Home is whenever I'm with you (first part)

"Home is where the heart is"
Pliny the Elder

JUSTIFICATION

According to the Cambridge Online Dictionary, “home” encompasses different meanings. It can refer to the house or apartment where one lives, especially with one’s family or the type of family one comes from. In other words, the concept of home itself involves both the dwelling and the feeling of belonging to some place. Therefore, this topic is ideal to start the course and to get to know our students better while teaching multicultural aspects of the English-speaking world and developing learning skills such as speaking as writing. These activities will help to students to learn about stylistic figures like the metaphor and to relate places with feelings, just like what happens when someone feels at home.

FOLLOW-UP

Step One: Imagination and Metaphor

To surprise our learners is always a great presentation card. Without saying a word, write on the board: ‘House = Home?’ and ask the most chatty type student to read it. Tell to four or five students to explain the difference between those two concepts. Try to create a debate about what home is supposed to be according to them. Just when the class is quiet, tell them to close their eyes and think about a place (real, imaginary, peaceful, scary, beautiful, disgusting, it could be taken from a film, from the real life, etc. All options are welcome!). After each intervention ask another student to guess if the place described is real or not, if it’s familiar to them or not. Here is a hint: if you see your students too puzzled or unwilling to follow your instructions, give an example in order to ease the development of this activity: ”
Here’s a pond near a cozy red house where there’s mud, frogs, weeds, logs, mosquitoes and a wooden bench to sit and contemplate. During this task avoid any kind of negative feedback or corrections, let them talk as much as possible and encourage them to keep going, try to make them comfortable in the dynamic of this exercise. You can project a list of places on the board to help them out, like "lighthouse", "river", "attic", "bedroom", "beach", "basketball court", "carnival", "concert", "grocery store", "island", "garden", "forest", "rooftop", "library", etc.

Then, they must write down on a piece of paper five feelings or states of being they know well (like happiness, anger, frustration, loneliness, excitement, etc.). Now, they match one feeling to each place. For instance: "loneliness is a pond of frogs where mosquitoes sit on the bench of frustration". Encourage them to tell what they came up to in front of the class. Perhaps their happiness is exciting seashore full of sunburned people coming from frustrating countries. Or hunger is a happy fast food restaurant place in Thirsty Street where you count the minutes to bet to your lonely home to eat popcorn and a soft drink in front of the TV.

**Step two: Slice of life**

House are much more than the physical materials from which they’re built. Especially why “house” becomes "home", when it’s "your" house and "your “feelings in "those" rooms? Tell your students to take a moment to remember the house or the houses you’ve lived in or spent a significant amount of time in - homes of grandparents, cousins or friends, all counts. Help them to locate this house-home in a city, town or neighborhoods. They must describe the way the get there by writing down each string of house numbers of the corresponding streets, avenues, roads, cul-de-sac, etc. The next step is to describe a place on the outside and to include a few memories that happened on the inside too. Give them the instruction to begin with "here’s the house where..." Give them total freedom to express themselves orally without correcting anything of their speech. Because they would probably struggle with the vocabulary, offer them some input about accommodations:

1. **bedsit**: furnished sitting room containing sleeping accommodation and sometimes cooking and washing facilities.
2. **detached house**: a dwelling which is disconnected or standing apart
3. **dwelling**: a place of residence
4. **flat (UK) / apartment (US)**: a set of rooms for living in that are part of a larger building and are usually all on one floor.
5. **households**: people in a family or group who live together in a house
6. **housing estate (UK)**: state owned accommodation
7. **loft conversion**: large open-plan living space
8. **mobile home**: a large house trailer that is parked in one particular place and used as a permanent living accommodation.
9. **outskirts**: outside of the city.
10. **projects (US)**: state owned accommodation
11. **suburbs**: a residential district on the outskirts of the city or town.

12. **terraced houses**: a row of houses, usually identical and having common dividing walls, or the street onto which they face

The expected result could be the following (you can read it out loud as an example)

"Here's the detached house which my grandparents inherited, with a garden of French lavender surrounded by rosemary bushes. The dwelling that smelled of Marseille soap and clean linen, where we used to host barbecues in summer and anyone could join us at the porch each night and teased our dog Kina to fetch a tennis ball. The place where my parents raised both of us and took care of horses, hens and geese while they collected the honey from the hives protected by hard-working bees. The kitchen where I learnt to read thanks to Tintin comic books and listened to Dire Straits albums. The bedroom that I had to leave when we moved to the big city, the winter I began calling a different address home, instead of that easy flower name that indicates the way to our house." 

**Bibliography**

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