

From topic to task

Designing activities using culture

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Estonia, October 2018

In this talk

- Guidelines and suggestions
- Introducing and extending coursebook topics
- Designing your own tasks

Sharing stories

Rush hour

- Describe something you often HEAR, and something you once SAW
- Advice: What is your number-one rush-hour tip?
- Look at this photo taken above a platform in the Shanghai metro. Think of a question to ask...



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Guidelines and suggestions

- Use stories and anecdotes to get students' attention
- Put yourself centre-stage: share your own stories
- Get students involved: set imaginative challenges
- Don't limit yourself to materials from English-speaking countries

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Introducing topics

Visual clues

- What can you see?
- What is happening?
- Who are the people?



Introducing topics

Language prompts

'The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched – they must be felt with the heart.' Helen Keller

- 1 SPEAKING** Work in pairs. Discuss the quotation. What was Helen Keller talking about, do you think? Do you agree with her?





Bringing topics to life

Set challenges

Write some short messages or sentences in English for your partner. Do not show him / her.

Hello. How are you?

Work in pairs. Take turns to close your eyes while your partner spells out their messages on your palm using their finger. Can you understand?



Extending topics

Empathy and imagination

7 SPEAKING Imagine you were deaf-blind. What practical and emotional problems would you face? Use the phrases below to help you.

One problem would be that ...

It would be difficult / impossible to ...

You'd have to ...

I would hate not being able to ...

Extending topics

Online research

8 INTERNET RESEARCH Find out about the life of another inspirational person who overcame disability or other difficulties. Make notes about:

- their name, nationality and background
- the disability or difficulties they overcame
- their achievements
- why you admire them



Nick
Vujicic



Malala
Yousafzai

Introducing and extending topics

- Connect with students' curiosity
- *Pay attention* to what students say
- Don't worry if students occasionally use L1
- Share work where everyone can see it
- Recycle students' ideas

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Reading

Graffiti's softer side

I can understand a text about street art.

- Who is this a statue of?
- Where was the picture taken?
- Can you explain the pink jacket?

The statue of Rocky outside the Philadelphia Museum of Art is very popular with tourists, who often stop to take their photo in front of it without bothering to visit the museum itself. This irritated Jessie Hemmons, so last month the 24-year-old artist knitted a bright pink jacket and put it on the statue of the boxer. She chose the colour because it attracts attention. On the front of the jacket, Jessie has knitted the words 'Go see the art'. Jessie hopes that her message will result in more people visiting the gallery.

- Students write a role-play...



Notice what is around you

Graffiti back-stories

- Get students to take a photo of some street art
- Ask them to invent a remarkable back story for each picture. Ask:

Who was the artist?

What is it about?

Why did they do it? / Who is it for?

What happened as a result?

Display and compare ideas

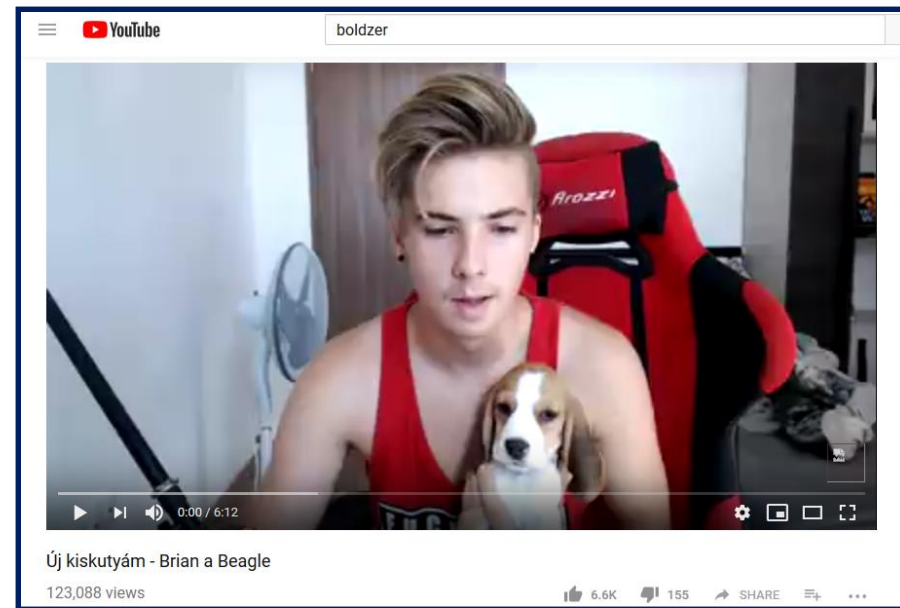


Watch in another language, discuss in English

Teenage YouTubers

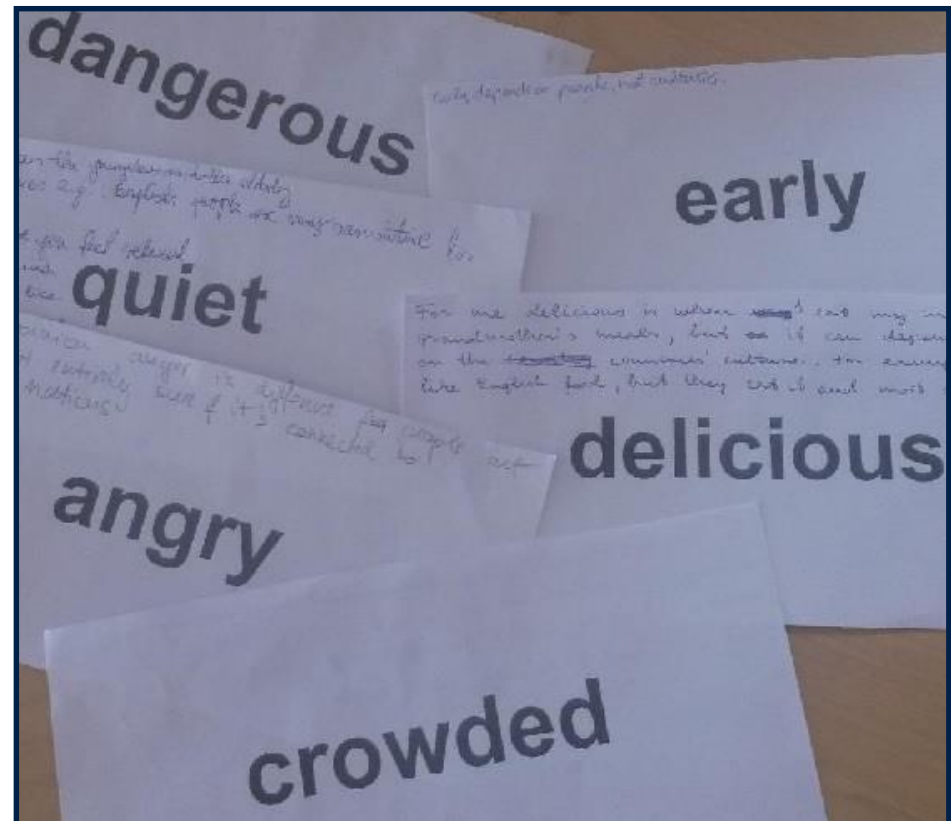
- Where do you think he is from?
- What is the video about?
- What do you think he is saying?

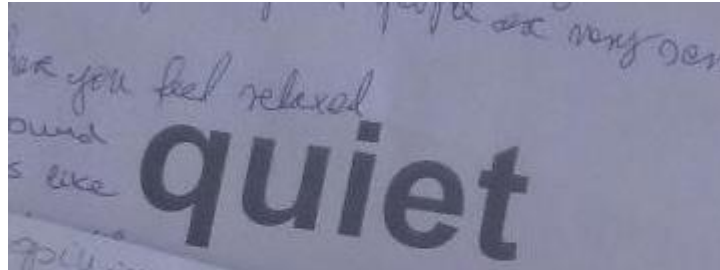
→ Explore videos in languages students understand - and ones they do not



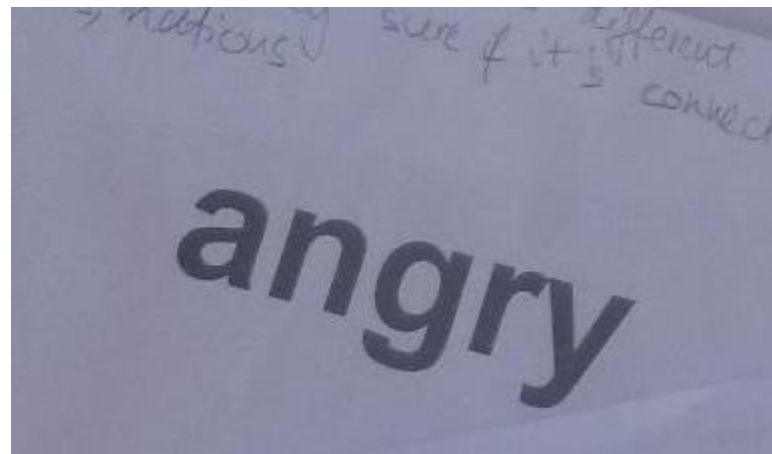
Culture and language

- Are words culturally loaded?
- Do words have different meanings in different cultural contexts?
- Can you think of any examples?





For example when a teacher says 'quiet', you must stay in absolute silence, but when your parents say that 'be quiet' then it doesn't mean the same, you can listen to soft music or use the computer etc.

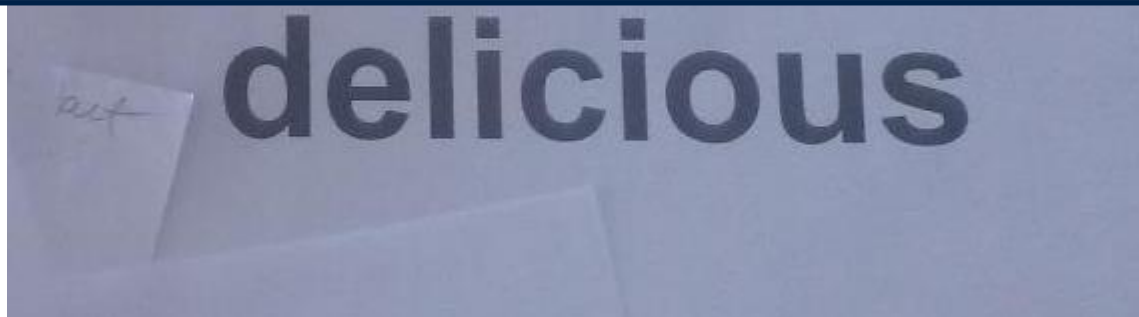


italian people's conversation

crowded

For example in Japan people are used to crowded places like buses but in Hungary people feel weird if they don't have enough ^{primate} place.

For me delicious is when ~~we~~ I eat my mother's or my grandmother's meals, but ~~it~~ it can depend on ~~the~~ people or the ~~country~~ countries' culture. For example I don't like English food, but they eat it and most of them like it



Explore memes

Online culture

Use memes to

- Collect examples of shared culture
- Highlight aspect of local life and culture (inc school life)
- Motivate students to do presentations
- Provide a framework for storytelling tasks



Explaining memes

Student presentations

- Select a meme
- Provide relevant background info and explain usage
- Make a presentation containing examples





Explaining memes

Example: *Success Kid*

- Background (knowyourmeme.com):
 - adorable image of a kid (Sammy) with a fistful of sand; first appeared in 2008; popularity peaked in 2012
- Usage:
 - To celebrate life's small, sweet, personal victories

Explaining memes

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- Examples:

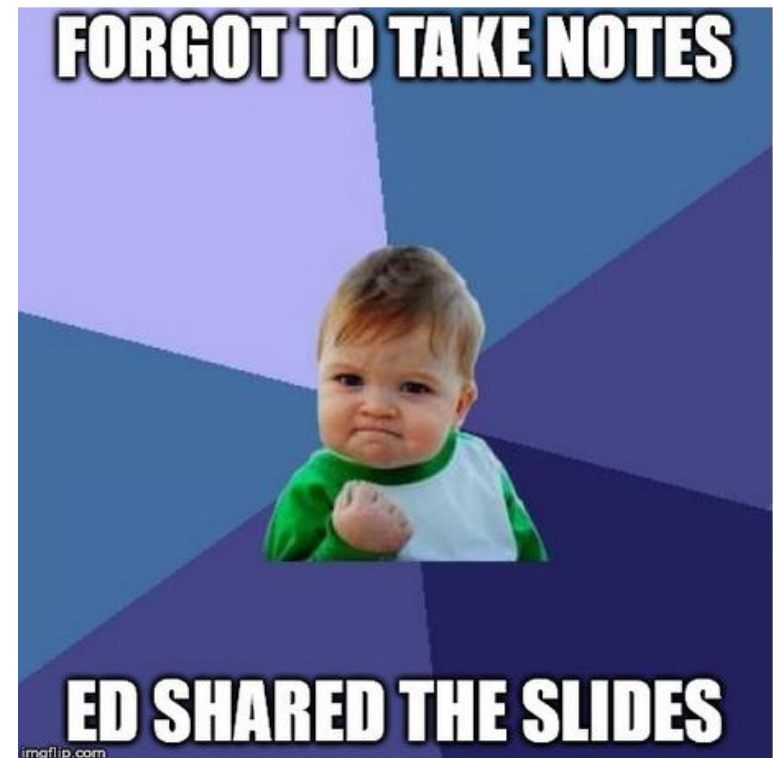


Meme contests

- Students use a meme generator (e.g. imgflip.com/memegenerator) to create their own version of memes
- Meme content should refer to your class or studied materials
- Create a gallery and vote for favourites

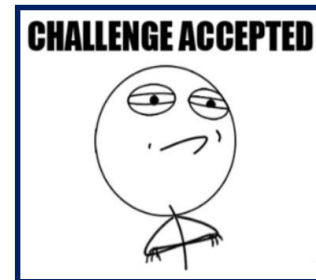
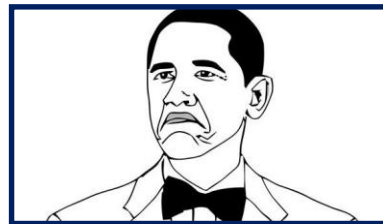
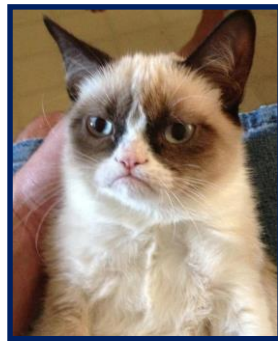
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Story-telling with memes

- Create a set of slides containing five different meme templates (e.g. Unhelpful High School Teacher, Grumpy Cat, Not Bad, Challenge Accepted, Success Kid)



- Students create a story incorporating all five memes
- Tell the story as a slide presentation
- Use the meme slides to emphasise key events

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