

A BIOGRAPHY OF...

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With the valuable suggestions of Julian Chancellor

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A biography of...¹

1. FINAL TASK

At the end of the unit the students (SS) will write a biography of Australian athlete Cathy Freeman. This will include some general information about her country of origin – i.e. Australia – some personal details, together with some professional information.

The Education Law (LOE) stipulates that certain basic competences should feature in the curriculum. The development of the following four basic competences in linguistic communication, ICTs and digital competence, competence in learning to learn and autonomy and personal initiative have been taken into account in the elaboration of this Didactic Unit².

2. LEVEL

This unit is addressed to 1st year of Bachillerato SS. SS at this age have finished compulsory secondary education and should therefore have acquired oral and written skills to communicate efficiently in every-day situations through specific tasks. Likewise, they already know basic vocabulary for descriptions and can use different present and past forms of many regular and irregular verbs that will help them complete the final task.

3. JUSTIFICATION

This unit is intended to motivate SS by getting them to speak about familiar issues. Therefore, it starts with simpler input that gets more complex as the lesson goes on. This allows the teacher to go from the old to the new, making sure that all SS get involved in the activities and feel at ease.

¹ The contents, general objectives and evaluation criteria in this didactic unit are based upon the Real Decreto 3473 (29th December 2000), whereby the minimum requirements of compulsory education in Spain are established.

² REAL DECRETO 1631/2006, de 29 de diciembre, por el que se establecen las enseñanzas mínimas correspondientes a la Educación Secundaria Obligatoria.

The material chosen includes oral and visual messages, which will help SS to follow the teacher by establishing connections between the foreign language and the images.

Motivation is also enhanced in the final task. As SS will have to explore, express and exchange their work with the rest of the class they will be encouraged to do their best.

Furthermore, the use of the ICT will help them become autonomous and life-long learners.

4. OBJECTIVES AND EVALUATION CRITERIA OF THE DIDACTIC UNIT

Didactic Unit Objectives	Evaluation Criteria
1. To obtain global and specific information from a spoken text about the Commonwealth of Nations and the Commonwealth Games.	1. To extract global and specific information from an oral message about the Commonwealth of Nations and the Commonwealth Games.
2. To narrate orally with a reasonable degree of fluency a text about the Commonwealth of Nations and the Commonwealth Games paying attention to coherence and cohesion devices.	2. To produce a coherent and cohesive oral message about the Commonwealth of Nations and the Commonwealth Games.
3. To interact orally with the teacher and other SS, previously planning the message and paying attention to both coherence and correction.	3. To participate in conversations or debates previously prepared, to use the appropriate strategies to guarantee communication with the speaker, and to produce coherent and formally correct messages to make communication possible.
4. To extract specific information from a written text about Fernando Alonso's F1 career.	4. To extract specific information from a written text about Fernando Alonso's F1 career.
5. To organise sentences and paragraphs in a logical way with the aim of creating a coherent and cohesive written biography of	5. To write a biography of Australian athlete Cathy Freeman with the correct syntax necessary for its understanding, and using

Australian athlete Cathy Freeman.	the different elements which guarantee coherence and cohesion to the text.
6. To interest the SS in learning about the culture of the countries where the foreign language is spoken.	6. To show awareness of the social and cultural diversity transmitted when the foreign language is used to communicate, and to search for similarities.
7. To recognise the presence and importance of the foreign language in the new information and communication technologies.	7. To recognise the presence and importance of the foreign language in the new information and communication technologies.

5. CONTENTS

Reflection on the language		
Grammar	Vocabulary	Language Functions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘First’, ‘second’ and ‘third’ conditionals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sports. • Descriptive adjectives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To express real possibilities and to formulate hypotheses.
Pronunciation		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘O’ pronounced as /ɔ/ or /ʌ/. 		
Sociocultural elements		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge of the history of the Commonwealth and of different English-speaking sports people. • Recognition of the presence and importance of the foreign language in the new information and communication technologies. • Interest in learning about the culture of the countries where the foreign language is spoken. 		

6. DIDACTIC MATERIALS

- Pictures of different sports.
- Script of the listening *The Commonwealth of Nations*.

- *The Commonwealth of Nations* listening comprehension. Written text *The Motor Racing Star* (from Sayer, M. and E. Terán. 2005. *Time for English*. Spain: Macmillan Heinemann).
- *The Motor Racing Star* reading comprehension.
- Pronunciation chart.

7. DIDACTIC RESOURCES

- Computer connected to a video projector
- Power Point programme
- Internet access

8. TIMING

This didactic unit has been designed to be covered in 6 50-minute periods.

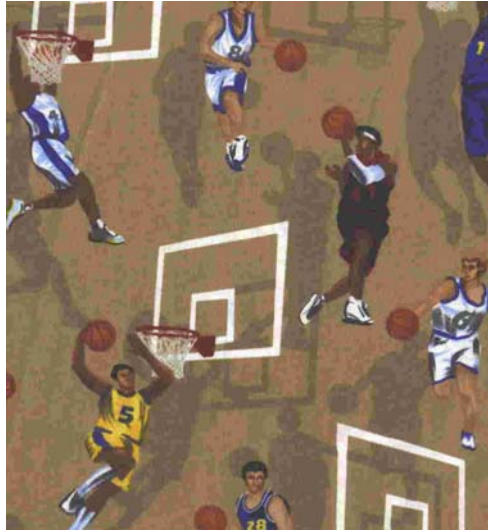
9. ACTIVITIES.

9.1. SESSION 1.

In order to **introduce the didactic unit**, the teacher tells the SS about the topic they will be learning about in this unit: sports. In order to create a pleasant atmosphere and get the SS involved in the topic, as a whole-class activity they brainstorm vocabulary related to sports. These ideas are written on the board.

Key words will be pronounced and written on the phonemic chart (see model below in session 2) next to the phonemic symbols they rhyme with.

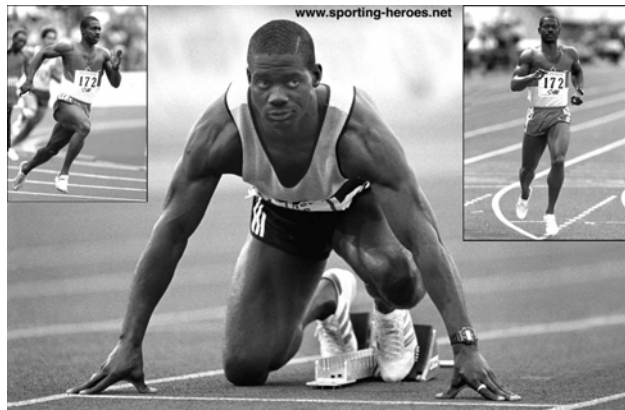
After this first brainstorming, the teacher shows pictures of sports using Power Point (see below – 1. basketball; 2. football; 3. athletics; 4. tennis; 5. sky-diving; 6. hang-gliding; 7. rafting) and explains to the SS which are individual or team sports, which of them are popular in English-speaking countries, and which are considered adventure sports.



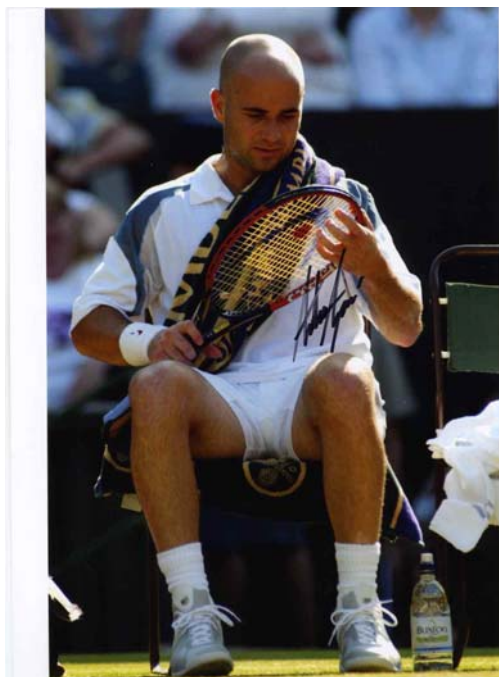
1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



7.

During the second half of the lesson, in order to activate previous knowledge, the teacher talks to the students about his / her own likes, dislikes and habits as regards sports. Then SS talk about themselves with the help of questions asked by the teacher – e.g. we start with simple ones such as *What type of sports do you know?; Do you prefer indoor or outdoor sports?; How often do you do sports?; Are you good at PE?*

SS are told that they will be doing a survey with other classmates and are asked to draw a survey chart in which those questions that have so far come up are written down.

After this, we altogether brainstorm possible further questions about sports to ask each other and again each SS completes the chart for him / herself and his / her classmates - *Are you a successful sportsperson? What type of sports do you prefer, team or individual sports? Why? Are you competitive? Do you have fun when you exercise with friends? Have you ever tried adventure sports? Do you think you are a brave person?*

QUESTIONS	YOU	PARTNER
<i>Are you a successful sportsperson?</i>		
<i>What type of sports do you prefer, team or individual sports? Why?</i>		

<i>Are you competitive?</i>		
<i>Do you have fun when you exercise with friends?</i>		
<i>Have you ever tried adventure sports?</i>		

9.2. SESSION 2

At the start of the lesson we altogether recap what was done in the previous session. Afterwards, SS listen to a text – *The Commonwealth of Nations* - about the Commonwealth and the Commonwealth Games.

THE COMMONWEALTH OF NATIONS

Script

The Commonwealth of Nations was created in the mid 20th century by a number of former British colonies. However, all the members are currently independent countries that accept the British monarchy as the symbolic head.

Since they were once part of the same country, Commonwealth members share one main feature – English is their official language. Most of the old colonies retained their native language also adopting English as the official way for communicating.

Furthermore, Commonwealth countries are nowadays involved in common activities. For instance, the Commonwealth Games are a series of sports competitions that take place every four years and where elite athletes from the members take part.

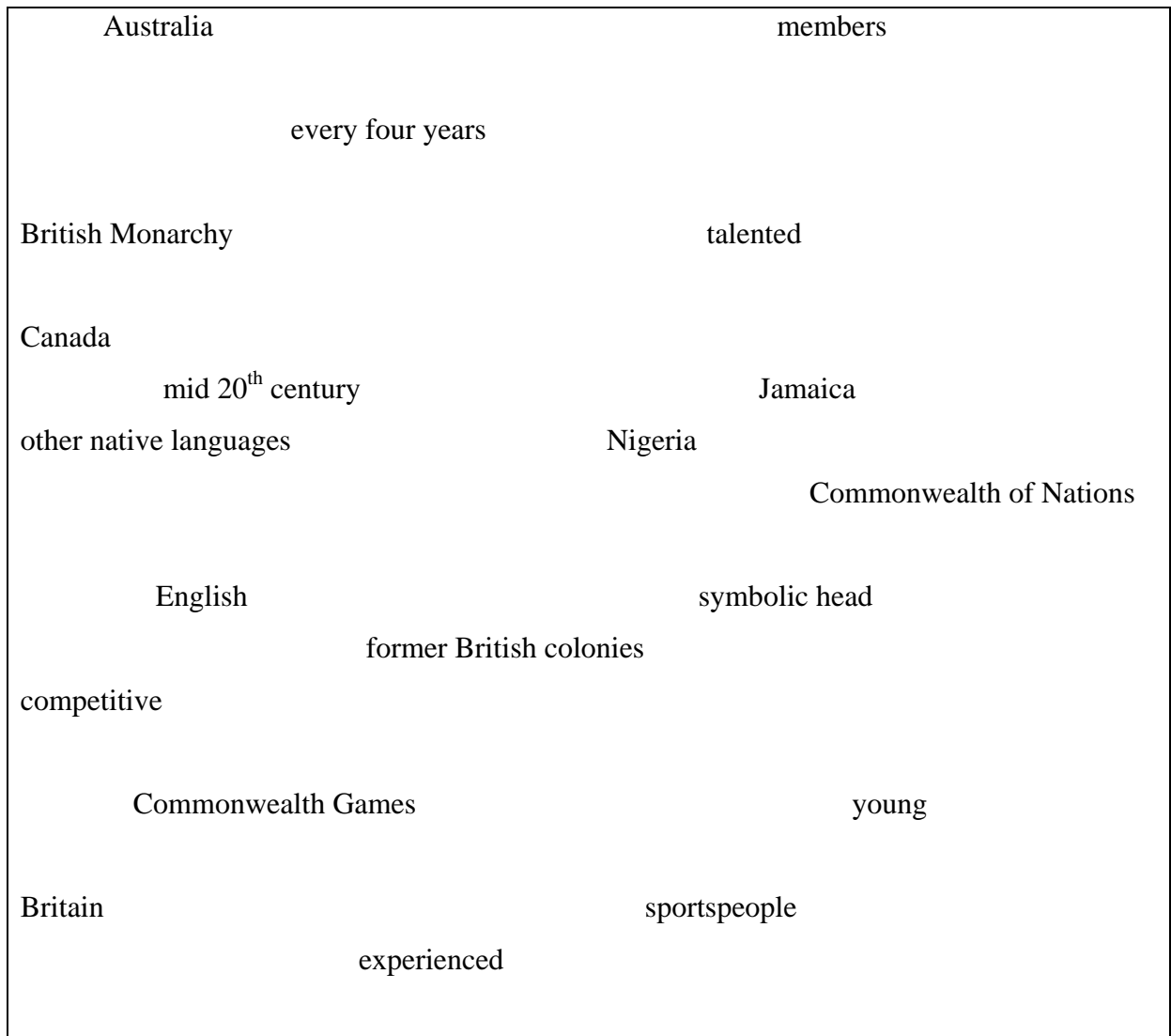
Some famous sportspeople who come from the Commonwealth countries are: Canadian athlete Ben Johnson, Jamaican Athlete Marlene Ottey, British football player Wayne Rooney, Australia athlete Cathy Freeman and Nigerian Football player George Finidi.

All of them have some common characteristics. Firstly, they were talented and competitive sportspeople from a very young age. Secondly, after becoming experienced, they won important races and championships and thirdly, they are all emblems of their nations.

Before listening to the story, SS are asked questions about the Commonwealth and the answers are written on the blackboard.

When was the Commonwealth of Nations created? Who is the symbolic head of the Commonwealth? Who are its members? What language is spoken in Commonwealth members? What takes place every four years? Which of these Commonwealth countries are mentioned? Which of these adjectives describe the sportspeople mentioned in the text?

Similarly to the beginning of session 1, key words are pronounced and written on the phonemic chart next to the sound they rhyme with.



The listening is read out while SS put the words in order of appearance. This activity allows them to associate what they are hearing with the key words on the board.

During the second half of the lesson, SS are allowed to read the questions for the listening comprehension (see below). In order for them to focus on listening and not writing, several choices are given. However, for those SS who have a higher level no answers are provided. The listening is read out again while the students complete the listening comprehension. Finally, as a whole-class activity the answers are checked.

THE COMMONWEALTH OF NATIONS

Listening comprehension

When was the Commonwealth of Nations created?	Mid 19th century, <u>mid 20th century</u>, beginning of 20th century
Who is the symbolic head of the Commonwealth?	The British Prime Minister The American President <u>The British Monarchy</u>
Who are its members?	Former American Colonies <u>Former British Colonies</u> Former British isles
What language is spoken in Commonwealth members?	English and other European languages <u>English and other native languages</u> English and African languages
What takes place every four years?	The Commonwealth Pains <u>The Commonwealth Games</u> The Commonwealth Names
Which of these Commonwealth countries are mentioned?	<u>Jamaica</u>, Ireland, India, <u>Nigeria</u>, <u>Australia</u>, Singapore, <u>Canada</u>, Mauritius, <u>Britain</u>
Which of these adjectives describe the sportspeople mentioned in the text?	<u>Talented</u>, daring, <u>young</u> successful, <u>competitive</u>, <u>experienced</u>

Reinforcement activity:

Those SS who find it difficult to complete the listening exercise will be given the script so that they can finish it.

Extension activity:

SS are asked to gather some more information about the Commonwealth – e.g. What other Commonwealth countries can you find? What's the capital city? What's its population? What currency do they use? - using internet resources.

9.3. SESSION 3

As a whole-class and warm-up activity, we all remind ourselves what was done in the previous lesson. We check the answers for the listening exercise.

The aim of this session is to work on the pronunciation of certain key words, which are found in the questions and answers of the listening comprehension, and retell the story of the listening exercise in lesson 1.

Such key words are: Commonwealth, twentieth century, symbolic, head, British, Monarch, members, former, colonies, English, other, native, languages, games, Jamaica, Nigeria, Australia, Canada, Britain, talented, competitive, experienced, young.

On the board the teacher writes them down (note that monosyllabic words have not been underlined) and SS include them in the phonemic chart (see below). Then SS repeat the words using the correct stress pattern.

PHONETIC SYMBOLS	<i>A biography of...</i>	
/æ/	<u>L</u> anguages, <u>C</u> anada, <u>t</u> alented,	
/ɜ:/		
/ɑ:/		
/ʌ/	<u>o</u> ther, <u>y</u> oung	
/ɪ/	<u>B</u> ritish, <u>E</u> nglish, <u>B</u> ritain	
/i:/		
/u:/		
/ʊ/		
/ɔ:/	<u>f</u> ormer,	
/ɒ/	<u>C</u> ommonwealth, <u>s</u> ymbolic, <u>M</u> onarch, <u>c</u> olonies,	
/e/	<u>t</u> wentieth <u>c</u> entury, <u>h</u> ead, <u>m</u> embers, <u>c</u> ompetitive,	
/ɪə/	<u>N</u> igeria, <u>e</u> xperienced,	
/eə/		
/ʊə/		
/aɪ/		
/aʊ/		
/eɪ/	<u>n</u> ative, <u>g</u> ames, <u>J</u> amaica, <u>A</u> ustralia,	
/əʊ/		
/ɔɪ/		

SS are encouraged to think of words which contain the same vowel sound and these are added to the pronunciation chart. Once we have all checked that the words have been properly included, the SS's attention is drawn towards the sound /ɒ/ in the words "Commonwealth" and "symbolic". Then to the word "other" where the letter "o" has a different pronunciation - /ʌ/. SS are given the following words: *hot, dog, love,*

Monday, some, compare and are asked to decide which sound the letter “o” represents - either /ɔ/ or /ʌ/.

During the second half of the lesson, in order to practise oral fluency, SS are given 10 minutes to prepare the following activity: in pairs they have to retell the text *The Commonwealth of Nations* using the information in the listening exercise. While they prepare it, the teacher walks around solving any doubts as regards pronunciation points – especially those of key words. When they finish, the teacher checks the exercise and SS change partner.

Reinforcement activity:

Those students who finish preparing the story change partner to help those who are still working.

Some SS are chosen at random to retell the listening and receive a mark for it.

9.4. SESSION 4.

As a warm-up activity, the teacher asks questions to the SS about Fernando Alonso, similar to those on p.17. Then the teacher shows a Power Point slide with words from the reading comprehension (see below). As a whole-class activity students identify the stressed sounds and possible rhyming words, which are included in the phonemic chart (see above). They speak about what each word suggests to them.

Minardi	1996
Renault	3
Fernando Alonso	after a season
Hungarian Grand Prix	daring
first job	
	start racing
world champion	
	successful
Japanese Grand Prix	
	10 th position
F1 test driver	unbeatable

In order to improve the SS's reading skills, they work individually on a written text (see below). After reading the text they answer a comprehension exercise (see below), which requires extracting, deducing and paraphrasing information.

THE MOTOR RACING STAR

Text

Fernando Alonso is one of the most talented and daring young stars of Formula 1 motor racing. In his first full season with the Renault team, he was the first Spaniard, as well as the youngest driver, to win a Grand Prix. He was only 22, and he led the race in Hungary from start to finish.

Alonso was born in Oviedo in 1981 and from an early age, racing and winning were what he loved most. In fact, he was only three years old when he began karting in his local championship. He had a natural talent for racing and, in the years that followed, Fernando was unbeatable in his regional kart events. In 1993, aged 12, he became Spanish national kart champion, and in 1996 he was junior world champion.

In 2001, aged 19, Alonso made his F1 debut with Minardi. He finished in an amazing 10th place at the Japanese Grand Prix. This impressed everyone, and Fernando became the Renault F1 test driver. He gained valuable experience and the following season he had a race seat with Renault. He moved to Oxford to be near the main offices of Renault and learnt fluent English.

Today, Fernando is rich, famous and successful, but he still has the same desire to race and win that he showed when he was a little boy. "I want to win everything I do!" he told a reporter. "If I don't think I can win, I won't play. If I lose at tennis to a friend, I won't speak to him for a week!" But everyone in Formula 1 is like that. If Fernando wasn't so competitive, he wouldn't win so many races.

From Sayer, M. and E. Terán. (2005) Time for English. Student's Book. Spain: Macmillan Heinemann.

The Motor Racing Star
Reading Comprehension

What team was Fernando driving for when he won his first Grand Prix?	For Renault.
What was special about Fernando's win in the Hungarian Grand Prix?	That he led the race from start to finish.
At what age did Fernando start racing?	At the age of 3.
When did Fernando first become a world champion?	In 1996.
What position did Fernando get with Minardi at the Japanese Grand Prix?	He got the 10th position.
Who did Fernando start driving with?	Minardi.
What was Fernando's first job with Renault?	As a F1 test driver.
After how long did he start racing with Renault?	After a season as a test driver.
Does he want to win as much as he used to?	Yes, he does.
What adjectives does the writer use to describe Alonso?	Talented, daring, young, unbeatable, rich, famous, successful, competitive.
Find words in the text which mean: - adventurous (line 1) - not able to be defeated (line 9) - obtained (line 14) - having achieved popularity (line 18)	- daring - unbeatable - gained - famous

9.5. SESSION 5

This session takes place in the computer room so that SS can develop techniques of autonomous learning. In pairs or groups of three, depending on the availability of

computers, SS work on a web-based information collection activity – i.e. Treasure Hunt. Any doubt as regards new vocabulary is looked up in a multimedia dictionary that has previously been installed or in an online dictionary such as the Cambridge Online Dictionary. Pair or group work is useful for those SS who find it difficult to locate the answers.

SS complete a Treasure Hunt related to Australia and Australian athlete Cathy Freeman (see below), in which they have to answer a number of questions for which the web source is given. Thus, SS do not surf the net looking for random information but are rather given a clear aim and corpus to work on.

Tre@sure Hunt

AUSTRALIA

What are the main areas in which Australia is divided?

http://www.australia.com/site_tools/maps/Map_Home_STD1.aust?L=en&C=US

What's its capital city?

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Australia>

Watch the TV advertisement for Australia. What animals can you see?

<http://www.wherethebloodyhellareyou.com/tvc/index.html?intcmp=www:australia:com>

Watch the following video. Then name and describe the different landscapes it shows.

http://www.australia.com/promosite/B06_Journey_vid/microsite.aust?I=B06_Journey_vid.xml&L=en&C=US

Do you know what animal is considered a symbol of the country?

<http://www.csu.edu.au/australia/>

CATHY FREEMAN

When was she born? Where was she born? Where does she currently live?

http://www.cathyfreeman.com.au/html/s02_article/article_view.asp?id=592&nav_cat_id=320&nav_top_id=115&view=&history=1&gback=home&dsa=1

When did she start running? Which Olympic Games has she competed in?

http://www.cathyfreeman.com.au/html/s02_article/article_view.asp?id=594&nav_cat_id=326&nav_top_id=115&view=&history=1&gback=home&dsa=1

What medal did she win at the Sydney Olympic Games?

How many Gold medals has she won at the Commonwealth Games?

<http://www.sporting-heroes.net/athletics-heroes/displayhero.asp?HeroID=247>

What ethnic group does she belong to?

<http://www.kidcyber.com.au/topics/Freemancathy.htm>

How did newspapers refer to her in the 1980s?

http://www.cathyfreeman.com.au/html/s02_article/article_view.asp?id=241&nav_cat_id=227&nav_top_id=87&dsa=1

How does Mike Danila describe the job of being Cathy's coach?

http://www.cathyfreeman.com.au/html/s02_article/article_view.asp?id=242&nav_cat_id=228&nav_top_id=87&dsa=1

What does "to be over the moon" mean?

<http://dictionary.cambridge.org/results.asp?searchword=over+the+moon>

Does she have any University studies?

http://www.cathyfreeman.com.au/html/s02_article/article_view.asp?id=609&nav_cat_id=322&nav_top_id=115&view=&history=1&gback=home&dsa=1

SS also collect appropriate photographs during the treasure hunt to illustrate their oral and written presentations.

9.6. SESSION 6

The first part of the session will be devoted to checking the answers to the treasure hunt questions as a whole class activity.

Students then start preparing an outline for a short oral presentation about Cathy Freeman. The vocabulary and ideas they have seen up to this point are a good aid for writing the text. SS are encouraged to bring pictures to class and use them for the presentation.

SS share their oral presentations with the rest of the class. Finally, as was suggested in "1.- FINAL TASK", SS write their essay about Cathy Freeman individually and hand it in to the teacher to be marked.

Further activities:

In small groups SS prepare similar oral presentations about other personalities they are interested in.

10. ASSESSMENT OF THE DIDACTIC UNIT

Evaluation of the **objectives** and **contents** is carried out through:

- **direct observation:** SS performance is evaluated day by day. They are required to participate in class, interact in the foreign language and do the classwork.
- **final task:** The SS' essays are corrected and marked by the teacher. The most relevant biographies written by the SS will be presented to the whole class using the video projector.

Assessment of the didactic unit is done by checking:

- suitability of the activities to the objectives,
- suitability and relevance of final task as regards didactic objectives,
- motivation towards the final task,
- timing,
- amount of interaction in the classroom,
- suitability of students distribution.

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