station?* (**Answer:** two pounds, see: tubeplanner)

3. Students work in pairs and write their own questions concerning The Tube (it is enough if each pair prepares 2-3 questions). During that stage the teacher should monitor the work and help students with their questions. Then they exchange their questions with other students and try to find answers to the questions written by other pairs. Those who finish the activity too quickly might be asked either to prepare even more questions or underline keywords in the questions they have answered and check if those could lead to correct answers (using both Google and SEARCH THIS SITE facilities).

Post-stage activity:

Some of the early-finishers may also enjoy reading the incredible trivia concerning the Tube and London public transport system.

Next class:

The teacher may encourage students to try to explore the webpage at home and check how much they can remember during the following class. The following questions might be used for quiz purposes:

- *How many stations are there?* (**Answer**: 275)
- *What is the busiest station on London Underground?* (**Answer:** Victoria)
- *How many passenger journeys are made every day?* (**Answer:** three million)
- *Why doesn't London Underground operate non-stop?* (**Answer:** there are only two tunnels, so a few-hour break is necessary for repair purposes)
- *How long is the network?* (**Answer:** over 408 km or 253 miles of railway)