How do others see us?
Putting questions to a community

e-lang citizen team

Teacher Sheet

Task

Your students will be given the following task.

> Do you want to know how speakers of the language you are learning see your country?
> On a question-and-answer site, you will ask members of the community how they see your country. You could discuss their answers with them. In class, you could compare these answers with each other and with your own view of your country.

Site

https://www.quora.com

The site is available in 24 languages: Danish, Dutch, English, French, German, Italian, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Spanish, Swedish, etc. To have direct access to the different versions, replace "www" in the URL by the domain code of the country that usually corresponds to the language: fr.quora.com for French, or es.quora.com for Spanish, de.quora.com for German, etc.

Quora is an online social network that allows you to start participating in question and answer sessions.

Other sites can be used. The teacher will choose according to the contextual popularity and their relevance to the learners.

- https://www.reddit.com

CEFR level – For A2 level and above

Objectives

Digital citizenship and literacy

Dimensions covered in task	(Potential) specific objectives
➢ Critical behaviour	- To become aware of the strengths and limitations of a machine translator for understanding foreign language speech (in case learners use a machine translator to understand the answers).
➢ Safe behaviour	- Know when and why to publish anonymously or under your real name. - To be aware of the information you give about yourself and the possible impact of this action.
➢ Technologically mediated communication (literacy)	- Knowing how to address the users of a platform to get their feedback. - To become aware of the differences between various platforms and communities (if you have the same task done on several platforms).

Main language activity

Written production and written interaction, in case online discussion with site users develops

Plurilingual / intercultural aspects

Task with a strong intercultural dimension.

This task allows learners to

- compare ways in which the learner's country is seen from the outside;
- try to understand where these perceptions may come from;
- become aware of factors surrounding stereotypes;
- learn how to respond to stereotyped opinions.

Possible steps

It may be interesting to carry out this task in several steps:

- ask the learners to formulate the question and have them write it down with details of who they are and why they are asking the question (if you do not plan to carry out future individual tasks on the site, you can open an account for each "country" represented in the group to ask the question about that country. If all the learners come from the same country, one account will suffice for the whole class and can be used for other tasks around other questions);

- ask the learners to answer the question themselves (how do they see their own country?) on a piece of paper and collect the answers;

- post the question yourself or have the question posted at a strategic time to get the most readers and therefore the most responses (choose early evening in the country whose users you are targeting – if you ask the question in Spanish, you could choose early evening in Spain for example);

- after a day or two, look at the answers. This can be done online. You can also print the answers out for the learners or make screenshots and show them on a projector in class;

- initiate a class discussion on the different ways of looking at the country, try to find out/understand the reasons and compare with the learners' answers which may have been collected on a photocopy or document which can be projected on a screen.

It may be interesting to ask the same question on several online platforms to see if differences in the answers emerge. This will also allow a discussion on the ergonomic and technological choice of platforms.

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Student Sheet

Task

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Quora is an online social network that allows you to start and participate in question and answer sessions.

Other sites can be used. You may choose a site you already know and/or use or try a new platform in order to find out differences and similarities between them.

- https://www.reddit.com

CEFR level – For A2 level and above

Objectives

Digital citizenship and literacy

While completing this task, you could:

- learn how to address users of a platform to get their answers;
- learn about the impact of giving personal information on a platform;
- learn about the different ways of looking at the same thing due to different values and attitudes;
- find out the strengths and limitations of a tool (if you are using a machine translator to understand responses).

Plurilingual / intercultural dimension

This task should help you to reflect on how people see a country in different ways, depending on their history, origin, values and attitudes.

Hints

Keep in mind who you are addressing

To discover the social rules of the site, you can read the "Acceptable use policy": https://uk.quora.com/about/acceptable_use. If you wish to consult the same page in another language, replace "uk" (in the URL) by the domain of a country corresponding to the language ("de" for German, "es" for Spanish...). If there is no version in the language you are looking for, Quora will propose to redirect you to the English version.

You can make a list of Do's and Don'ts when you participate in online discussions.

Think about the best way to phrase your question in order to get answers. For example, explain who you are and why you are asking the question.

Work on the language-related aspects

You can look at several questions asked on Quora and analyse how these questions are formulated.

Take into account the advice given by Quora in the window where you will post your question.

Note that your question can be posted anonymously.

If you have trouble understanding the answers, you may want to use a machine translator, such as DeepL: https://www.deepl.com/translator.

For you to think about

Once you have completed the task, you could reflect on the following:

- What did you learn from the comparison of the different points of view?

- Did you publish the question anonymously or using your real name? Why? If you want to post on this platform with a personal account, what approach would you adopt (anonymously or using your name)?

- When you register on the site, you have to choose a lot of fields of interest. What do you think about this? In your opinion, why does the site ask for this information? How do you benefit from this? How do the site owners benefit from this?

- If you used a machine translator to understand the answers, how helpful was it? Did it help you understand everything? What were the most problematic parts for the translator? Were you able to grasp the original answers with the help of the translator? How do you rate the linguistic quality of the translations?

- If you are a member of another community similar to Quora, what differences do you notice in the ergonomics, technological choices...? Which platform do you prefer? Why?