



English for PS, Sek I

Mountains of Switzerland: The Rigi

Rack railway and Nagelfluh

14:30 minutes

Summary

The Rigi towers majestically over the Lakes of Lucerne, Zug and Lauerz. For millions of years, tectonic forces from the south have been pushing the molasse layers of the Rigi higher and higher. Breathtaking views from its peaks of sunrises and seas of fog, have attracted tourists for centuries. As the first rack railway in Europe, the Rigibahn opened up an important tourist destination, not just for the region – for the whole of Switzerland.

Didactics

This feature on the Rigi focuses on geographic as well as economic topics, lending itself both to a mono- and an interdisciplinary approach (such as «We and the environment»). Designed as an introduction, it concentrates on key aspects and events. Thus, for a more thorough exploration, additional teacher input, group- or individual project work is recommended.

Learning goals

The students...

1. are able to show the route from their home to the Rigi on a map.
2. are familiar with a range of rack railway technologies and can explain the basic concept of the Rigi rack railway as well as put it into a historical context.
3. draw a mural of the Rigi's geological genesis, based on the film.
4. organise a day's outing to the Rigi.

Methodical ideas

1. Start lesson 1 by showing the film. Students take summary content notes while watching. (20 minutes)
2. Team work (40 – 60 minutes):
 - a. Group 1 plans a one-day outing to the Rigi. Students find out train times, work out a timetable, and devise a list of required materials to take along.
 - b. Group 2 works out a detailed itinerary in collaboration with group 1, including all the sights to be visited on the outing.
 - c. Group 3 assembles a list of questions for interviews during the outing: engine driver, tourists, farmer, etc. Students also plan a documentation of the outing, including a brief photo report.
 - d. Group 4 compiles a table on a flipchart featuring the most important Swiss cogwheel trains. The location of these railways may be displayed on a wall map of Switzerland.
 - e. Group 5 sketches and explains the various types of cogwheel trains on the flipchart. Students also write up a brief historical summary of the Rigi Railway.
 - f. Group 6 creates a mural showing the genesis of the Rigi.
3. To consolidate the learning targets, students do the tasks on the observation sheet and complete the crossword puzzle. (30 – 40 minutes)

Mountains of Switzerland: The Rigi

- Remarks** Based on the film «Mountains of Switzerland: The Rigi», a number of very different didactic ideas may be put into practice. The following three may serve the purpose:
1. As an introduction, students enter «Rigi Kulm» into the search box of Google Earth. The programme navigates them to the point in question. Once arrived, they brainstorm personal knowledge and experiences about the Rigi and its cogwheel railways. Collect their findings. Continue by teaching them whatever they don't know yet about the Rigi. Only then show the film to consolidate what has been taught and learnt beforehand.
 2. The Rigi region is ideal for school outings and excursions. The overwhelming view of lakes, seas of fog and mountains makes up for the physical exertion of a mountain walk. Show the film in preparation for such an excursion.
 3. Central Switzerland offers wonderful opportunities to research and experience more extensively what has been prepared in class beforehand: Nagelfluh, Belle Epoque, event tourism, railway construction and operation. A class project week in the Rigi region, including walks and an outing to the Lucerne Museum of Transport, will guarantee a memorable change from the humdrum of school life.