

## Tech Tools: Utilizing Free Technology to Aid Adult Classroom Teaching: Movies and News

By Ravneet Parmar

### Movies

Teaching with movies or movie clips is a refreshing change from traditional classroom practices, and can be used to teach various English skills in the classroom. Using them, students enjoy practicing reading, writing, listening, and speaking; in addition, movies can be used in all levels of ESL.

Many times, watching and using a whole movie is not feasible in an ESL classroom. Listening to a two-hour movie with or without subtitles can also be very challenging for ESL students. In this case, movie trailers or short clips can be used in a classroom; some free movie websites that teachers can use to aid in lesson planning are listed at the end of this article. Various examples of how the teacher can use them in the classroom are listed below:

- Ask students to rearrange dialogue strips or create their own based on a silent film. Depending on the language level of the students, they can put the lines in order before/after or while watching the clips. The teacher can also make it harder by asking them to listen only and then, after listening, order the lines from memory.
- Ask students to watch the trailer/clip carefully, noticing things in the background and taking notes if they want. Afterward, ask them questions about a specific item in a room, or a character's words or actions. The teacher can create a buzzer game out of the information, to make it more fun in the class.
- Students can also watch a silent clip and create their own dialogue with partners or groups and present it to the class.

Some free movie websites are listed below:

- Fandango Movie clips APP (available on Android and I phone)
- [http://www.busyteacher.org/classroom\\_activities-listening/movie-worksheets](http://www.busyteacher.org/classroom_activities-listening/movie-worksheets)
- <http://www.moviesegmentstoassessgrammargoaals.blogspot.com>
- <http://www.eslcommando.com>
- <http://www.eslnotes.com>
- <http://www.movieclips.com>

### News

News is another topic that teachers often think belongs only in an intermediate or higher level ESL classroom. Websites like [www.breakingnewsenglish.com](http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com), however, make it easier to discuss current issues and news in beginner classrooms. This website contains authentic news in different levels with free printable lesson plans included. Each lesson plan also comes with online quizzes for your tech-savvy students and printable exercises for the rest of the class.

Other websites for intermediate and advanced students such as <http://learning.blogs.nytimes.com> from *The New York Times* also have lessons and conversation questions that teachers can use in the classroom to generate debates and discussions. Students older than 13 can also write comments online under the article and have discussions with other students using the blog. Finally, <http://www.newslevels.com> provides practice in listening, reading, and vocabulary for all levels of students. Teachers can also go to a reading jigsaw with these articles, as they are tailored for ESL students.

As technology evolves, we should make sure that our ELLs are also evolving with it by keeping up to date and utilizing as much of these free resources as possible.

*Note:* This article is based on the workshop presented at 2015 Annual NYS TESOL conference.

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