

TEACHING ENGLISH VIA TV OR YOUTUBE

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Introduction

In some contexts, governments and school systems are looking at how they can use TV or YouTube to continue learning when schools are closed. This guide offers some ideas for how simple lessons can be structured and supported to improve learning opportunities.

Getting started

- In some countries, there are established TV channels specifically for educational programmes or set times during the day when this content is broadcast. Find out what schedules are being created and how you can contribute your content and skills.
- If you're thinking about using YouTube, set up a channel (see *Useful links* below).
- Remember you have the option of doing both live and recorded lessons.
- Be clear about whether the lessons should focus on reviewing and revising content or introducing new concepts. This will affect how you design your content.
- Look at the curriculum that the students need to follow – either national curriculum documentation or their textbook syllabus – and design your lessons accordingly.
- Think about who your target audience is – what age groups do you expect will watch? Do you need to design lessons for different age groups or different levels of knowledge and skills? The more focused this is, the better your content will be.
- Decide what technology you need to use. Do you only need to write the lesson scripts for someone else to present or do you need to record them too? If you are recording, check what file formats and quality the broadcast service requires from you.
- Have a structure for your lessons – a beginning, middle and end – but also vary the types of input and activities to keep your learners engaged. If you have access to the internet, watching some examples of people teaching English on YouTube can give you some ideas for your lessons. Remember that you will need a balance of presenting new language and opportunities for the learners to practise or review what they have learned.

Presenting new language and content

- Be clear about what language or skills you want to cover during each lesson.
- Telling stories is a great starting point for introducing new language and practising learners' listening skills. If possible, you can also show some text on screen.
- Try presenting new language using pictures or actions, avoiding long explanations.
- If all your target viewers are likely to share a common home language, use this language to explain concepts or key vocabulary.
- Invite friends or family to help illustrate language. Do short interviews or act out scenes with them. Ask viewers to listen out for key words or answer comprehension questions.
- Try and film in different locations to show different contexts – the advantage of filming your lessons is being able to show language being used in many different situations.

Practising and revising new language and skills

- Use the time during the live lesson to focus on practising listening and speaking skills as much as possible. Encourage learners to repeat words and phrases and answer questions out loud, as well as write things down when they need to.
- Try to include fun quizzes during the lessons – learners can collect points.
- You can set tasks at the end of the lesson for learners to do at home. Give clear instructions. If possible, provide a way for them to share their work.
- Find out if there is a way to provide extra activities by distributing a publication or in the newspaper. Remember that content can be distributed as PDFs via mobile messenger services like WhatsApp if it's not possible to send out hard copies or share online.

Filming and editing the content

- Try to film your lessons in front of a colourful and attractive background. You can include realia (real objects) or even costumes while filming to make it more interesting. For younger learners, puppets can also make lessons engaging.
- Make sure the lighting is good. Avoid having light behind you. If you are talking directly to the audience, look straight into the camera while speaking.
- Use a board to show written language and explanations, or have the words appear on screen. Make sure the writing is clear and large enough to be seen.
- Remember to include 'wait time' when you are teaching live – this means time for the viewers to reply or respond to questions you ask them or to repeat language you model. For example, you might say: 'OK, children, we're going to play a game. Are you ready? [wait] I can't hear you!! Are you ready?? [wait] Yes! I'm ready too. Let's play!' or 'OK, I'm going to give you 20 seconds to think of as many words for parts of the body as you can. Go!' [then wait for 20 seconds before moving on].

Things to consider

- **Copyright issues:** You might want to use some video content or read a book aloud as part of the TV lesson. Check carefully what copyright restrictions there are for any content that you don't develop yourself.
- **Making lessons interactive:** By combining the lessons with other technologies, you can receive feedback and responses from learners. On YouTube, you can use the comments function or set up a Facebook group. On TV, your institution or the government department responsible for broadcast can set up a telephone hotline for students to phone with their questions. You could also provide a telephone number for SMS or phone calls, which can be received by the teacher live on air.

Useful links

- An old publication with useful ideas for using media, including radio, to teach English: <https://bit.ly/UseOfMediaELT>
- More ideas about creating audiovisual content: <https://bit.ly/RTTAVContent>
- Setting up an educational channel on YouTube: <https://bit.ly/EduChannel>