

The world around us 16.1

What are you doing?

Language focus

is/are; present continuous

Key vocabulary

boots, camp, dining room, fire, map, mountain, newspaper, postcard, shorts, ski, smile, snow, surf, tent, waiter, windy

Skills focus

speaking: talking on the phone; describing places and present activities

Level

elementary

Time

25–30 minutes

Preparation

one photocopy for each pair, cut into A and B parts

Warm-up

- 1 Ask students how often they call their friends on the phone and why they call.
- 2 Ask them to think about being away on holiday. In a phone call to a friend, what would they want to say and what would they want to find out? Elicit some useful expressions, for example:
Greetings: *Hi/Hello (name). This is (name). / It's (name) here.*
Questions: *Where are you? What are you doing? What's the place/hotel/weather like?*
Responding: *Really? Wow! That sounds great/awful. What about you?*
Checking: *What was that? I didn't catch that. What did you say?*
Ending: *I have to go now. I'll call you later/tomorrow. See you soon.*

Main activity

- 1 Put students in pairs and hand out an A and a B worksheet to each pair. Students must not look at their partner's worksheet.
- 2 Ask students to imagine that they are the person on the phone in their picture. Explain that they are both away on holiday with their family and they are going to talk to each other on the phone about what is happening. Ask them to talk about where they are, what the weather is like, what they and the other members of their family are doing and whether or not they are having a good time. Point out that there are other family members visible in the picture.
- 3 Give students a few minutes to look at their picture and think about what they will say. Remind them to use the present continuous for things that are happening now. Encourage them to make the phone call interactive by asking each other plenty of questions.
- 4 Seat pairs back to back, so that they can hear but not see each other during the phone conversation. Tell student A to make the call and start the conversation. Set a time limit of five minutes.
- 5 At the end of the call, students turn back to face each other. They report back to their partner all that they can remember about what they heard, using the present continuous (e.g. *You're in the mountains in France and you're having breakfast in the hotel ...*). Their partner corrects the information if necessary.
- 6 Now ask students to look at each other's pictures. Is the scene how they imagined it from the phone conversation?
- 7 With the whole class, ask students to say which holiday they would prefer and why.

Follow-up

- Ask students to write a paragraph comparing the two pictures, using *is/are* and the present continuous.
- Put students in pairs and ask them to imagine what happened in each place after the phone call. What did the people do next? After discussion, students report their ideas to the class, using the past simple.

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