Film and Video in Language Learning

Frank Mc Girr
Film and Video in a traditional language classroom

Considerations

**Time:** usually 90 minutes

- length and content of video
- a lead in-background information
- pre teach vocabulary
- comprehension questions
- play the video more than once

**Purpose:** What are you trying to achieve in your classroom?

are you using video
- as a listening exercise
- to teach grammar
- as a comprehension exercise
- to inspire conversation
Film and Video in a traditional language classroom

Content

- youtube
- vimeo
- News BBC, CNN, etc
- History channel
- Comedy
- Travel
- TED
- Amazon
- Netflix
- MUBI
Film and Video in a traditional language classroom

Look at the following video. Think about how it might be used in class - take notes and prepare to talk about it with your partner.  

3 mins

https://p.dw.com/p/1DDfB?

http://www.dw.de/branching-out-tree-house-hotels-are-all-the-rage/a-18264183
Step 1: Tell students your going to call out a word. Ask them to write down the first six words that come to mind when they hear this word.

Holiday

Step 2: Put students in pairs. Ask them to talk about their six words 7-10 minutes

Step 3: Take some feedback. Task one of the students with writing all the words on the board. Get students to correct any spelling mistakes. 3-5 minutes

Change pairs

Step 4: Hotel might be one of the words listed on the board. Ask students to think about what’s important for them when choosing an hotel --location, price, swimming pool, etc. Give students Handout 1 and ask them to spend 7-10 minutes ranking their choices

@filmbloggs
Student Handout 1:
What do you look for when choosing a hotel?

Rank the following 1-14. Which are the three most important? Compare your list with a partner

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>You've been there before</th>
<th>Gastronomy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Someone's recommended it to you</td>
<td>Air conditioning (in room)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Price</td>
<td>Wi-Fi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming pool/sauna, etc.</td>
<td>Minibar</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proximity to airport/station</td>
<td>Animals are allowed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proximity to city centre/nightlife</td>
<td>You saw it on TV/guide/newspaper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peacefulness</td>
<td>Other reasons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>View from your window</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Step 5:** Ask students to compare their choices  
**5-10 mins**

**Step 6:** Take some feedback  
**2-3 mins**
Step 7:

Student Handout 2 & 3 Key Words

Tell students they’re going to watch a short video featuring unusual accommodation. Before watching they need to complete a Key Word Exercise.

Students work in pairs to find a solution. Encourage guessing. 5/10 mins.

Take feedback/check answers 2/3 mins

Handout 2 Student A

a border
creature comfort
to branch out
to explore
out on a limb
cladding
fanciful
cosy
accessible
a birds eye view

Handout 3 Student B

Complete the following key word exercise with your partner. 5/10 mins

1. Something ____________ is based on imagination and not facts or reason.
2. ____________ is warm, comfortable and safe, especially because of being small or confined.
3. ____________ is a general view from above.
4. ____________ are all the things that make life comfortable, such as good food, comfortable furniture, or modern equipment.
5. Something ____________ is able to be reached or entered.
6. ____________ is to start doing something new or different, especially in business.
7. ____________ is in a position where you have no support from other people.
8. ____________ is the line that divides two countries or areas; the land near this line.
9. ____________ is to travel to or around an area or a country in order to learn about it.
10. ____________ is a hard substance such as wood, stone, or metal that is put on the outside of a structure, especially a building, to protect it or make it look more attractive.
Step 8: Listening

Give Students **Handout 4**. Tell them to listen for answers for these questions.

**Student Handout 4**

1. How do you gain access to the accommodation in Kulturinsel Einsiedel?
2. Can you connect to the Internet?
3. What year was the centre opened?
4. What size in square meters is the building in Berlin?
5. How far from the Arctic circle are the guesthouses in Harads, Sweeden?
6. How much is one night’s stay for two people?

**Step 9:** Play the video 3 mins

**Step 10:** Ask students to compare answers 2/3 mins

**Step 11:** Check answers *(play video once more- if necessary)* 5/7 mins
Step 12: Give each new pair **Handout 5**- Discussion questions  
*(students don’t need to discus every single point)*  
10/15 mins

**Student Handout 4**

**Discuss some of the following questions with your partner**  
10/15 mins

- Would you like to stay in one of the tree-houses mentioned? Why/ Why not?
- Did you have a treehouse as a child? Talk to your partner about it
- Have you ever stayed overnight in a treehouse? What was it like?
- What is the best and worse things about staying in hotels?
- Where is the most interesting place you’ve stayed?
- How far in advance do you like to plan your holidays?
- Do you book holidays online or with a travel agent? Why
- Talk about your best memory from a holiday?

**Step 13:** Depending on how much time is left----Change pairs and repeat the exercise

**Step 14:** Take feedback/ if necessary remind students to do keyword exercise as homework
Film and Video in Language Learning

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Film Trailers
Watch a trailer. Afterwards retell the sequence of images with your partner. What happens first, second, third and so on.

Philomena Official Trailer #1 (2013)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x6ToSr_LSKU

Retell the film trailer with your partner - start to finish 3-5 mins.
Film Trailers

- Pre-viewing activities
- Gap-fill exercise
- Check answers
- Read a synopsis (answer comprehension questions)
- Check answers
- Set an exercise related to the film trailer---e.g. retell the trailer in pairs
- Show the trailer/advertisement
- Check answers
- Focus on Linguistic element of trailer
- Discuss culture and values
Pre-View

Suggestion: Show the film poster

Posters work on a subliminal level (without you being aware) and are designed to convey the maximum amount of information in the minimum amount of time.

With this in mind, I explain to the group that I’ll show “an image” (I don’t say film poster) 10 seconds

Some possibilities

- **DESCRIBE WHAT YOU SEE:** Look at the poster and write down six words (more if you like) that you think of as you look at it. Share the words with your partner(s). Why did you choose them?

- **STORY:** Talk about what you think the story of the movie is – the start, beginning, end, etc. Change partners and share stories.

- **CREDITS:** Look at the credits on the poster (the actors, director, producer…) and talk about them with your partner(s).

- **MUST-SEE:** Talk with your partner(s) about whether the poster and movie title are good and make you want to see the movie.
Philomena
(Drama) (2013)
94 minutes

Philomena is the true story of one mother’s search for her lost son. When she got pregnant as a teenager in Ireland in 1952, Philomena was sent to the convent of Roscrea to be looked after as a “fallen woman”. When her baby was only three, he was taken away by the nuns for adoption in America. Philomena spent the next fifty years searching for him.

Then she met Martin Sixsmith, a journalist who was interested by her story. Together they set off for America. There they discovered the extraordinary story of Philomena’s son, and also became very close friends.

The film tells a story of human love and loss and in the end celebrates life. It is both funny and sad and is about two very different people, at different stages of their lives, who help each other and show that there is laughter even in the darkest places.

The book “The Lost Child Of Philomena Lee” was published in 2009. It acted as a catalyst for thousands of adopted Irish children and their ‘shamed’ mothers to come forward to tell their stories. Many are still searching for their lost families.

The film was directed by Stephen Frears and stars Judi Dench with Steve Coogan. It was screened in the main competition section at the 70th Venice International Film Festival where Coogan and Jeff Pope won the award for Best Screenplay. At the 2013 Toronto International Film Festival it was awarded the People’s Choice Award Runner-Up prize.

Read the above article and answer the following questions

1. What year was the film made?
2. How long is the film?
3. What year was the book “The Lost Child Of Philomena Lee” published?
4. Who directed the film?
5. Name the two main actors?

What do the following words mean? Complete the gap-fill exercise

convent  fallen women  toddler  to adopt  compelling
narrative  catalyst  to shame  to search in vain

1. A_____________ is a child who has only recently learnt to walk
2. A_____________ is a description of events, especially in a novel
3. _______________ someone is to make them feel that they have lost honour or respect
4. _______________ is to take somebody else’s child into your family and become its legal parent
5. A_____________ is a person or thing that causes a change
6. _______________ is to look with success
7. Something________________ makes you pay attention to it because it is so interesting and exciting
8. A_____________ is a way of describing a woman in the past who had a sexual relationship with somebody who was not her husband
9. A_____________ is a building in which nuns (= members of a female religious community) live together
Movie trailers are short segments (usually two to three minutes) of key scenes that provide interesting linguistic input and action accompanying the language. The language in the clips can be used in 'cloze' exercises and the scenes for generating discussion and answering questions.

**Plot Summary:** Trailers usually have a structure of three acts; a beginning which lays out the characters and premise. A middle which furthers the story and usually ends in a dramatic climax.

A montage of clips are usually condensed into a 2.00 - 2.30 minute trailer.

The suggestions on the next slide (for trailers) can be used with ANY short movie segment.
• Show the trailer and ask pairs to retell the story.
• Show the trailer to half the class. They retell the story to the other half. Ask the second group to take notes and retell the story to the whole group. Make a timeline on the board. What bits of information were lost? Why?
• Show the trailer with sound only. Students make a list of the words they hear
• Show a film clip with sound only and asks partners to speculate on what is happening. (*works really well with action sequences*)
• Back to back. One group listens to the dialogue and then speculates on what the story is with the group that had sound and vision. Again you could make a timeline on the board to aid comprehension.
• Show the trailer without sound and have students make a list of all the things they see. (*Car, woman, house, airplane, building, party, drinks, etc.*)
• Show the trailer without sound and then with sound. Talk about the impact of sound.
• Give students a worksheet asking them to analyze and then discuss the trailer in pairs (*see next slide*)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Main Characters:</strong> What information does the trailer give about the characters? Why does it give this information?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Setting:</strong> Mars? Africa? Australia? City? Countryside? How do you know?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time:</strong> Past? Present? Future?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Plot:</strong> What information is given about the story? Is there a beginning, a middle, an end?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Music:</strong> What type of music is used? What does the music suggest about the movie?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Genre:</strong> Horror, Romance, Drama, Sci-Fi, Coming of age, Action, Adventure, etc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Title:</strong> When does the trailer give the name of the film? Why is this?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Linguist Element of Film Trailers

Depending on the trailer, there may be a lot or very little dialogue. Teachers can use the dialogue to call attention to some element of grammar. There might be yes/no questions, noun clauses, idioms/phrases that can be highlighted and practiced. Students can listen and repeat whole sentences. In more advances classes you might want to point out the subtle differences in accent.

The trailer for Philomena is overlaid with the following text.

**Inspired by the incredible true story**

**An unlikely friendship**

**A journey to find the truth**

**From the acclaimed director**

What is Inspired? (influenced, motivated, excited, stimulated, prompted) What inspired you to learn English? Have you ever had an unlikely friendship? Heard an unlikely story? What is the most incredible true story you have heard? Do you like films based on true stories?

@filmbloggs
### Discussing Culture and Values

The film *Philomena* raises questions on a variety of subjects:

- the power of the church
- sex education
- parenthood
- adoption
- women’s rights
- children’s rights
- investigative journalism
- corruption
- respecting the wishes of others
- friendships

Any one of these topics presents an opportunity for exploration. Put students in pairs and ask them to discuss the questions **10-15 mins**.

Change pairs and handout a new set of questions **10-15 mins**.

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### Adoption

- Would you adopt?
- Do you know anyone who was adopted?
- Should people adopt children from the same race?
- When should you tell a child he / she is adopted?
- What checks should adoption agencies conduct on prospective parents?
- What questions do you think a child has when he / she finds out he / she is adopted?
- Should brothers and sisters be split apart for adoption?

### Sex Education

- Should sex education be a compulsory subject in school?
- Who is the best person to give sex education to children?
- From what age should children receive sex education?
- Are there any topics that should not be in sex education lessons?
- Did you receive your sex education?
- Was it fun, interesting, embarrassing, shocking…?
- Would you (did / do you) give sex education to your children?
- How do you answer young children’s questions about sex?
- Is television good for teaching about sex to kids?
- Should boys and girls have different sex education classes?
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Another way of using film clips/trailers is to start with sound only (no image) and have students predict what is happening.

Listen to the following short clip. What’s happening? -take notes and prepare to talk about the clip with your parter. **2-3 mins**

- What sounds can you hear that give us clues about location, story or character?
- What words can you use to describe the atmosphere?
- Where is this film based?
- What action is taking place?
- If this sound extract were a fruit what would it be and why?

[https://vimeo.com/190700988](https://vimeo.com/190700988) 

*Play for 60 seconds without vision*

Discuss with your partner---2-3 mins
Film Clips

Predictive Writing

Most short films will have a twist – a moment when the narrative suddenly shifts and the unexpected happens. It is this moment that makes predictive writing really interesting.

Predictive writing is very engaging for students. They get a chance to play the part of a detective, hunting for clues and solving riddles as they look to crack the case! What happens next? Or in some cases, what happened before?

It is also an opportunity to assess learners’ understanding of different tenses. For example, a teacher can focus on the future tense if predicting what will happen next or past tense if guessing what happened before.

What is happening?

Watch the clip and discuss with your partner
Talk about what you see--- make a list of all the items
What’s in the box at the end of the clip?

Ready?
Discuss the video with your partner- 2-3 mins
Retell the story--What did you see? Talk about *where, why when, how, what*
And what is in the box?

https://vimeo.com/190700988

Click link  Stop video at 02:25

Tuesday, 12 March 2019
Would you like to see the end of the clip?
https://vimeo.com/190700988

Click link  Start  video at 02:25 till end

It’s interesting to note that even though we’re predicting the future you have to consider the past. How did the child end up here? Why are they alone? Why did they shoot down the drone? Who is controlling the drone? The past often gives us the biggest clues about what will happen in the future.

Were there any surprises? Did you guess what happened? Were there any clues in the first part of the film?

Did you like the ending in the film or do you prefer your version?
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Recap

Short films offer a range of opportunities in language learning.

- pre-viewing activities
- gap-fill exercises
- vocabulary exercises
- reading exercises
- listening exercises
- predictive writing
- discussions
Film and Video in a Flipped Classroom

Flipped learning is a reversal of the traditional learning environment. In a flipped classroom, students complete instructional content in advance, often online, outside the class, and then discuss/practise it with teachers in class.

Benefits in Language Learning

- **Time**: learning is not restricted to the timetabled needs of an institution.
- **Material**: more challenging, authentic, engaging, varied and purposeful.
- **Students**: every individual has the opportunity to work at his/her pace.
- **Classroom**: prioritised for group (not individual) activities.