

## EPISODE 34

### LEVEL B2

#### READING COMPREHENSION



#### A BIT OF GEOGRAPHY

One of the people I've always looked up to is uncle George, my mother's brother. Uncle George is well-known in our family for his passion for travel. It wouldn't be a lie if I said that he has **traveled round the world**, having reached both the hottest places on Earth and the cold North **Pole** (= one of the points on the very top or bottom of the Earth), which was actually his last year's achievement.



Uncle George has been to and has seen many parts of the world, including the Sahara **Desert** (= a large area of land with few plants and little water), the Niagara **Falls** (= **waterfall**; a place where water flows over the edge of a cliff or rock onto another level below) and the **hot springs** (= a place where hot water comes up out of the ground) of an island in the northern **hemisphere** (= one half of the Earth), as well as the Amazon **rainforest** (= a forest in a tropical region where it rains a lot) and the Indonesian **archipelago** (= a large group of islands) in the southern hemisphere.

Right now he is getting ready for his next journey whose **destination** (= the place where someone is going) will be New Zealand. By now I've learnt quite a lot about the place. I know it's a very **mountainous** (= covered with mountains) country situated on two **islands**. It seems to offer something for all tastes: beaches, **volcanoes** (= a mountain that forces hot gas, rocks and lava into the air through a hole at the top) and even a small area of desert. It has a pleasant warm climate in the north and Norwegian or Canadian scenery with lower temperatures in the south. I wish I could travel all over the place one day!

#### More contexts for the new words:





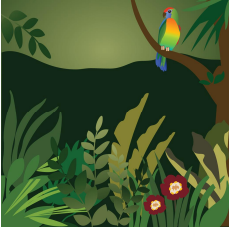


- The film I saw last Monday tells the story of a man who **deserts** his wife after 30 years of marriage. (= leave someone in a situation where they have no help or support)
- Robinson Crusoe was shipwrecked on a desert island (= a small tropical island with no people living on it)



## EXERCISE 1

Match the words to the pictures.

*a desert - a rainforest - a volcano - a waterfall - an archipelago - an island - the North Pole*

	<p>1. ....</p>
	<p>2. ....</p>
	<p>3. ....</p>
	<p>4. ....</p>
	<p>5. ....</p>
	<p>6. ....</p>
	<p>7. ....</p>



## EXERCISE 2

Add the missing vowels, then answer the questions.

1. If you could travel around the ..... WRLD, which countries would you like to spend most of your time in? Why?
2. What is your favourite holiday ..... DSTNTN? Why?
3. For the holiday of your dreams, would you choose an area with ..... HT SPRNGS or a ..... MNTNS one? Why?

## ENGLISH IN USE



Today the text included a few examples of nouns which are always preceded by the definite article 'the'. Let's look at these and make generalizations about the use of this article. You use 'the':

- with nouns which refer to things which are unique or unique in a context, e.g. [the world](#), [the North Pole](#) (also [the sun](#), [the president](#), [the Queen](#))
- names of geographical features such as deserts ([the Sahara Desert](#)) and rivers ([the Nile](#)), groups of islands ([the Indonesian Archipelago](#)), but also oceans ([the Atlantic Ocean](#)), seas ([the Red Sea](#)) and mountain ranges ([the Alps](#))

But, DO NOT use any article when you talk about single islands (e.g. [Greenland](#), [Majorca](#)) or mountains (e.g. [Mount Everest](#)).

## IDIOM CLOSE-UP



*A/ Are Sandra and Betty really twins?*

*B/ Yes, although it's hard to believe. They are **POLES APART**.*

When two people or things are **poles apart**, they are completely different.

## PHRASAL VERBS CLOSE-UP



1. If something **FALLS APART**, it breaks because of being old or badly made.

*We used this car to travel round the world. Now it's **falling apart**.*

*I've read this book so often that it's **falling apart**.*

2. When something **SPRINGS UP**, it appears or is produced suddenly and quickly.

*When you are shipwrecked on a desert island, problems tend to **spring up** rather frequently.*

*New Internet companies **spring up** every day.*



### EXERCISE 3

Fill each gap with the missing preposition.

1. Hundreds of new high-rise buildings have sprung ..... recently in Warsaw.

2. My poor old shoes are falling ..... .

3. Capitalism and communism are poles ..... .

## NEWS



### LUXEMBOURG

Hi guys, thanks for reading this travel blog, and the tons of positive **feedback** that you keep sending me. It really means a lot to me to know that someone out there is actually reading this stuff :).

Anyway, here's another country that I have visited recently – Luxembourg! It's a really **tiny** state **squeezed between** some larger ones, and I almost missed it on my first try! I had to **do a U-turn**, slow down and here it was! It's a mountainous area without much habitable space, so property prices are **extortionate**. Well, basically all the prices are extortionate, except for fuel, so the citizens of the neighboring countries often come here to fill up.

The upside is, there is practically no crime here! Really! People leave their front doors open, their cars unlocked, their children **roam** the streets freely, without any fear of criminal activity. Art exhibitions are taken out into the streets, so you're likely to stumble across modern paintings or sculptures wherever you go. And nothing is vandalized!

As you can see, it's a really weird place. But wait till next week, and I'll describe a place that is even weirder...

## GLOSSARY

- **feedback** – comments about how well or how badly someone is doing something,
- **tiny** – very small
- **squeezed between** – situated in a small space between
- **do a U-turn** – turn around
- **extortionate** – very high
- **roam** – to walk around

<b>KEY TO EXERCISES</b>
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### Ex.1

1. a desert
2. an island
3. an archipelago
4. the North Pole
5. a rainforest
6. a waterfall
7. a volcano

### Ex.2

1. world
2. destination
3. hot springs, mountainous

### Ex.3

1. up
2. apart
3. apart