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Tech Tools for Teachers: Video-sharing
By Nik Peachey

Nik Peachey explores video-sharing and how we can use it to motivate language learning. Nik provides a comprehensive overview article on the use of video-sharing, including a list of tools to create activities around videos, such as ESLvideo, a downloadable lesson plan, a video screencast tutorial and a printable how-to guide.

What are video-sharing websites?

Without a doubt, the most popular video-sharing website is YouTube. YouTube, though it started as a video-dating service, has been transformed into the biggest video library in the world with over 490 million visitors each month and over 24 hours of video being uploaded every minute. Despite these facts, YouTube doesn't produce video, it just provides the platform to host and share people's videos. The video content is produced by a whole range of people, from companies and organizations to individuals of all ages like you and me, and anyone can register on the site, create a 'channel' and start producing and uploading their own video clips. This has become so much an accepted part of 21st-century culture that even the British Royal Family has its own channel www.youtube.com/user/TheRoyalChannel where they host and share video clips for anyone to access.

However, YouTube isn't the only video-sharing website. There are lots of others, many of which specialize in specific types or genres of video, from collections of advertisements to music videos to instructional videos and many, many more (you can find some examples towards the end of this article). Online video has even been responsible for the creation of new programme genres such as the micro soap opera, and ironically, nowadays, there are even TV programmes made about online video.

In this article, we look at *video-sharing* to see how it can be used as means of language-learning as well as entertainment. **All downloadables relating to this article can be found in the 'Related files' section on the top right-hand side of this page.**

Equipment needed   Why are video-sharing websites useful for language teaching?
Tips for exploiting online video   Teaching suggestions and activities   Tools for video-sharing
General video-sharing sites   Specialist video-sharing sites   Further reading

Equipment needed

In order to exploit online video-sharing websites, you don't need any specific equipment, just an internet connection and a web browser. If you want to start creating and sharing your own videos, then at the very minimum you will need a webcam or some form of digital camera capable of recording video. It would also be useful to have some form of video-editing software, though the free software that comes with most computers (Moviemaker with Windows PCs and iMovie with MACs) is generally more than adequate.

It's also worth remembering that most of the modern phones that many of our students carry around with them are capable of recording video and, in the case of some smartphones, the video can even be edited on the phone using

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If you want to start snaring your own videos, you will also need to subscribe to some form of video-sharing website too. It doesn't have to be YouTube; there are many other options around and most are free, though they might also carry some form of advertising.

Why are video-sharing websites useful for language teaching?

- Video-sharing websites provide an enormous resource of authentic listening material for exploitation in class.

- Clips on sites are generally quite short and therefore they are appropriate for the demands that authentic materials can place on the concentration span of our learners.

- Most clips are appropriately edited or chunked so that they appear complete; this means that students don't have the sense of frustrated expectations that comes when you only show a portion of a film in class.

- Video is an incredibly powerful medium for contextualizing language and helping students to deduce meaning and appropriacy from context.

- Video can also convey vital information about culture and specifically the culture of communication, such as body language and other paralinguistic features, that are absent from the kinds of audio materials we often use in class.

- Many younger students are visually stimulated by video and can find it more engaging than other forms of material.

- Involving students in the creation of video materials can help them to develop some really useful 21st-century literacy skills.

- Video can rapidly convey an enormous amount of information, even when students don't understand the language they are hearing, so can still be useful for other kinds of activity apart from listening.

- Most video-sharing websites supply an embed code, which means you can effectively copy the code and use the content within your own online-learning materials without breaking copyright.

- Students can access online video-sharing websites from home: this makes it possible to use these kinds of materials to make homework assignments much more motivating.

Tips for exploiting online video

- This should go without saying, but you must watch the complete clip yourself first and ensure that it, and any surrounding advertising, comments or further links that may be displayed, are culturally and age-appropriate before sharing it with your students. If there are advertisements around it or a part of the clip that you would rather not let your students see, then there are ways around this (see the 'Tools' section). But always be aware that even in clips that other teachers have used or recommended, things can change in quite a short period of time.

- Make sure that you use clips with a purpose; don't just play them to entertain and expect your students to learn something.

- Video is a visual medium so be sure to think about how you can exploit the visual aspect to support learning.

- Be aware of the target language level and grade your tasks appropriately. If students are lower level, then try to focus on tasks that exploit understanding of the visual elements of the video and/or try to find a script for the

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content or comments and then teach your students how to use these. Understanding these kinds of features not only helps to rid sites of inappropriate materials which they generally don't want to host, but also develops your students' abilities to be good digital citizens and protects you from any claims that you may be exposing your students to inappropriate content.

- If you decide to start creating and sharing videos on your own channel, be sure to check out the various different services that are available. If you plan to be doing this a lot with your students, it might even be worth seeing if your school will pay for a subscription site where you can have more control over who sees the content.

Teaching suggestions and activities

In these suggestions, I have tried to focus on activities which do not necessitate access to the internet in the classroom. Instead, they describe activities that students can do with the video at home and ways of following them up in class.

'Flip' your classroom

This is a concept that has become very popular in mainstream education recently. It centres around the idea that we can get students to watch the 'input' or lecture part of a class at home and then do the more practical part at school. We can extend this to English language teaching and give students video clips to watch at home – this could be language presentations or grammar explanations – and then get them to do the more practical speaking or writing activities in the classroom where the teacher can support them. If you don't have the time or ability to create your own presentation videos, you can probably find some ready-made ones on YouTube which might be appropriate.

Story retelling

Find short video clips for your students to watch and get them to write about what they saw. This works particularly well with silent or animated films which rely strongly on visual elements. Students can do the writing on paper or post their completed compositions to a class blog or website along with the clip they watched.

Film or music video reviews

Use online music videos or film trailers and get your students to review them for homework. There are lots of sites where you can find film or video reviews that you can use as a model in class before they do their own review for homework.

Script it

You can set video clips as a kind of dictation activity and get students to watch the clips at home and write out the script (be sure that it isn't a clip they can find the script to on Google); then in class they can compare their scripts and correct them.

Re-enact it

Find a clip with around four to five people in. Assign one of the roles from the clip to each person in the class and tell them to watch the clip and prepare to come into class and act it out. When the students come to class, create

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Understanding character and relationships

Try to find a clip with a number of people in (clips that include a party, dinner party or other social scenes are usually quite effective). Ask the students to watch the clip at home and make notes about the relationships between the people in the clip. You could give them a list of questions to guide them, such as *How well do they know each other?*, *Which ones are related?*, *Which people like each other?*, *Which have more formal relationships?* etc. You could also ask them to analyze the characters on a more personal level, e.g. *Which of the characters do you like?*, *Which do you feel you have the most in common with?* etc. In class, they can discuss their analysis and justify it using the visual clues they saw in the clip.

Comparing cultures

Try to find some quite ordinary scenes from the target culture. Get your students to watch these at home and to think about how they differ from their own culture. Things to focus on could be clothes, degrees of formality, greetings, proxemics (how close to each other people sit or stand when interacting), kinds of food or drink, etc. In class, students could discuss these and consider the consequences that ignoring these kinds of social norms may have for a person's ability to integrate into the culture.

Tools for video-sharing

www.eslvideo.com

This site has a huge collection of user-generated online quizzes based around web-based videos. The quizzes have been created by language teachers and are graded according to level. The quality of the quiz questions seems to vary quite a lot, so be sure to try the quizzes out before sharing them with your students and check that there are no incorrect answers or typos. If you register (for free), you can also use the site to create your own quizzes as well as creating your own teacher code which enables your students to send you their quiz results.

You can download a onestopenglish **video screencast tutorial** on using ESLvideo and a **printable how-to guide** at the links at the top right-hand side of this page.

http://safeshare.tv

This is a really useful site which enables you to create a frame around a YouTube video so that the students can watch the video without any other distractions from things like comments or advertising that may appear around it. You can also use the site to edit the clip so that only a small section of it is played. It's free and very quick and easy to use.

http://dotsub.com

This site tends to host a lot of educational video content in multiple languages. The reason it is included in this section is because, as the name suggests, it also enables you to take videos from other websites and add subtitles to them. You have to register to do this and the site includes a short tutorial to show you how. This would be a really useful activity to get students to do. They could either use the site to transcribe or they could add translation subtitles.

www.lyricstraining.com

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and this controls how many of the words are removed from the lyrics. At advanced level, all the words are removed. Students can also register and track their score. You can also use the site to add your own favorite videos and create activities for them, so if there is a song your students really like, you can use the site to turn it into a really motivating listening activity.

General video-sharing sites

www.youtube.com

This is probably the king of all video-sharing websites with a huge number of videos and all kinds of categories. As well as hosting your videos, it does also have some editing features too.

http://vimeo.com

This is a far less popular service than YouTube but does pretty much the same thing. In many countries and schools YouTube is blocked, so this might be a useful alternative if this is the case where you work. You can create a free account to host your videos or buy a premium account which allows you to upload content more quickly.

http://teachertube.com

This service was specifically designed for teachers and educational content, so it's a good place to look for videos if you want to 'flip' your classroom. It's also a good place to host videos, particularly if you want to limit access just to your class members. It does however carry quite a lot of education-related advertising.

Specialist video-sharing sites

www.kideos.com

This site has a huge collection of online video clips which are suitable for children. They are even graded by age appropriacy.

http://ed.ted.com

The TED-ed site builds on the success of the internationally famous TED Talks to help teachers to add an educational perspective to this wonderful series of talks and lectures. The talks themselves are quite high-level for language students, but they do have some really useful features. The TED-ed site has divided the talks into series and the talks now have interactive quizzes built around them. You can also access the scripts from the talks and clicking on any part of the script will take students to the specific part so they can hear it. You can also register on the site and create your own quizzes.

http://lessonstream.org

This site was specifically designed for teachers and has a huge collection of lesson plans built around videos from YouTube and some other sources. The lesson plans have suggested levels and learning aims included. This is a wonderful resource to help you exploit online video and learn how to create your own video-based lessons.

http://monkeysee.com

visually instructive nature of the video helps students to understand the linguistic content, so these video clips are ideal for language instruction.

www.expotv.com

This site is a product review site which anyone can submit reviews to. The videos are good for language learning because the visuals reinforce the language being used and there is also a huge range of accents and different voices that students can be exposed to. Students can also create and submit their own product reviews so it acts as a helpful model for language practice.

Further reading

Online Video: What does it have to offer teachers and learners?
This article from my Learning Technology blog gives an overview of the wide range of uses and types of video available online. It also links to a further four articles which explore different types of online video.

The Flipped Class: Myths vs. Reality
This article from The Daily Riff's blog explores an approach to combining video instruction with classroom practice, known as the flipped classroom.

Digital Video Revisted: Storytelling, Conferencing, Remixing
This article by Robert Godwin-Jones explores ideas related to storytelling and digital video, and reviews how technology for online video has developed over the last five to ten years.

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