

BBC NEWS AS A WARM UP FOR A STARTER

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Abstract. Some powerful changes have had their impact on our teaching routine such as a variety of online video materials, the ease with which the technology can facilitate their application in the classroom. As for the new generation of students they are obviously well equipped for acquiring knowledge and skills of business English using ICT (Information Communication Technology). This article reviews some approaches to teaching English based on integrating BBC news videos into the language classes, applying those videos as systematic warm ups to facilitate discussion and analyses. It provides some guidelines for selecting news sites, outlines strategies to make English class more enjoyable.

Keywords: Information Communication Technology (ICT), warm ups, BBC news, video resources, perception inhibitors, trigger, involve, communication skills.

Any starter offered has the only purpose to provoke appetite and facilitate further digestion. That is why carefully selected activities at the beginning of the lesson deserve more attention and could serve as a good alternative to a notorious checking home task. Here come a number of questions. How to tap students' multiple interests and intelligences? How to plunge students into the foreign language environment softly? Why not let some fresh air into the classroom using online news resources? They can set the tone of the lesson, provoke interest and more focus on English. This activity often results in a lively group discussion or even dispute.

The importance of video resources in developing communication skills and acquiring new vocabulary as well as cross-cultural competencies is hard to deny.

Still there is a lot of evidence that students might have difficulties in authentic video comprehension due to the lack of efficient strategies but mostly to persistent training.

One must admit that video perception refers to active and very complicated mental processes (interactive and interpretive). It takes a strong focus (which should be well grounded in their interests) in order to recognize a certain amount of vocabulary and grammar patterns, to separate each utterance into small meaningful units, where the visual content is of great help.

Using video news in business English class as a starter not only grabs students' attention but also helps to focus, triggers anticipation, decreases anxiety and tension, thus relaxing them for subsequent group communication activities. Students need to keep all of the components in short-term memory before retrieving background knowledge. On the other hand, video news increase memory of content as they create memorable visual images and foster speedy learning. Finally, they inspire and motivate students for self-study, which the internet makes easily available nowadays.

The internet is a goldmine of authentic audio and video files for teaching practices. Here comes the problem of selecting warm up materials. They should meet some requirements, namely, they primarily need to be authentic, relevant, interesting, selective and efficient.

The internet resources have a number of advantages, such as opportunities to pause at will, and repeat the episode or to download subtitles if necessary. A teacher of English can choose from a rich variety of news sites which offer a good menu to choose from for a starter.

- **The BBC News** <http://www.bbc.com/news/> It has proved to be very efficient, especially for upper-intermediate learners. The BBC news is a number one choice to grab students' attention; to help to concentrate; to generate interest in class; to trigger anticipation; to decrease anxiety and

relax students for learning exercise; to increase memory of content; to inspire and motivate students; to create memorable visual images to fix the information in short-term memory and so on. This resource offers innumerable opportunities to keep in touch with the whole world. It stands out for plenty of advantages. In addition to exciting up-to-date stories on a various topics each video lasts no more than 2-3 minutes and is supplied with a short review, which can help the students with the story background and useful vocabulary at preliminary stage.

In addition to the above:

- **Breaking News English** <http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/>

This site can be recommended for work outside the class as well. It gives free access to recent news in all spheres, worksheets and audio files in addition. It is also as an extra source of fresh business articles.

- **Monthly News Digest Online**
<http://www.englishclub.com/listening/news.htm>

Monthly News Digest Online designed to make warm up practice enjoyable offers various audio feeds, texts, and exercises for comprehension check.

Teaching strategies in integrating BBC news. First of all they should be targeted at psychological support helping the student

- to accept the fact that he or she is not going to understand everything,
- to stay relaxed when they continue to not understand for a long time,
- to avoid translating into native language as understanding English is efficient only in English.

When planning your warm up practice the following factors should be taken into account: the time available, proficiency level, their ability and content of the material for analysis.

Warm up activities for students with intermediate and upper intermediate levels can be approached as three stages: pre, while and post watching ones.

Preliminary stage. In real life environment it is unusual for people to watch, listen and comprehend something without having some idea of the background. A waiter knows the menu which the diner is choosing their food from. It is important to allocate a fair proportion of a lesson to the preliminary or introductory tasks.

Preliminary activities are aimed at: setting the context, generating interest, building confidence, activating or acquiring knowledge, predicting content and activating new vocabulary. Class work sheets or handouts with new vocabulary may be prepared or taken from internet by the teacher.

As large numbers of unknown words will often hinder comprehension, and lower confidence the teacher selects “difficult” vocabulary for the students to review beforehand.

This is followed by checking understanding of the subsequent tasks. The teacher should hand out the work sheets and go through the introductory article or review and difficult vocabulary list to make sure everyone understands. Then students should be given plenty of time to go through the tasks and questions or quiz to the content. It enables them to grasp the gist of it. They may even try to predict answers before watching activity. More extensive lead- in is given to the class generally struggling with such activity.

Main stage. Watch the video at least two times: firstly, to get the gist, secondly, to deepen understanding, to do the comprehension tasks and check answers. For students with low level of language proficiency it is recommended to repeat the video on students’ request. After that, students can work on the quiz sheet in small groups or in pairs.

Final stage. For homework: students should find a short video of their own to present to the class for warm up activity. Ask them to pick up difficult vocabulary and prepare a worksheet modeled on yours.

With a leading role in applying BBC news in English class, given to teachers, still a key to success lies in close cooperation with student group and delegation of video news selection and identifying dispute provoking points for discussion.

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