

Episode 03x01: One famous US prison

Teacher's Notes

Aims: To practise listening and talking about crimes and tourist attractions of San Francisco.

Language: The past simple; prepositions; vocabulary connected with crimes.

Preparation: Make one copy of the Student's worksheet (pages 1 and 2) for each student in your class.

Procedure:

Before you watch

Write *Alcatraz* on the board and ask students if they know anything about the place. Listen to students' suggestions and explain they will check them as they watch the video.

Note: You can find the detailed history, picture gallery and general information about Alcatraz Island on its official website: www.nps.gov/alca/index.htm

1. Types of crimes

Students match the words and the definitions. They work individually and then compare their answers in pairs. Check the answers with the whole class and drill the pronunciation of the types of crimes. To make sure students know the differences between the crimes, ask for the Polish translation of the terms.

Key: 1b, 2e, 3d, 4c, 5a

2A.

Ask students to define the types of punishment. If necessary, give them monolingual dictionaries to look up the terms or tell them to use an online dictionary at: www.macmillandictionary.com. Next, students put the types of punishment in order from the mildest to the harshest. Elicit the suggestions from the whole class.

Suggested answers: 1. fine, 2. community service, 3. prison sentence, 4. death penalty

2B.

Students work in groups of 3-4 and discuss the question. Elicit the suggestions from different groups.

Note: The types of punishment will vary depending on individual cases, but the death penalty is prohibited in Poland for all offences.

Video tasks

1. True (T), false (F) or no information (NI)?

Students mark the statements *T* (true), *F* (false) or *NI* (no information given). They work on the task individually and then compare their answers in pairs. Play the video again. Check the answers with the whole class. Encourage students to correct the false statements.

Key: 1 T, 2 T, 3 NI, 4 F, 5 NI, 6 F, 7 T, 8 F, 9 F

2. The past simple.

Pre-teach: *mobster, canary, sparrow, yard*.

Students complete the sentences with the correct verbs in the past simple. One verb is extra. They then compare their answers in pairs. Play the video again. Check with the whole class.

Key: 1 went, 2 was, 3 found, 4 started, 5 went, committed

3. San Francisco

Pre-teach: *signature, pier, hang out, the crookedest*.

Students match the descriptions and the places. They compare the answers in pairs. Play the video again. Check the answers with the whole class.

Key: 1c, 2e, 3a, 4b, 5f, 6d

Follow-up

1A.

Talking about Alcatraz.

Students complete the questions with the prepositions from the box. They compare their answers in pairs. Check the answers with the whole class.

Key: 1 for, 2 in, 3 for, 4 of

1B.

Students match the notes of the answers given by the speakers in the video to the correct questions in 1A.

Key: A - 3, B - 4, C - 1, D - 2

1C.

In pairs, students act out an interview about Alcatraz. One student asks the questions, the other answers them in his/her own words, using the information from the video and the notes from activity 1B. Next, students can change roles.

2. Guilty or innocent?

Pre-teach: *cashier, to run over*.

In pairs, students discuss each case and decide on the right punishment. They should justify their choices. Encourage them to use the words from the 'Before you watch' section where appropriate. When they have finished, go through the crimes with the whole class and elicit the suggested punishment from different pairs.

Extension

Students write a short paragraph about a tourist attraction in their area.

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Transcript

Please note: original, spontaneous utterances have been used throughout so minor grammatical or lexical slips may occasionally occur. They do not affect the message though and can be exploited to show our students that English, as a global language, can be spoken in a number of communicative ways.

Gosia: Welcome to the next episode of the "Voices" series. The bridge that you see behind me is called Golden Gate and it is the signature of ... San Francisco. Especially for you, we travelled over 2,000 miles to show you the West Coast of the United States. And today we will go around the city to hear some of the "Voices of San Francisco".

San Francisco is located in Northern California, on the coast of the Pacific Ocean. It is situated on the hills and that's why cycling and walking around the city might be a real workout. And although it might be a little bit tiring, the view pays it off.

Another famous place in San Francisco, right next to the Golden Gate, is Alcatraz Island, located in the San Francisco Bay. But what is it so famous for? Let's find out.

What is Alcatraz famous for?

Shabnam: Alcatraz ... oh, it's famous for ... You know, it's a prison built in the middle of the ocean and they used to put the most dangerous criminals in there years ago. But they don't use it anymore, it's just a tourist attraction now, you could go, take a boat out there.

Susana: Alcatraz is famous for having mobsters, really bad criminals from the early 1900s and up until the 1960s.

Sarah: I think it's most famous for just being a prison on an island. I think that's something that's pretty, I don't know, romantic in a lot of people's minds to have this place where all these crazy criminals go and they're secluded on this island.

Which famous person was a prisoner in Alcatraz?

Shabnam: I've heard of a few little escapes but I am not really sure of the names.

Susana: The most famous person that I can think of who went to Alcatraz is Al Capone. He was a mobster from the 1920s and he was Italian.

Sarah: There was some guy called the Birdman of Alcatraz. I don't remember his real name or his full name, but he was famous for ... at a different prison, this guy started, I think he found like a canary or sparrow in the yard at one point and he started studying birds.

What crimes were the prisoners sent to Alcatraz for?

Shabnam: Most of the people that went to Alcatraz committed murder or were serial killers.

Susana: The crimes that people committed that had them sent to Alcatraz were murders, crimes such as theft, robbing banks.

Sarah: I think people who were sent to Alcatraz had usually committed pretty terrible crimes like murder, assault, manslaughter. You know, pretty terrible things like that.

Do you know any films which tell the story of prison or prison escape?

Shabnam: They have that show "Prison Break", other than that ... I'm not really sure, I think "Shawshank Redemption" was one.

Susana: One film that explains as it is "Escape from Alcatraz".

Sarah: I'm pretty sure, as far as movies go, I think the Birdman actually had a movie made about him.

What other famous places do you know in San Francisco ?

Shabnam: A lot of people go to China town and Lombard street.

Gosia: San Francisco Chinatown is the largest Chinatown outside of Asia, as well as the oldest Chinatown in North America. Being a starting point and home for thousands of Chinese immigrants, it is also a major tourist attraction. So what else can you see in San Francisco?

Susana: Some of the locations tourists come to see in San Francisco are the piers, there is also the trolleys ...

Gosia: Trolleys or mostly known as cable cars are the icon of San Francisco. They are world's last, permanently, manually operated cable cars which are pulled along by cables embedded in the street. They are among the most significant tourist sights in San Francisco. So what are the others?

Sarah: It's always good to go see the symphony, there is Davies Symphony Hall which has some great restaurants nearby. Let's see ... Fisherman's Wharf is a popular place, I think there's some pier out there, where a lot of sea lions hang out and people like to go watch the sea lions sometimes. And then, there is Lombard Street which is a very steep hill.

Gosia: Lombard Street is best known for the one-way section on Russian Hill between Hyde and Leavenworth streets. In which the roadway has eight sharp turns that have earned the street the distinction of being the crookedest street in the world.

Gosia: With almost 16 million people coming to San Francisco every year, it is on the list of the top ten most visited cities in the United States. San Francisco is often cited as the most European city in the U.S., and there are limitless way to spend your time here. See you in the next episode of Voices of San Francisco.