

Activity 2: The story of a weather forecast

Introduction

An activity based around the **Tour of the Met Office – multimedia presentation**. The challenge is for learners to create an easy-to-understand description of how a weather forecast is produced, entitled 'The story of a weather forecast'.

The activity is flexible. The story can be told in any format; for instance, as a cartoon strip, a web page or a slide show. The story could even be acted out by the learners. Learners can aim their story at a target audience of their own choice, such as children of a particular age or learners on another course.

Although these guidance notes describe how the activity might work with groups in a classroom or training centre, the activity is also suitable for learners working independently or remotely. Such learners can share their work electronically and give each other feedback.

Learning objectives

Learners should be able to:

- describe the key steps involved in producing a weather forecast
- simplify complex information
- tailor an information product to a particular audience.

Learners will also be able to develop research and analytical skills, and improve their listening and discussion skills.

Resources required

- A means of showing the **Tour of the Met Office – multimedia presentation**, on individual PCs, as well as via data projection. The images and audio clips from the presentation can be copied and used by the learners.
- Resources that allow learners to work in their chosen format, for example, a cartoon strip, a web page or a slide show.
- Optional – role cards from the Co-operative learning area of the IT resources.

Starting points

If your learners are working in co-operative learning teams they will need to have agreed team ground rules. The Co-operative learning area contains guidance on using a co-operative approach.

Activity 1: What's the weather like today? provides an ideal opener, especially for less confident learners.

Suggested approach

Stage 1: Introducing the task

Learners can work in small groups or co-operative learning teams of three or four.

Explain that they are going to study the **Tour of the Met Office – multimedia presentation**. Their task will be to produce an information product called 'The story of a weather forecast'. You may wish to guide them towards a particular format or a particular audience. Alternatively, you may like to allow each group to choose their own format and target audience. Examples of possible information products might include:

- a cartoon strip for children aged 8 to 10 years old
- a series of PowerPoint slides for 16 to 18-year-old learners on a travel and tourism course
- a web page for members of a model aircraft flying club or a gardening club.

If you are following a fully developed co-operative learning approach, learners will benefit from having team roles. You might select some of the following roles.

- Team facilitator – keeps the team on task and ensures everyone participates fully.
- Discussion leader – facilitates team discussions.
- Graphic designer – may design a master slide or template.
- Picture editor – finds suitable images and ensures they are in the correct format.
- Editor – helps the team produce and improve text.
- Reporter – takes the lead in presentations.
- Resources manager – gathers the resources needed by the team.



There are over 20 possible roles – see the role cards in the Co-operative learning area of the IT resources. Roles can be combined where appropriate.

Stage 2: Watching the presentation

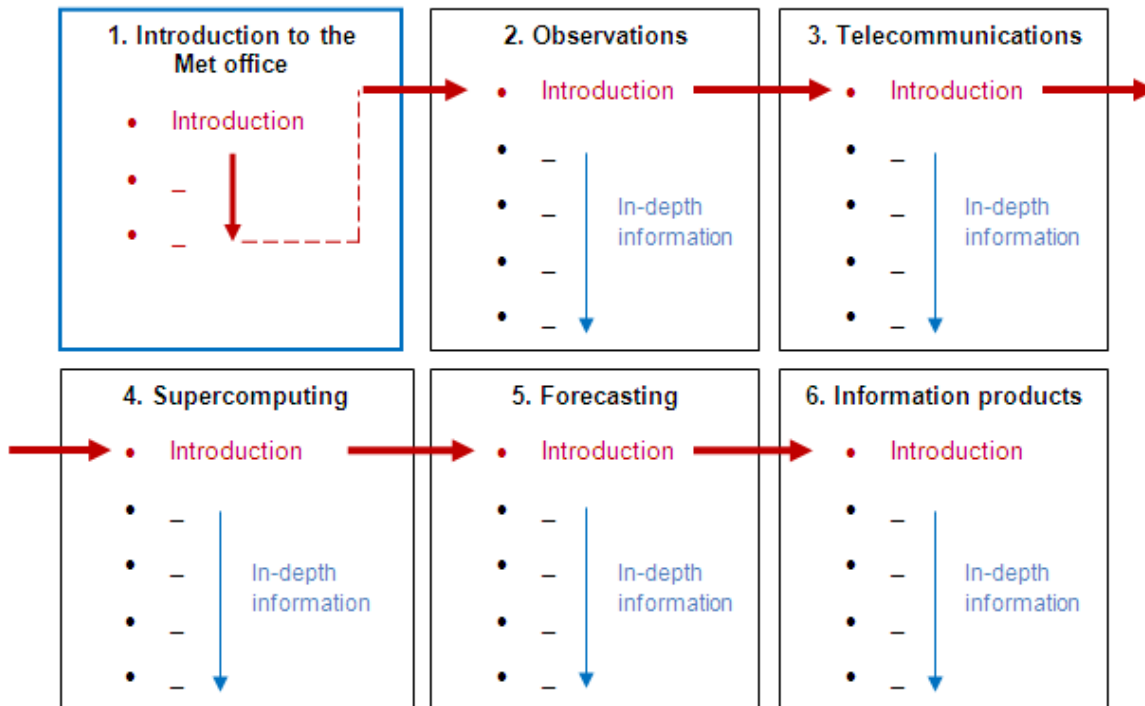
Working individually or in pairs, learners study the **Tour of the Met Office – multimedia presentation** and take notes. At this stage they are seeking to identify the key steps involved in producing a weather forecast. They may need to look at some sections of the presentation several times. You might like to introduce the presentation via data projection and then allow learners to explore it on their computers.

The **Tour of the Met Office – multimedia presentation** is structured as shown below. You may wish to guide learners towards particular parts of the material, or you may prefer to allow them to explore it in their own way. Learners need not be anxious if there are sections they do not understand at this stage.

Structure of the **Tour of the Met Office – multimedia presentation:**

Key:  Recommended route
 In-depth information

Alternative approaches



The audio files are provided as downloadable mp3s. These can be uploaded onto mp3 players for individual use, or within a T3 (Talking Tactile Technology) system for use with visually impaired learners.

Stage 3: Group discussion and planning

Group members come together to:

- compare notes and create an outline or storyboard about how the Met Office produces a forecast
- agree a specification for their product
- plan how to carry out the task.

Learners may need help to specify their product. You might circulate around the groups, using questions to prompt their discussions.

- How long should it be? What is the attention span of the audience likely to be?
- Should it be mainly text or pictures?
- Will it be purely visual or include sound?
- What level of language should it contain? Will there be any technical terms?

- Encourage groups to make a written record of their specification. This can then be displayed during Stage six.

Stage 4: Creating the information product

Group members create their information product. Encourage learners to constantly revisit the multimedia presentation and gradually become familiar with the more difficult material. The images and audio clips from the **Tour of the Met Office – multimedia presentation** can be copied and used in the information products.

Stage 5: Criteria consensus

At this point it will be useful to reach a consensus across all the groups on the criteria against which the final products will be judged during the next stage. The Peer review area of the IT resources contains four methods for doing this.

Stage 6: Peer review

Peer panel is a technique for peer review, sometimes referred to as peer assessment. It involves learners presenting their information products to panels of their peers, who provide feedback and suggestions for improvements. For more information see the Peer review area of the IT resources.

Stage 7: Consolidating and reflecting

Team themes is a technique from the Peer review area of the IT resources. It involves groups reviewing how well they worked together as a team and giving each other feedback on their team citizenship. You might consider awarding bonus marks to individuals who are nominated by their groups for making an exceptional contribution to teamwork.

This stage is essential if you are seeking to embed co-operative learning principles.

What learners might do next

Learners show their information product to their target audience and obtain feedback. Groups meet to discuss the feedback and reflect on the lessons learned.