

Describing experiences and objects

- 1 Look at the photo of the Amazon rainforest. What do you think it is like to be there? Think of ways to describe the experience, then compare your ideas with a partner.
- 2 (2.05) Read and listen to the dialogue. Did Darren enjoy his experience in the rainforest?



- Fiona** So Darren, what was it like living in the Amazon rainforest for a month?
- Darren** It was sort of like ... erm ... How can I put it? It was life-changing! Even though you see tropical rainforests in TV documentaries, you just can't imagine what it's like actually being in one. How can I describe it? You feel clammy all the time and you get the sense that you're kind of being eaten alive. And all those weird plants – it's like being on another planet.
- Fiona** Wow! Where did you stay?
- Darren** It was a kind of medical research base where tourists can stay too. The building was made out of wood, there was no electricity and we had to boil our own water. It was like something out of a survival film!
- Fiona** It all sounds a bit primitive! Did you have an upset stomach or anything?
- Darren** Actually, I was a bit under the weather for a week or so; some type of bacteria in the water, or something. It made me feel quite queasy. But apart from that, and a couple of insect bites, I was generally fine. As I said, it was an amazing experience.

Speaking tip

In spoken English, we often use the following words when we aren't sure exactly how to describe something:
kind of type of sort of sort of like something like a bit or something
 We also use hesitation devices when we can't yet give an accurate description.
How can I put it? How can I describe it?

- 3 Read the *Speaking tip* and then read the dialogue again. Find ten expressions that Darren uses when he is not sure how to describe something.
 - 1 It was sort of like ...
- 4 (2.06) Listen to three descriptions. What are the speakers describing?
 - 1 _____
 - 2 _____
 - 3 _____
- 5 (2.06) Listen to the dialogues again. Complete the sentences for each description.
 - 1 It's _____ that you can pack away.
 - 2 It's _____ a mobile home.
 - 3 Right, this place _____ fort.
 - 4 You _____ the length.
 - 5 My place is _____ strange and eerie.
 - 6 It was like being, how can I put it, _____ completely isolated.
- 6 Use the expressions in the *Speaking tip* to describe three objects in the room to your partner.
- 7 Work in pairs. Decide on a place or an experience you want to describe. Prepare a dialogue using the words in the *Speaking tip* to help you. Practice acting out both parts A and B.

A

Ask B about a place they have visited or an experience you know they have had.

B

Describe the place or experience.

Ask B a question.

Answer the question and continue with the description.

Show interest and ask another question.

Conclude your description.

- 8 Act out your dialogue to the class.