

# 10 WAYS TO USE VIDEO CLIPS IN CLASS

With today's classroom equipment, it's easier than it's ever been to use video when we teach. TVs and DVD players are well established as class resources, but we can use other equipment such as data projectors and interactive whiteboards to play video clips too.

Projecting clips onto a whiteboard or using an interactive whiteboard is very similar to how you would use a television, but the great advantage is that you can write on it while the video plays! So don't forget about these as options for your class.

In this article, I'll give you 10 different activities for using with video in your lessons – but first, a question:

## WHY USE VIDEO?

The obvious answer is that it's enjoyable. Watching TV or a video/DVD is familiar to most of your students, so you can probably expect them to look forward to watching a clip in class.

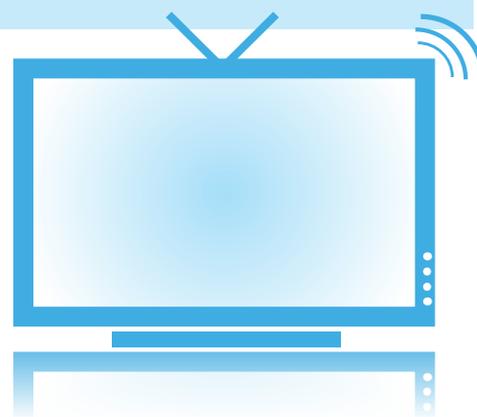
However, there's much more to it than simply enjoyment. Here are some more reasons why video is a useful tool for the classroom:

- Provides a different focus, which motivates students
- Rich source of language
- Lends itself to many activities
- Reinforces language
- Helps develop listening skills
- Provides exposure to culture, cultural gestures and so on

## ALSO:

- Unlike listening to a CD, a video clip provides **visual clues** - students can see gestures accompanying speech, and this helps to understand meaning
- Video clips set their own **contexts** both for a topic and (in terms of the classroom) for language
- Visual content provides a shared **common knowledge** – not all students will understand a listening the same way, but everyone can see if the man's coat is blue

Now let's look at ten simple activities that you can use to exploit video clips in your lesson. I hope you find them useful, and I'd love to hear your feedback. Good luck!



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## 1. THE NAME GAME

**AIM:** to practise and revise vocabulary

- 1 Play a DVD clip and pause it.
- 2 Ask students to shout out the things they can see on the screen.  
*or*  
If you wish to do it word by word, point to the things (i.e. words) you want to revise

### TIPS

This can become noisy, so an alternative is to ask students to write a list of what they see.

If you are using an IWB, you or the students can write the words on the paused video clip, labelling the clip like a picture.

## 2. RUN AND TOUCH

**Aim:** to practise and revise vocabulary

*You will need plenty of space for this activity!*

- 1 Ask students to come to the front of the class
- 2 Put them in teams, ask each team to stand in a line.
- 3 Play the DVD and pause it.
- 4 Shout the name of something that appears on the screen.
- 5 Students at the front of each line have to come and touch the word. The first student to do it gets a point for their team. The students then go to the back of the line and the game repeats with the next students from each team.

### TIP

To give the students more control, get them to say the words they'll run for.

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### 3. COVERED SCREEN

**AIM:** to set the context of the lesson, or for language work such as models of deduction

*If you are not using an IWB, you will need something to cover the screen (paper, card etc.)*

#### PAUSED PICTURE

- 1 Find the piece of the DVD you wish to use and pause it. Don't let students see it.
- 2 Use the **spotlight** feature in the IWB to spotlight an area that makes it hard to guess what the whole picture is.
- 3 Ask the students to guess what they are looking at. This is where the target language can be used, e.g. 'It could be a restaurant.'
- 4 After the students have guessed, move the spotlight to another part of the picture and ask the students again.
- 5 Repeat until the students guess correctly, then reveal the picture.
- 6 For follow up, you can do 'the name game' activity above.

#### SOUND

- 1 Use the **screen shade** feature in the IWB to cover the screen.
- 2 Tell the students you will play the DVD and they have to listen and guess where the DVD clip is set.
- 3 Play the DVD - screen shade hides the picture so the students can only hear
- 4 Stop the DVD and ask the students to think about where the DVD is set (or who are the people, how are they feeling, what the place is like and so on).

*As with Paused Picture, you can ask students answer using the lesson's target language.*

### 4. PREDICTION (1)

**AIM:** to encourage speaking (or you can use it for a specific language aim)

- 1 Play the DVD and pause it before something 'important' happens.
- 2 Ask the students to discuss questions such as what they think is going to happen, what is the person about to do, how it will end and so on.
- 3 Play the DVD for the students to confirm their predictions.

**IWB  
TIP**

If you are using an IWB then you can prepare the questions before the lesson and then display them on the board as a visual reference.

INTERACTIVE  
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### 5. PREDICTION (2)

**AIM:** *Similar to Prediction 1, but students see the beginning and end of the clip – not the middle. This way they have to predict (speculate) what has happened.*

- 1 Play the first part of the clip then stop it. Ask students to discuss what they've seen.
- 2 Fast forward the DVD (preferably so the students cannot see).
- 3 Play the end of the clip.
- 4 Ask the students to guess what happened in the middle – elicit some ideas.
- 5 Play the whole clip for students to confirm their predictions.

### 6. MAKE YOUR OWN QUIZ

**AIM:** **to practise questions**

- 1 Students watch a DVD clip.
- 2 After it has finished, ask them to write questions about the visual content of the clip, e.g. *what colour was the man's sweater?*
- 3 Students share their questions.
- 4 Students try to answer the questions from memory, then by watching the clip again.

### 7. WHAT ARE THEY THINKING?

**AIM:** **to test listening comprehension (students react to what the characters say)**

- 1 Play the DVD and pause it when there are a few characters on the screen.
- 2 Ask the students to think about what the characters have said and what they might be thinking.
- 3 Write down their suggestions on the board.
- 4 Ask the class to discuss which are the best suggestions and why.

**IWB  
TIP**

Draw 'thought bubbles' from the characters' heads - ask students to write their ideas in the bubbles  
If you play the clip without sound, you can draw speech bubbles instead of thought bubbles.

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## 8. BODY LANGUAGE

**AIM:** to show the importance of body language in communication

- 1 Choose a clip where there is a lot of body language – an argument, for example.
- 2 Make sure the sound is switched off.
- 3 Play the clip and ask the students what they think is happening, what the characters are saying. *Remind them to look at the body language of the characters.*
- 4 Students share their ideas.
- 5 Play the clip again with sound to see if anyone is correct

## 9. OVERDUBS

**AIM:** to practise understanding functional context

An **overdub** is when we ask students to replace the video dialogue with dialogue of their own. To do this you need to play the clip without the sound.

- 1 The students watch a clip and make notes on what they think is happening.
- 2 After the clip, students work together to decide on the dialogue (the size of the group depends on the number of characters in the clip).
- 3 When students are ready, the clip is replayed and the students 'act out' their dialogue.
- 4 Students decide which group has the best dialogue.
- 5 Play the clip again with audio so students can hear the original dialogue.

### IWB TIP

Check your IWB for a recording facility – students might be able to record their own dialogues  
Try the internet to find a free voice-recording program

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## 10. SUBTITLES

**AIM:** to test comprehension

*You will need an IWB for this activity.*

If you do not object to using L1 in the classroom, you can ask students to translate the dialogue in the clip, then write the translated dialogue as a subtitle.

Simply use the IWB software to make the translation appear on the screen as the video is played.

As with overdubbing, your students can use subtitles to present an alternative dialogue. No sound is played while students first watch the clip.

*There are a number of websites that can help you to add subtitles to video clips found on the Internet.*

### FINAL TIPS FOR USING VIDEO CLIPS IN CLASS

- 1 Keep extracts reasonably short
- 2 Encourage active viewing through tasks
- 3 Prepare appropriate tasks for before, during, and after the clip
- 4 Play the clip before the lesson so you know how the technology works
- 5 Remember that video clips can have a cultural bias
- 6 Remember copyright – if you are using a clip from the Internet, it may be illegal to download it

