

The fourth plinth

Language

Question forming, landmarks and statues

Level

Pre-Intermediate; (equivalent to CEF level A2–B1)

Comment

This lesson is about an unusual art project in London in which contemporary artists are invited to create works of art for an empty plinth in Trafalgar Square. You can find pictures of the works of art by following the links to the related websites at the end of the teaching notes.

How to use the lesson

- 1 Ask students to name as many London tourist sights as they can. Give them copies of the worksheet and ask them to complete exercise 1 in pairs. Check answers. Find out if any students have been to London. Have any students been to Trafalgar Square? What can they tell you about it?
- 2 Explain that the students are going to read a news story with the title 'The Fourth Plinth'. Do any students know what a plinth is? Ask them to read the first two paragraphs of the article to find the answer. If they still have problems understanding what a plinth is, draw a column with a statue of a person on top and beside it draw a rectangle block with a statue of a horse on it and clarify that the horse is on a plinth.
- 3 Students do exercise 2 while they read the article, putting the tiles for each paragraph in order. Invite a student to read out the answers and check with the rest of the class. Students then do exercise 3 individually or in pairs. It might help to write the first question together so students understand how the exercise works: *How tall is Nelson's column?*
- 4 In pairs, students write three more questions. You can either ask them to write questions to ask other student pairs or repeat the previous exercise type and ask students to write the questions and answers. Students then take it in turns to read out an answer for other students to form the correct question.
- 5 In groups, students discuss the answers to the questions. At this stage it would be useful to show students pictures of the six shortlisted works of art. Follow the links below to find pictures. Ask students to identify the works that are mentioned in the article and then let them use the pictures to choose their favourite work. You can use these questions to discuss the importance of statues in this century. Are statues in public places a thing of the past?
- 6 Divide the class into small groups and ask them to read through the instructions in exercise 6 together. The students should then prepare an idea for the fourth plinth. It can either be related to the theme of 'Global' or another topic which the students feel strongly about. When they are ready, students present their ideas to the rest of the class. Encourage them to present a visual of how their work will appear.

Answer key**1**

- 1 Tower
- 2 Piccadilly
- 3 Nelson's
- 4 National
- 5 Buckingham
- 6 Hyde
- 7 Trafalgar

2 The correct order is d, c, g, a, f, b, e**3** Possible answers:

- 1 How tall is Nelson's column?
- 2 When did Nelson die?
- 3 How many plinths are there in Trafalgar Square?
- 4 How old were the people who took part in *One & Other*?
- 5 Who chooses the sculptures for the plinth?
- 6 Where are the shortlisted works on display?
- 7 What does the boy on the rocking horse represent?

4–6 Students' own answers.**Related websites**

The following websites might be useful, for either yourself or your students.

<http://www.london.gov.uk/fourthplinth/> (Fourth Plinth official site - includes pictures of shortlisted works)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PVI11CYWWY> (video of the unveiling of *Nelson's Ship in a Bottle* by Yinka Shonibare)

<http://www.camvista.com/england/london/trafsq.php3> (webcam of Trafalgar Square)

<http://www.thersa.org/home> (RSA website with information about their work)