

Editor's Note



he second city in our 2008 line-up of American cities is Seattle, Washington, also known as The Emerald City—because of the many evergreen trees in the surrounding area. Tucked away in the rugged northwest corner of the country, Seattle is a city that many Americans don't think of visiting. Some people who have been to Seattle only ended up there because they were taking a cruise to Alaska, and their ship set sail from Seattle.

In 2007, the international convention of Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) was held in Seattle. (Perhaps some of our readers were there.) The convention was held at the Seattle convention center, a sprawling building adorned by hanging gardens that lend an emerald hue to the urban landscape. My colleagues and I were at the convention, where we hosted various activities in our Office of English Language Programs booth, and several of us gave talks or participated in panel discussions.

When the bustling conference halls emptied in the evenings, convention participants went out to see the sights of Seattle. One night, some colleagues and I traveled by ferryboat to spend the evening on nearby Bainbridge Island by invitation of the former director of our office, who, with her husband, built a retirement home on the island. Back in 2004, when she told us she was retiring to Seattle, I remember thinking “Who retires to Seattle?”—because I associate retirement with warm climates (and people playing golf), and Seattle has a widespread (and not completely undeserved) reputation for being cloudy and rainy.

Well, once I saw the overwhelming beauty that surrounds Seattle—mountains, ocean, lakes, and trees—and I visited Bainbridge Island, which has a quiet, almost rural feel to it (and many evergreen trees), but is only a ferryboat ride away from all the cultural opportunities of Seattle, I could understand why the Seattle area could be an excellent place to retire.

Seattle is also a wonderful place to visit, even if only in your imagination. The feature article in this issue, the photos that accompany it, and the activities in the Seattle lesson plan will help you and your students take an imaginary trip to Seattle.

Have a good trip!

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