

People Who Crossed Borders: An Interactive Reading Exercise

Roger Nunn
nunn [at] cc.kochi-u.ac.jp
Kochi University (Kochi, Japan)

Introduction

Once a reading text has been written on an appropriate topic for a current teaching unit, it can be exploited in many ways beyond just presenting information or practising the skills of reading comprehension. The following simple and easily designed exercises provide an interactive purpose for reading, but also provide practise in using interactive questions. Each student whether in a pair (exercise 1) or a group (exercise 2) has the same text, but different information is omitted from each student's text. No one has a complete text, but all the information is available in the pair or group. Students have a dual purpose. They need to complete a potentially interesting text using predictive reading skills. To do so they have to formulate questions and where necessary follow-up their questions using linguistic skills. Before asking their questions they need time to try to predict some of the information from the context provided by the text itself. The teacher might then demonstrate with students different kinds of questions commonly used in interaction: "normal" questions, such as "When was Gandhi born?"; indirect questions, such as "I need to know, when Gandhi was born? or "Do you know/ does anyone know, when Gandhi was born? ; short questions such as "How about his birth place?

Follow up activities could include retelling the stories in a teacher-whole group activity. The teacher prompts students to reconstruct the text without looking at their papers, by trying to recall it from memory.

Example 1: A Pair Work Exercise

Student A: People Who Crossed Borders - Gandhi

Sometimes experience in other countries can help people to understand their own identity better. Mahatma Gandhi was born (when?)_____ at Portandar in Western India. After studying in India, he dreamt of going (where?)_____ to study. He was told that his Hindu religion did not allow voyages abroad. However, Gandhi was very determined and he finally left for England in 1887. At first he tried to learn to behave like an English gentleman, but he soon learnt that it was better to be himself. He studied law in London, qualifying (when?)_____. He also learnt about other religions.

He returned home to India and worked as a lawyer for (how long?)_____. After some problems, he was offered a job in South Africa. Here he experienced racism as a member of the Indian community. He decided to fight for the rights of Indians using "passive resistance". He had three main beliefs, non-violence, religious tolerance and (what?)_____. When he finally returned to India in 1915, he became a great political leader. During the fight for independence he was often put in prison, but his beliefs never changed.

Gandhi had studied in Britain, so he understood the British better than they understood him. Gandhi's leadership led to (what?)_____

_____, but, on Independence day, 15 August, 1947, Gandhi refused to celebrate. He was in favour of Hindu-Moslem unity but Moslems and Hindus could not agree, so a separate Moslem state was

formed in Pakistan. In 1948, Gandhi started fasting to death as a protest (why?) _____ between India and Pakistan. He was assassinated by a Hindu fanatic on 30th January 1948. _ India and Pakistan are still fighting in Kashmir today. The fight for independence was a difficult one, but not as difficult as the fight for non-violence, religious tolerance and truth.

Student B: People Who Crossed Borders - Gandhi

Sometimes experience in other countries can help people to understand their own identity better. Mahatma Gandhi was born in 1869 (where?) _____ in Western India. After studying in India, he dreamt of going to England to study. He was told that his Hindu religion did not allow voyages abroad. However, Gandhi was very determined and he finally left for England (when?) _____. At first he tried to learn to behave like an English gentleman, but he soon learnt that it was better to be himself. He studied (what?) _____ in London, qualifying in 1891. He also learnt about other religions.

He returned home to India and worked as a lawyer for two years. After some problems, he was offered a job in (where?) _____. Here he experienced racism as a member of the Indian community. He decided to fight for the rights of Indians using "passive resistance". He had three main beliefs, (what?), _____ religious tolerance and truth. When he finally returned to India in 1915, he became a great political leader. During the fight for independence he was often put in prison, but his beliefs never changed.

Gandhi had studied in Britain, so he understood the British better than they understood him. Gandhi's leadership led to independence, but, on Independence day, 15 August, 1947, Gandhi refused to (what?) _____. He was in favour of Hindu-Moslem unity but Moslems and Hindus could not agree, so a separate Moslem state was formed in Pakistan. (when?) _____, Gandhi started fasting to death as a protest against fighting between India and Pakistan. He was assassinated by a Hindu fanatic on 30th January 1948. _ India and Pakistan are still fighting (where?) _____ today. The fight for independence was a difficult one, but not as difficult as the fight for non-violence, religious tolerance and truth.

Teacher's Key: People Who Crossed Borders - Gandhi

Sometimes experience in other countries can help people to understand their own identity better. Mahatma Gandhi was born in 1869 at Portandar in Western India. After studying in India, he dreamt of going to England to study. He was told that his Hindu religion did not allow voyages abroad. However, Gandhi was very determined and he finally left for England in 1887. At first he tried to learn to behave like an English gentleman, but he soon learnt that it was better to be himself. He studied law in London, qualifying in 1891. He also learnt about other religions.

He returned home to India and worked as a lawyer for two years. After some problems, he was offered a job in South Africa. Here he experienced racism as a member of the Indian community. He decided to fight for the rights of Indians using "passive resistance". He had three main beliefs, non-violence, religious tolerance and truth. When he finally returned to India in 1915, he became a great political leader. During the fight for independence he was often put in prison, but his beliefs never changed.

Gandhi had studied in Britain, so he understood the British better than they understood him. Gandhi's leadership led to independence, but, on Independence day, 15 August, 1947, Gandhi refused to celebrate. He was in favour of Hindu-Moslem unity but Moslems and Hindus could not agree, so a separate Moslem state was formed in Pakistan. In 1948, Gandhi started fasting to death as a protest against fighting between India and Pakistan. He was assassinated by a Hindu fanatic on 30th January 1948. _ India and Pakistan are still fighting in Kashmir today. The fight for independence was a difficult one, but not as difficult as the fight for non-violence, religious tolerance and truth.

Example 2: A Small Group Exercise

Student A: People Who Crossed Borders - Mother Teresa

Mother Teresa was born_ (when)_____ in what is now Macedonia (At that time it was Yugoslavia). Her parents were Albanians. In 1928 she traveled to Dublin, Ireland_ (why?)_____. About a year later, she went to a convent in Darjeeling in northeast India. Mother Teresa was then sent to teach geography at a high school in Calcutta, but she soon decided that there was a pressing need to help the poor people in the slums of Calcutta.

In 1948 she became an Indian citizen, but she got permission from the Pope to work as an independent nun and she founded the Missionaries of Charity in Calcutta. She is known throughout_ the world for (what?)_____ which she started wearing at this time. Four years later Mother Teresa founded the Kalighat Home for the Dying. Her aim was to comfort people who were dying in misery and to help them to die with dignity. Mother Teresa also helped victims of leprosy.

In 1965 Mother Teresa's order became international with the help of the Pope. Centers and schools for those abandoned by society, orphans, lepers, the blind, the disabled, the aged, and the dying were gradually opened (where?)_____. In 1972, she won the Jawaharlal Nehru Award for International Understanding, but it was the award of the Nobel Peace Prize seven years later which brought her the most international fame and recognition. Mother Teresa went on to receive many other international honors. By 1990 over 3,000 nuns from the Missionaries of Charity were running centers in 25 countries.

While she was a practical person who dedicated her life to others, Mother Teresa_ could not escape (what?)_____ whose image is presented through the media. She also had her opponents who could not agree with her strong views about abortion and the impact of her views on less charitable opponents of abortion. The way she ran her charities has also been questioned. After her organization became more international, some people_ even criticised her (why?)_____. Although Mother Teresa is likely to become a saint, it would probably be wrong to think that all these criticisms are completely unjustified. Mother Teresa was a human being who had her contradictions and her faults, but how many of her critics could compare their own lives to hers and honestly claim to have done more to further international understanding of the global problems_ she tried to solve according to her own beliefs?

Student B: People Who Crossed Borders - Mother Teresa

Mother Teresa was born in 1910 (where)_____. Her parents were Albanians. In 1928 she traveled to Dublin, Ireland, to join a religious order. About a year later, she went to a convent in Darjeeling in northeast India. Mother Teresa was then sent to teach (what?)_____ at a high school in Calcutta, but she soon decided that there was a need to help the poor people in the slums of Calcutta.

(when)_____ she became an Indian citizen, but she got permission from the pope to work as an independent nun and she founded the Missionaries of Charity in Calcutta. She is known throughout_ the world for the simple white sari with a blue border which she started wearing at this time. Four years later Mother Teresa founded the Kalighat Home for the Dying. Her aim was (what?)_____ and to help them to die with dignity. Mother Teresa also helped victims of leprosy.

In 1965 Mother Teresa's order became international with the help of the Pope. Centers and schools for those often abandoned by society, orphans, lepers, the blind, the disabled, the aged, and the dying were gradually opened worldwide. In 1972, she won (what?)_____, but it was the award of the Nobel Peace Prize seven years later which brought her the most international fame and recognition. By 1990 (how many)_____ nuns from the Missionaries of Charity were running centers in 25 countries. Mother Teresa received many other international honors.

While she was a (what kind)_____ person who dedicated her life to others, Mother

Theresa_ could not escape the problems that face all international figures whose image is presented through the media. She also had her opponents who could not agree with her strong views about abortion and the impact of her views on less charitable opponents of abortion. The way she ran her charities has also been questioned. After her organization became more international, some people_ even criticised her for_ her "jet-set" lifestyle. Although Mother Theresa is likely to become (what) _____, it would probably be wrong to think that all these criticisms are completely unjustified. Mother Theresa was a human being who had her contradictions and her faults, but how many of her critics could compare their own lives to hers and honestly claim to have done more to further international understanding of the global problems she tried to solve according to her own beliefs?

Student C: People Who Crossed Borders - Mother Teresa

Mother Teresa was born in 1910 in what is now Macedonia (At that time it was Yugoslavia). Her parents were Albanians. In 1928 she traveled to Dublin, Ireland, to join a religious order. About a year later, she went (where?)_____ Mother Teresa was then sent to teach geography at a high school in Calcutta, but she soon decided that there was a need to help the poor people in the slums of Calcutta.

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While she was a practical person who dedicated her life to others, Mother Theresa_ could not escape the problems that face all international figures whose image is presented through the media. She also had her opponents who could not agree with her strong views about abortion and the impact of her views on less charitable opponents of abortion. (what?)_____ has also been questioned. After her organization became more international, some people_ even criticised her for her "jet-set" lifestyle. Although Mother Theresa is likely to become a saint, it would probably be wrong to think that all these criticisms are completely unjustified. (why?) _____ but how many of her critics could compare their own lives to hers and honestly claim to have done more to further international understanding of the global problems_ she tried to solve according to her own beliefs?

Teacher's Key: People Who Crossed Borders - Mother Teresa

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While she was a practical person who dedicated her life to others, Mother Theresa_ could not escape the problems that face all international figures whose image is presented through the media. She also had her opponents who could not agree with her strong views about abortion and the impact of her views on less charitable opponents of abortion. The way she ran her charities has also been questioned. After her organization became more international, some people_ even criticised her for_ her "jet-set" lifestyle. Although Mother Theresa is likely to become a saint, it would probably be wrong to think that all these criticisms are completely unjustified. Mother Theresa was a human being who had her contradictions and her faults, but how many of her critics could compare their own lives to hers and honestly claim to have done more to further international understanding of the global problems_ she tried to solve according to her own beliefs?

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