

Language Activity

Around the World with AI: Language and Culture Adventure

Rahul Anand

Objective

In this activity, students become “world travellers,” using an AI tool as their virtual travel companion. They explore a new language and culture by using realistic scenarios. The AI acts as a supportive guide, helping them practise conversational skills, vocabulary, and cultural understanding. AI can seamlessly respond in multiple languages and adjust to each student’s needs, creating a unique, immersive experience.

Level: Intermediate to Advanced English learners with basic skills in a second language

Time: 40 mins

Materials

- Access to an AI chat tool (like ChatGPT) that can communicate in multiple languages
- Travel Scenario Cards: Cards that describe various travel situations students might encounter (e.g., asking for directions)
- Travel Reflection Sheet: A worksheet for students to jot down useful phrases, cultural notes, and vocabulary they pick up along the way

Procedure

1. Set the Scene: Becoming World Travellers (5 min)

Introduce the activity by explaining that students are about to embark on a virtual trip to a foreign country. Each team will choose a different destination, where they will face real-life travel scenarios. The AI will act as their multilingual “travel buddy,” helping them use the language and culture of this new place.

2. Divide into Travel Teams and Choose a Scenario (5 min)

Divide students into pairs or small groups, and hand out a Travel Scenario Card to each team. Some example scenarios could be:

- Ordering a meal at a local café
- Visiting a doctor or pharmacy to describe symptoms

Encourage teams to put themselves in the shoes of a traveller and think about how they would handle the situation in real life.

3. Starting the Adventure with AI (5 min)

Each team begins by describing their scenario to the AI in English, setting the scene. Then, they can ask the AI how to say certain phrases or handle specific interactions in the target language.

4. Exploring Language and Culture (15 min)

As students interact with the AI, they will use a mix of English and the target language, switching back and forth to ask questions and gain understanding. The AI can answer in the target language and provide helpful tips on cultural norms, such as polite ways to ask questions.

Encourage students to explore different ways of phrasing questions, adjusting based on the AI's responses. They can also get the AI's help to understand local customs or learn vocabulary specific to the situation.

5. Recording Key Phrases and Insights (5 min)

Each team records helpful phrases and any interesting cultural insights on their Travel Reflection Sheet. They note down useful expressions, vocabulary they didn't know, and any tips the AI provided about local etiquette. This reflection helps them connect language skills with cultural context.

6. Class Sharing and Reflection (5 minutes)

Bring the class back together and invite each team to share one or two things they learned whether a phrase or something surprising. Encourage discussion on how it felt to use a foreign language in real time, and how they might apply what they learned if they were actually traveling.

Follow-Up Activity

Students can write a short travel journal entry about their virtual experience. They can describe their scenario, the phrases they learned, and how they felt interacting in another language. This reflection reinforces their vocabulary and cultural insights

*D. Rahul Anand is a research scholar at EFLU, Hyderabad.
rahulace.anand@gmail.com*