

**T**his section presents three stand-alone language learning activities related to the theme of boats. Each activity is designed for students at the proficiency level indicated.

## Going to School by Ferryboat

**Level:** Upper Beginner/Intermediate

**Time required:** 40 minutes

**Goals:** To practice listening to language about an everyday routine; to learn nouns and verbs for transportation

**Materials:** a blackboard or whiteboard, chalk or a marker, paper, pencils or pens

### Procedures:

1. Ask students to think of different ways that people can go to school. Possible responses would be *on foot*, *by bike*, *by bus*, and *by car*. Write students' responses on the board.
2. Tell students that in some places, students go to school by boat, and that they will listen to a story about one of those students, named Amanda Potter. Introduce the word *ferryboat* by writing it on the board. Ask if anyone can explain what a ferryboat is; if no one can, you can explain that a ferryboat carries people and things across water for a short distance between two pieces of land. Write the word *ferry* on the board as well to show the short form of the word.
3. Prepare to read "Going to School by Boat" by telling students that a *dock* is a place where people get on and off boats and that the *mainland* is a large piece of land. It is different from an *island*, which is a piece of land with water on all sides. Write these words on the board.
4. Read "Going to School by Boat" to students. Adjust the speed of your reading according to their proficiency level.

### Going to School by Boat

Amanda Potter takes a ferryboat to high school every day. She gets up early in the morning. She gets dressed and eats breakfast. Then she starts her long trip to school at 7 o'clock. First, she gets on a bus. The bus travels to a dock, and she gets off. Then she gets on a ferryboat to travel one mile to the mainland. Another bus meets the ferry. Amanda takes that bus to school.

Why does Amanda take a boat to school? She lives on an island in the southeastern part of the United States. The island does not have a bridge to the mainland. Young children attend school on the island, but Amanda and her high school friends take the ferry every day. Amanda says, "It's fun to take a ferry to school."

5. Before you read the text again, ask students to listen for the first thing that Amanda does after she gets up. Then read the text.
6. Ask students, "What is the first thing Amanda does after she gets up?" When students answer correctly, write on the board "She gets dressed." If students cannot answer correctly, you might want to read the first three sentences of the text again.
7. On the board, write the following actions that Amanda does: (a) eats breakfast, (b) gets dressed, (c) gets off a bus, (d) gets on a bus, (e) gets on a ferryboat, (f) gets up, (g) takes another bus to school, (h) travels to the mainland, and (i) travels to a dock. Check that students know the meaning of each expression; if not, explain the expressions as necessary.

8. Ask students to draw the following two-column table on a piece of paper (or in their notebooks):

Amanda Potter	[Student's name]
1)	
2)	
3)	
4)	
5)	
6)	
7)	
8)	
9)	

9. Ask students to listen again and put the list of actions in the table in the order of Amanda's daily routine by writing the actions in the first column of the table. If necessary, read the first paragraph of "Going to School by Boat" two or three times as students write the actions in their table in the correct order.

10. Have students check their answers with a student sitting next to them.

11. Check the correct order with students (the correct order from the list in Step 7: f→b→a→d→i→c→e→h→g).

12. Ask students to fill in the right-hand column with the actions that they perform in the morning. If appropriate, they can use some of the same actions that they heard in Amanda's story. They can add other expressions as well.

13. Pair up students and have them share and compare the list of morning actions with their partners. Then ask them to report the similarities and differences they found to the entire class.

### Extension

Have students write a short description of what they do to prepare for and go to school each morning. They can use the list of actions they developed in this activity as the basis for their descriptions.

## Classifying Boats

**Level:** Intermediate

**Time required:** 40 minutes

**Goals:** To learn boat types and their common features; to develop classifying skills; to write a classification essay

**Materials:** boat cards; a classification chart written on poster paper (the chart could also be written on the board)

### Preparation:

1. Prepare blank cards or small pieces of paper on which students will write boat types and definitions. These are the "boat cards." Each group, consisting of 4 students, needs 9 cards. Students can help prepare these cards.

2. Write the information in "Boat Types and Descriptions" (see Step 4) on a piece of poster paper—or you can wait and write this information on the board during the activity.

### Procedures:

1. Ask students what types of boats they already know or have heard of. Suggest that they think about what they have learned from TV, movies, books, or their own experience.

2. On the board, write down the boat types mentioned by students.

3. Tell students that they are going to classify boats. Ask them what criteria they can use to divide the boats into different groups (for example, you can ask, "How can we put boats together in groups

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with similar boats?”). Possible answers include *size, color, function, who uses them, and where they are used*.

4. Make groups of 4 students and give each group 9 cards. On the board, write the information in “Boat Types and Descriptions.” Ask each group to make a set of boat cards by writing a boat type on the front side and the description of the boat on the back.

### Boat Types and Descriptions

Front: Boat type	Back: Description
canoe	a long narrow boat that the driver moves through the water using a paddle
ferry	a boat that makes regular journeys between two or more places
freighter	a large ship that carries cargo
barge	a long flat boat used to carry cargo on rivers and canals
cruise liner	a large, comfortable ship that people ride on vacation trips
houseboat	a boat that people live in as their home
sailboat	a small boat that the wind moves by pushing its cloth sail
Jet Ski	a very small fast boat for one or two people
kayak	a small boat that sits low in the water and that a person moves through the water with a paddle

5. Write the “Classification of Boats by (Feature)” chart on the board. Ask each group of students to classify the boats and fill in the chart. Check each group’s progress and conclusions by looking at its chart. If a group has no idea about how to classify

the boats, provide hints (e.g., encourage students to think about the boats’ size, function, shape, and power source). You can use the charts provided under “Possible Answers for Boat Classification” as guides and as sources for more suggestions to give to students.

### Classification of Boats by (Feature)

Classification	Common Feature	Examples
Group 1		
Group 2		
Group 3		
Group 4		

### Possible Answers for Boat Classification

#### Classification of Boats by Function

Classification	Common Feature	Examples
Group 1	transportation for passengers	canoe, ferry
Group 2	transportation for cargo	freighter, barge
Group 3	leisure	cruise liner, houseboat, sailboat
Group 4	sports	Jet Ski, kayak

#### Classification of Boats by Size

Classification	Common Feature	Examples
Group 1	small	sailboat, Jet Ski, kayak
Group 2	large	freighter, cruise liner

### Classification of Boats by Power Source

Classification	Common Feature	Examples
Group 1	paddling by humans	canoe, kayak
Group 2	wind	sailboat
Group 3	engine	freighter, barge, cruise liner, houseboat, Jet Ski

6. Have each group make a short presentation explaining how the group classified boats and why the group put certain boats together. Depending on your class size and the time you have available, each presentation can be given either to the whole class or to another group of students.

### Extension 1: Let's Mark Our Boats

1. Draw the “Boat Types” table on the board and ask students to copy it onto a piece of paper (or in their notebooks). You can modify the table by using or adding other boat types. Other choices include *lifeboat*, *yacht*, *kayak*, and *Jet Ski*.

#### Boat Types

freighter	cruise liner	ferry
houseboat	canoe	raft
rowboat	sailboat	barge

2. Ask students to think about the main function of each kind of boat. Then tell them to mark each boat according to the following instructions:

- If the boat is used for transportation of passengers, check (✓) the boat type.
- If the boat is used for transportation of cargo, circle the boat type.
- If the boat is used for enjoyment and pleasure, underline the boat type.

3. When students finish marking the boat types, they can share their table with the whole class or with another student. They can describe their classification using the structure *is/are used for*. On the board, write questions such as “How many boats are used for [transportation of passengers]?” and “Which boats are used for [enjoyment]?” Tell students to ask and answer these questions with one another, and to ask other questions of their own.

If necessary, use the “Suggested Answer” chart as a guide. If you are using additional boats, lifeboats are used mainly for transportation of passengers, yachts and Jet Skis are used mainly for pleasure and enjoyment, and kayaks are used mainly for pleasure, but they can be used for transportation of passengers as well.

#### Suggested Answer

freighter	<u>cruise liner</u>	ferry ✓
<u>houseboat</u>	canoe ✓	<u>raft</u>
rowboat ✓	<u>sailboat</u>	barge

### Extension 2: A Boat Classification Essay

Ask the groups of students to imagine that they opened a boat sales and rental business and that they need to write a short classification essay about the kinds of boats the business sells. Ask each group to work together to write a short classification essay based on the group's boat classification chart. Tell students that the purpose of the essay is to introduce and explain different kinds of boats to their customers. Each group should write about the kinds of boats it categorized. To introduce the writing task, suggest expressions that will help students write the essay. Examples of expressions include *divided into three groups*, *classified into three groups*; *one type is ...*, *another type is ...*, *the other type is ...*; *first*, *second*, *third*; and *is/are used for*. (Note that groups might have classified boats into more than three categories; that is fine, and students should write their essays accordingly.)

# Mapping the Mississippi River

**Level:** Intermediate

**Time required:** 60 minutes

**Goal:** To practice vocabulary related to boats and rivers

**Materials:** a blackboard or whiteboard, chalk or a marker, paper, pencils or pens; a map of the United States with the Mississippi River shown for your reference (optional)

## Procedures:

1. Explain to students that one of the most important boat routes in the United States is the Mississippi River, and that the history and culture of the river are also important. Tell students they are going to learn about this American river and the words they need to understand and discuss it.

2. Write the following words on the board in any order: *transportation, Mississippi River, Louisiana, Minnesota, barge, fish, bridge, farm, species, ship, north, south, east, west, houseboat, steamboat, and waterway*. If students do not know what the words mean, write definitions on the board or read them aloud; definitions for some terms are provided in the Glossary for “Mapping the Mississippi River” at the end of this activity. (You do not need to copy the Glossary for students, but it is provided for your reference.)

3. Put students in groups of 3. Ask group members to work together to sort the terms on the board into categories. Tell them they are free to create any categories they want, but they must have a reason for grouping terms together. If students have difficulties, offer suggestions; you can say that the terms might be sorted into general categories such as man-made things and nature, or into specific categories such as places, directions, and boats. Walk around the room to help students as they work together. If some groups finish faster than other groups, encourage them to create more categories.

4. After students have categorized the words, discuss the categories with the whole class. Ask them (1) to indicate any words that are new to them, (2) to give the title of each category they made, (3) to explain the reasons for their groupings, and (4) to identify the common characteristics of all the words. To guide the discussion or to have groups discuss before you bring the whole class together, you might want to write the following questions on the board:

- What words are new for you?
- What category name goes with each group?
- Why did you choose these groups?
- What do all the words have in common?

5. Ask students to take out a piece of paper to draw a map of what they think the United States looks like. Tell them to first draw the border lines of the United States on the paper. Then ask students to draw a line down the middle of the country to represent the Mississippi River and have them label it “north” (at the top), “south” (at the bottom), and “middle” (between “north” and “south”).

6. Draw a map of the United States on the board. Have students compare it with their own maps and make any adjustments that they would like to. If they want, they can turn over their own drawings and redraw the map using the one on the board as a model.

7. Explain to the students that you will read to them about animals, plants, states, and transportation around the northern, middle, and southern parts of the Mississippi River.

8. Before you read, ask students to listen carefully and imagine. Then read “The Mississippi River” to the class. Adjust the speed of your reading according to your students’ proficiency level.



## The Mississippi River

The Mississippi River passes through many states in the United States, from Minnesota in the north to Louisiana in the south. Many bridges connect the east side of the river to the west side. The Mississippi River is an important waterway in the United States because it helps with the transportation of people, crops, and other cargo. There are many types of boats on the Mississippi River such as barges, steamboats, and houseboats. Farms along the river produce a lot of corn. Frogs and snakes live in the river. And many large birds live near the Mississippi River in the south. At least 250 species of fish are found in the river from north to south.

9. Ask questions to check students' comprehension. You might choose from among the following questions:

- Which state is the northern part of the river in?
- Which state is the southern part of the river in?
- What connects the east and west sides of the river?
- What can people see if they travel along the river?

Each time students respond with one of the words on the board, point to the word.

10. Read the passage again, and this time ask students to draw at least five things on their map. Give an example showing how they might draw a vocabulary item (for example, students can draw small squares to indicate farms). Things that can be drawn on the map include the following:

- a) The beginning of the river in Minnesota, in the north
- b) The end of the river in Louisiana, in the south
- c) Bridges over the river connecting the east and west

- d) Boats and barges on the river
- e) Corn on the farms along the river
- f) Frogs and snakes in the river
- g) Large birds at the southern end of the river
- h) Different kinds of fish in the river

11. Have students share their drawings with a student sitting next to them and make changes if they would like to. Call on students to go to the board to add to the map that you drew on the board. For example, one student might add a bird, and another might add a boat. Continue until the map on the board contains all the objects that students have drawn.

## Extension

1. Write on the board the different types of boats on the Mississippi River and ask students to think of other types of boats they have seen, such as fishing boats, canoes, rafts, and ferries. Add the boats mentioned by students to the list on the board.

2. Ask students to take out a new piece of paper to draw a map of a river that they are familiar with. Tell them to draw as many types of boats as possible on the river.

3. Invite students to draw their maps on the board. Ask them to write their own names beside their maps and indicate the names of their river and boats.

4. Have the class look at the drawings and the names of boats and rivers on the board. Tell students to take note of the boat types that are unknown to them on the back of the page with their map. Ask the students to move around the room, find the authors of the boat types, and ask the authors questions about the boats. Students can take notes about what they learn from the other students.

5. Have the students go back to their seats. Invite volunteers to share the boat types that they have learned from other students.

## Classroom Activities

### Glossary for “Mapping the Mississippi River”

**barge** – a large, long boat with a flat bottom used for carrying cargo

**houseboat** – a boat that people live in as their home

**Louisiana** – a state in the southern United States

**Minnesota** – a state in the northern United States

**Mississippi River** – a major river in the United States that flows from Minnesota to the Gulf of Mexico

**species** – a group of living things that share similar characteristics

**steamboat** – a boat that has an engine powered by steam

**transportation** – a means of carrying people, food, and cargo from one place to another

**waterway** – a body of water such as a river or canal that ships or boats can travel on

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