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RANDOM MATCHING

Students try to match two completely randomly chosen country words using any connection between the two they can think of. Each type of connection can only be used once in the game. One similarity they can use is nationality word endings, e.g. "England is similar to Poland because both languages end in 'ish'", but they can also use things like "They are both famous for football" or "They are both cold". An alternative way of playing the game is to get them to match each one on the list to a country that isn't there, e.g. "This country is similar to Brazil, because the most famous food has lots of meat in it".

It's not from round here

Students try to think of something that is absolutely typical of one country, e.g. their own, and after web research the other students try to disprove it by showing a connection to somewhere else. Students might be surprised to learn that "Kimchi isn't really Korean because chilli peppers came from South America", "The croissant isn't French because it was invented after the siege of Vienna in Austria" and "Sushi isn't Japanese because they eat fish on fermented rice in China and Southeast Asia too".

Country nationality board race

Divide the whiteboard into two and get the class to stand in two teams in lines in front of the board, with the person at the front of the queue holding a whiteboard pen. The teacher calls out a category of a list of words that they should write as quickly as they can (either one category per team or the same for both), and the students take turns writing one word, passing the pen to the person behind them, and then going to the back of their line. Each person must write one word before they can move on, but their team mates can shout out words, spelling etc to help them. The team with the most correct words in the category when the teacher stops the game wins. Suitable topics for country and nationality words include "Countries where English/ French/ ... is the first language", "Countries that were British/ Portuguese/... colonies", "Footballers and their nationalities" (maybe only allowing one per nationality), "Singers and languages they sing in" (ditto), "Countries in Africa", "Cars and where they come from", "Countries with red/ stripes/ stars/ the moon in their flag" and "Official languages of the European Union".

Maps pairwork dictation

Give pairs of students different maps of the same region of the world with half the country names tippexed out of each one. They then explain one of the countries they have on their map until their partner guesses which one it is or gives up. They then describe where the country is on the map so that their partner can write the name in at the right place. When they have done the same with all the countries, they can compare their maps to make sure that they now both have all the countries written in the right places.

Identifying music

Students listen to some traditional folk music or pop from another country and try to guess where it comes from. Things that could help them and make the topic more interesting include having pictures of the instruments used labelled by country, pictures of people in traditional dress dancing to the different kinds of music, and giving them hints if they guess wrong .