



The role of video in language learning

Introduction

Video viewing is increasingly becoming recognised as a 'fifth skill' and is a hugely important part of the language learning classroom. It has become a predominant medium in how we receive information in today's world.

Video is not new in language teaching, but it has been seen as primarily a listening skill, where students have often been asked to watch a video and complete a written task whilst they are watching the video, which checks their comprehension of what they have heard. While comprehension is still very important, the visual and viewing aspects of video in the classroom have not always been fully exploited.

The approach to video in the classroom nowadays is changing as we understand that students can benefit from engaging actively with it. It should be an integral part of teaching where students can participate in a multi-sensory way with a variety of information, have greater interaction with the content, and thus facilitate their language acquisition and confidence to communicate.

The benefits of using video in the classroom

Motivation and engagement

Most students respond well to video and can find it more engaging than text or audio as a medium of instruction, so video can help to keep students motivated and focused.

Providing a context for language input

Video helps to contextualise new language, such as vocabulary and grammar, as well as more complex aspects of language, such as register and formality.

It's also hugely beneficial for modelling non-verbal communication. Video can give us the opportunity to observe non-verbal communication: the way people use their hands, bodies, and facial expressions to communicate in different contexts, something that would otherwise be very challenging to teach in the classroom.

Language practice

Videos can provide us with models of the target language in conversation that students can follow and then personalize for their own practice, perhaps creating videos of themselves using the target language and sharing them with classmates.

Skills practice

Watching a video provides more information than simply listening to an audio. Providing a balance of video and audio allows students to improve their ability to understand what is being said in real situations. Similarly, watching people speak will allow students to improve their ability to communicate effectively.

It's important that students are given the opportunity to develop their viewing skills, so material should provide activities that focus on what the students can see as well as hear.

Achieve learning goals

Videos are an important part of a lesson and provide variety to help learners achieve their learning goals. There should be a clear reason for using video in the classroom. It shouldn't be used as a 'reward' or an add on at the end of term but must always have a clear purpose.

Multimodal learning

Many videos that learners encounter in real life are multimodal. Multimodality is where there is the use of more than one mode of communication in a visual text to create meaning. Including some video in the classroom which is multimodal helps them to develop their English both inside and outside of the classroom.

Cultural aspects

As English is an international language spoken in different contexts around the world, each with their own cultural appropriacies, video is often rich in cultural information about the way people in different cultures live and interact.

Integrating videos into a lesson

In *English File fifth edition*, the concept of integrating a range of videos into each lesson enhances the learning experience for students. When teachers incorporate viewing into their classroom practices, it is of vital importance that viewing does not seem radically different to their current teaching practices and that both teachers and learners are aware that understanding the viewing process is as important as understanding the listening and reading processes.

To encourage learners to become effective active viewers, teachers could use the following procedure:

- **Before Viewing:** learners prepare to view by activating the prior knowledge they bring to the study of a topic or theme (their schemata), anticipating a message, predicting, speculating, asking questions, and setting a purpose for viewing.
- **During Viewing:** learners view the multimodal text to understand the message by seeking and checking their understanding by making connections, confirming predictions and inferences, interpreting and summarising, pausing and reviewing, and analysing and evaluating. Learners should monitor their understanding by connecting to their background knowledge, questioning, and reflecting.
- **After Viewing:** learners should be given opportunities to respond personally, critically, and creatively to multimodal texts. Learners respond by reflecting, analysing, evaluating, and creating.

Video in *English File fifth edition*

English File fifth edition takes the principles of using video in the classroom, as seen on the previous page, and embeds them into the lessons throughout the book.

Look out for the Video icons  **Video** in every File.

There is a lot of variety of video type and also of how and where the videos are used. The firm principle is that video is used to enhance a lesson in the natural place it works best, rather than sticking to a rigid formula with video tagged onto the end of a File.

The three key language elements of the course are Grammar, Vocabulary, and Pronunciation, and the video content sets out to help students learn and practise these elements as well as developing their listening and speaking skills.

The video content in *English File fifth edition* also develops viewing skills, with tasks that focus on what they can see, body language, and other non-verbal communication.

Types of video in the course include:



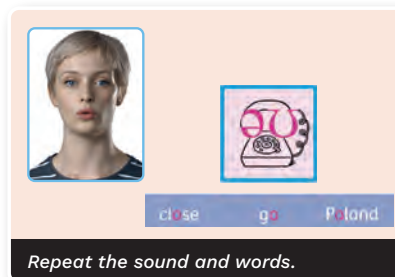
Grammar videos

The use of video brings situations to life and provides engaging practice. Students are exposed to real language in meaningful contexts which are used to present or practise target language through dramatized conversations, games, and quizzes.



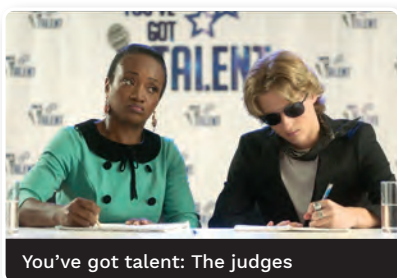
Vocabulary videos

Video helps to contextualise language through carefully selected images and clips that are visually engaging and motivating. The videos include clips and visual prompts, games, and animations.



Pronunciation videos

These provide modelling and practice of English sounds, showing the mouth position to help students both make and recognise the sounds. Pronunciation videos are embedded within lessons and a full set of Sound Bank videos can be found in the resources section on Oxford English Hub.



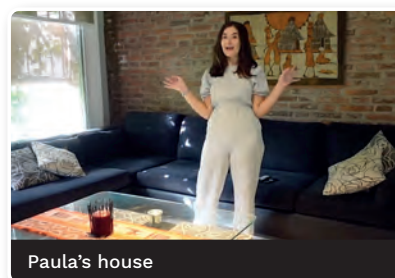
Dramas

Short dramas, dramatized conversations, and comedy shorts, present or practise grammar and vocabulary and develop listening and viewing skills.



Documentaries

Information films, documentaries, and biopics in a range of styles, with videos from around the world, develop listening and viewing skills.



Vox pop and teacher-generated content

Vox pops videos expose students to authentic content from real people around the world and provide stimulating examples of language they can relate and aspire to. For the *fifth edition* we invited *English File* teachers to submit their own videos for use in the course.



Practical English videos

An exciting, new Netflix-style drama series for *English File fifth edition*, *Pictures of you*, develops listening and viewing skills and provides valuable input and practice for functional language and social English.



How to exploit video in the classroom

English File fifth edition has tasks and teaching notes for every video. For example, with grammar and vocabulary practice activities where the video contains visual prompts for words, phrases, or sentences, the Teacher's Guide gives instructions as to how to use them in class. However, many of them can be used in other ways, depending on class numbers and what kind of practice you want to focus on. The following are possible ways to ring the changes and get the most out of the video material in *English File fifth edition*:

- Written and oral practice
- Using subtitles
- Alternative video suggestions

Written and oral practice

Written practice

- 1 Ask Sts to work individually, or put them into pairs or teams.
- 2 Play the video once the whole way through.
- 3 If the activity ends with a grid showing a still image of all of the clips within the video, pause the video there, and give Sts time to write the answers. You may want to set a time limit.
- 4 If the video does not end with a grid, the second time you play it, pause it after each clip, again giving Sts a time limit.
- 5 You may want to ask Sts to spell their answers.

Oral practice

- 1 Play the video once the whole way through.
- 2 Tell Sts they are going to watch it again. Pause the video towards the end of each clip and elicit the answers orally, either from the whole class, or individual Sts.
- 3 Make sure you correct any pronunciation errors.

Using subtitles

Subtitles are being increasingly used by native speakers globally even when what they are watching is in their language. Reading English subtitles while watching is something that will benefit Sts' reading and listening skills, so there may be occasions, especially where the video is a grammar presentation, where you may want to have them on for the second listen. Where the aim is improving their listening skills, having a third listen with subtitles is a way of allowing Sts to confirm what they understood, and also for dealing with new vocabulary or pronunciation they were not expecting.

With a listening where you feel that the speed or accent is making it especially challenging for your Sts, having the subtitles on is a way of helping them to enjoy what they are watching, and to show them how watching with subtitles makes video that might otherwise be above level more accessible.

Alternative video suggestions

Once you are familiar with the way a video works in a lesson, you may want to try exploiting it in different ways, or even to reuse a video for a different purpose. The following list of tasks are things that you might choose to use with different videos. However, at lower levels make sure that you do not introduce an activity requiring language that Sts have not yet been taught.

Noticing sounds

- 1 Play the video with the picture off.
- 2 Ask Sts to write down the noises they can hear, e.g. a door opening, a person walking, a dog barking, etc.
- 3 Put the Sts into pairs to compare their ideas.
- 4 Play the video with the picture on and check their ideas.

Watching with the sound off 1

- 1 Play the video with the sound off.
- 2 Ask some questions while the video is playing to help Sts imagine / articulate what is happening.
- 3 Then ask Sts to discuss what they think the people in the video are saying or doing. Elicit some ideas.
- 4 Play the extract with the sound on and compare with the Sts' answers.

Watching with the sound off 2

- 1 Play the video with the sound off.
- 2 Put the Sts in pairs. Ask them to write five questions that they want to know the answer to, based on the visuals they have seen.
- 3 Elicit some ideas and write them on the board.
- 4 Play the video again with the sound on and see if the Sts can answer their own questions.
- 5 Ask the Sts to share the information from their questions and answers.

Screenshots

- 1 Before the lesson, watch the video and make five or six screenshots. Make a handout or a PowerPoint slide of the screenshots in a random order.
- 2 Distribute / Display the handout and ask Sts to discuss what the video is going to be about.
- 3 Ask Sts to put the screenshots in the order they expect to see them.
- 4 Compare their ideas as a group and then play the video to check them.
- 5 Extension: After you've done the coursebook exercises, ask Sts to use the pictures to summarise the video in their own words.

Watching on fast forward

- 1 Play the video on fast forward.
- 2 Give Sts a few gist questions to predict what they think is happening, e.g. *Are they talking or arguing? Does it end well?*
- 3 Put the Sts into pairs to compare their ideas.
- 4 Play the video with the picture on and check their ideas.

Emotions

- 1 Play the video with the sound off. Ask the Sts to say how the people are feeling and why they think that.
- 2 Put the Sts into pairs and ask them to compare their ideas.
- 3 When doing the course book exercises, the Sts can check their ideas.

'Thing' bingo

- 1 Before the lesson, watch the video and make a list of things you see. This works for a video of stills, clips, a short drama or documentary, etc.
- 2 In class, write the list of things on the board. Ask Sts to choose and write down five of the words.
- 3 Play the video, and Sts tick off the items on their list as they see them.
- 4 When a student has ticked off all the items on their list, they shout 'Bingo'. Keep playing the video until all the Sts have completed their lists.
- 5 Put Sts into pairs and ask them to discuss what they saw, when and in what order.

Pause and predict

- 1 Prepare by reading the script and choosing a few places where you could pause and ask Sts what they think happens next?
- 2 Put the Sts in pairs. Play the video and pause on the first screen.
- 3 Ask them to predict what they think is happening and what is going to happen next.
- 4 Ask for ideas from a couple of pairs.
- 5 Play the clip and ask the Sts if their predictions were right.
- 6 Play the video and pause on the next screen. Ask the Sts in their pairs to discuss what they would like to happen and why?
- 7 Ask a couple of different pairs for their predictions.
- 8 Play the next clip and ask the class how many of their predictions were right, and so on.

Predicting images

- 1 Focus on the title of a video that Sts are going to watch.
- 2 Put Sts into pairs and ask them to predict five things they think they are going to see in the video.
- 3 Elicit their ideas and write them on the board.
- 4 Play the video and tick or cross their suggestions. See if any pairs predicted five correct images.

Colours

- 1 Ask Sts to write a list of eight colours.
- 2 Tell them that they need to try to find at least one thing in the video that is of each of the colours on their lists.
- 3 Play the video.
- 4 Put the Sts in pairs and ask them to compare their lists. What were the most / least common colours? Can they describe the things?

Memory / Observation

- 1 Play the video. Pause it at a specific point.
- 2 Tell the Sts they have 30 seconds to look at the image.
- 3 Turn off the video and ask Sts to write down what people are doing / what things are in the picture / what colours they can see (or other ideas depending on the video you have chosen).
- 4 Put the Sts in pairs and ask them to compare ideas.
- 5 Elicit feedback from the class.
- 6 Show the screen again and ask Sts how many of their observations were right. Did they miss anything?

One-sentence video review

- 1 Tell Sts to write a one-sentence review of the video. (You could set a word limit to add to the challenge.)
- 2 Ask Sts to work in pairs and compare their summary with a partner.

Memory test

- 1 After you've done the coursebook activities with the Sts, tell them you are going to do a 'test'.
- 2 Ask Sts to work with a partner. Ask them 5–10 'observation' questions about the video, e.g. *What colour was the girl's blouse? How many animals were there?* etc. Sts should discuss the answers with their partner and write them down.
- 3 After you've asked your questions, play the video again, ask Sts to check their answers or go through the answers with the Sts to see who were the 'winners'.