

School of the Air **A2**

In this A2 article your students will discover the special distance-learning schools which provide classes for children in the Australian Outback who live hundreds or even thousands of kilometres from the nearest school. We suggest going further with two downloadable short videos. In each one, a School of the Air student introduces themselves and where they live. We have provided several options for using one or both videos, with A2, A2+, B1 or mixed-level groups.

Vocabulary and structures

- school
- technology
- Australia
- preterite and the two presents
- introducing oneself
- describing everyday life, school, hobbies and routines

Writing, Interacting

- We suggest asking pupils to first think about the topic and write down questions they would like answers to. Ask them to imagine children living on isolated farms or in Aboriginal communities in the Australian Outback. (The Alice Springs School of the Air in the Northern Territory covers an area of 1,300,000 km², more than twice the size of France. And it only has 143 students!) How could these children go to school or have classes?
- If pupils need help coming up with questions, or to help them firm up their hypotheses, you can videoproject the article and ask them to concentrate on the photos.
- The Activities guide comprehension but also encourage pupils to build their own understanding working from the questions they wanted answers to.

Watching and Listening

- These two videos of SOA students in Western Australia are downloadable for

working off line. The first one, Casie, is slightly simpler. At A2 level, we suggest you show one or both videos and help pupils pick out information to build up a picture of life for SOA students in the Outback, based on what they have already learned. For A2+-B1, we have proposed comprehension activities. The Casie video is simpler and we have provided more prompts. Use both videos as a differentiated group activity, assigning the Lawson video to the stronger group. Or use one or other as single-level comprehension (A2+ and B1 respectively).

- <http://vimeo.com/62846712> Casie. You will probably need to help pupils with “cattle” (although the image helps comprehension), and “chooks” (Australian word for chickens).
- <http://vimeo.com/50966520> Lawson. Half a million acres is just over 2000 km². You may need to guide pupils to catch that Lawson is dyslexic.

Interacting

- If you choose to use the two videos as a group activity, we've suggested an information-gap activity collecting information for the other group.

Speaking

- Whether you use one or both videos, pupils can be asked to present Casie or Lawson from their notes. More guidance has been given for Casie.

Going Further

■ Pupils could use the model of the videos to imagine a video or presentation of their own lives. This revises all those typical start-of-term language items about introducing yourself, describing likes and dislikes, family and school routine.

Solutions

Reading

B.1. c 2. d 3. b 4. a

C.1.a. Adelaide Miethke **b.** 1946 **c.** radio transmitters/communication

2.a. W. Children went to boarding school or received lessons by post.

b. W. They can interact with other students too.

c. W. It is also for children who can't go to school for medical reasons.

3.a. radio transmitters/communication

b. satellite, Internet, video, electronic whiteboard, web camera, e-mail

c. watch, respond, e-mail, hear their classmates, participate in group discussions, and interact with the whiteboard

4.a. At home visits, sports days or carnivals, school camps

b. At sports days or carnivals, school camps

c. sports, "normal" lessons

Watching and Listening

A.1.b.

These are suggested solutions, but you may not want to require as much detail depending on level.

Girl's name: Casie

School: School of the Air, mum teaches

Activities: swimming, caring for animals, driving a quad bike (visible but not named)

Family: Mum, Dad, little sister Emma

Pyramid Station:

Characteristics: Cattle Station. Named after a

hill. Dusty, dry

History: Founded/Established in 1865.

Animals: cattle/cows, rabbit, fish, pigs, chooks/chickens, dogs, goat (visible but not named)

B.1.b.

These are suggested solutions, but you may not want to require as much detail depending on level.

Boy's name: Lawson

Hobbies: art (paint, collage and sketch); horseriding; collecting rocks; climbing trees; trampoline; gymnastics/acrobatics/stunts; cycling/mountain biking (visible but not named).

Place he lives: Cheela Plains Station

Event he is getting ready for: mini-camp for School of the Air at his home.

School:

Type: School of the air

What 'townies' think: He only does one hour of school a day.

Reality: Starts school at 7:30 (a.m.) and ends at 3 o'clock (p.m.)

Difficulty: dyslexic but not a disadvantage, a gift. He can see things in 3D well.