

Starting your own hotel business: A Case Study

Learning objectives:

1. To develop problem solving skills;
2. to develop analytical thinking;
3. to develop language skills- reading, speaking, professional lexis, grammar, writing.

Introduction

“Starting your own hotel business” is a case study devised by teachers at Turiba University for the “Unity in Diversity” project.

Its aim is to develop language skills for learners of English at level C1 of the Common European Framework of Reference. It can be used with groups of 4 students, guided by a language teacher. The case study also contains preparation activities which students can complete autonomously, either in a language laboratory or at home.

In completing the case study, learners have the chance to improve skills of reading, listening, spoken production and spoken interaction. They have access to a number of authentic texts to read, and as regards writing, they are required to write a business plan. In a section devoted to warm-up activities, learners have the opportunity to do exercises, related to the topic of the case study, with the dual aim of acquiring knowledge about the topic and improving their language skills. Finally, great attention is paid to speaking skills, both production and interaction, with learners having to participate in a discussion, make a narrative, express agreement/disagreement, offer a solution to a problem.

Explanation of the tasks

This activity is useful to help learners to fulfil the case study effectively. By doing the following exercises, they will also learn some useful vocabulary as well as practice grammar. All the activities can be done in a language laboratory or at home in the students’ own time. It is up to the teacher and the learners to decide how many of these activities should be completed, depending on the time available.

Warm-up activities are designed to pre-teach the specific lexis and introduce the student with the situation.

Warm-up activity 1: Match the terms with their definitions. The aim is to develop language skills and acquire useful vocabulary.

Warm-up activity 2: Gap fill. Fill in the blanks with the words given.

Warm-up activity 3: Scanning reading. Match the following headings to the various sections.

Task 1: True or False? This is a reading comprehension exercise based on the case.

Task 2: Vocabulary task. Students have to finish the sentences by choosing the most suitable word from the options provided. It helps to widen the students' vocabulary and practice language use in a definite setting.

Task 3: Vocabulary task. Students have to choose the appropriate words to complete the gaps in order to finish the article about starting a new business.

Task 4: Listening and comprehension. This activity practices using language skills in a complex way. Students listen to the recording and perform a vocabulary task (on professional terminology) and a grammar task (modals).

Task 5: Writing a business plan to a bank or a venture capital institution. A creative task that suggests learners develop their skills of writing a business plan. The given activity motivates students to read additional texts on how to carry out a SWOT and PESTLE analysis. Students also have links to business plans and can apply the knowledge acquired to draft a business plan for the couple mentioned in the case study thereby enhancing students' creativity and preparing them for work in the industry.

Background information

A 40-year-old British couple with 2 teenaged children run a small bed and breakfast operation. They have just inherited some money from a dead relative and are considering to move to a warmer country where they would like to buy and run a hotel or an inn. They have identified some businesses and would like to acquire one of these businesses. As they need extra financing they will have to avail a loan from a bank or venture capital institution.

In this case study you will be involved in the general objective of finding the appropriate business to take over.