

# languages ICT



## Technology for languages • Focus on presentation software

### Talking vocabulary

Take a simple vocabulary 'flashcards' presentation in PowerPoint or other software, where you use a picture (and possibly text) on each slide to teach pupils the meaning and pronunciation of new vocabulary, thus avoiding the need for English. You might use animated Clip Art instead of static pictures to introduce verbs. Enhance each slide by embedding a sound file of your voice saying the vocabulary, which appears as a loudspeaker icon (use the Insert > Object function). You can then give pupils access to your presentation for revision outside of lessons, either on the network, on disk or via the school website. You can record your voice using Sound Recorder in Windows and a microphone. Such teaching resources could be useful for supporting non-specialist colleagues, particularly in the primary phase.

### Storytelling

Use the combined facilities of text, pictures and sound effects to create a supportive and stimulating environment for story-telling, which you can enhance further with gesture and voice tone. You should therefore be able to use a level of language which is challenging for your pupils, whether this be in vocabulary, grammar or length terms or a combination of all three. Amongst other features, Clip Art, sounds from MS Clips Online, scanned images from a text book, background colour, speech bubbles (AutoShape Callouts) and arrow symbols may be useful in creating the visual storyline where copyright allows. The use of images of TV or animated characters copied from the web may be particularly motivational, but permissions would need to be obtained.

### Spot the object game

You can exploit the Flash Once animation option for an enjoyable vocabulary revision game. A picture flashes briefly on screen and pupils need to call out what it is in target language before it disappears again. An adaptation of this game is to crop the pictures first to increase the level of challenge, which you can do from the Picture Toolbar.

### Getting pupils to use the target language

In the same way that traditional flashcards and classroom props can be used to create a target language environment and prompt pupils to speak, so can the visual power of a PowerPoint presentation. This can be particularly useful when practising a new language structure such as, for example, likes and dislikes. Instead of asking pupils to translate English sentence examples, you can prompt target language sentences through the use of pictures and symbols to represent person of the verb, intensity of like/dislike and grammatical object.

### Teaching verb conjugation

If you wish to teach the paradigm of a particular verb, use colour to highlight the verb endings. You can animate the endings separately from the verb stem by using separate text boxes. This animation can help to focus pupils in on the endings and offer them opportunities to anticipate what each will be before it comes on screen. The addition of an animated Clip Art to a slide to represent the meaning of the verb can help you to avoid the use of English when introducing the new vocabulary. Within the same presentation, you can move quickly to applied use of the verbs, where Clip Art and speech bubbles can be effective for depicting people 'using' the verbs in context.

### Learning through teaching

A PowerPoint presentation is constructed of a series of slides which are planned in a certain order, not dissimilar from the way that we as teachers use building blocks of language. Pupils can take advantage of this feature for reinforcing their own understanding of a new grammar point. After introducing and manipulating a new language structure, set groups of pupils the task of creating a PowerPoint presentation to teach the lesson to a peer or younger class. This encourages pupils to discuss language and to articulate their understanding in their own words and pictures, which can be a very effective way of uncovering where there is weak understanding or misunderstanding.

### **Reinforcing word order**

Clever use of the animation facility in PowerPoint can support the teaching of word order, whereby pupils can see words move around within a sentence. Watching a word introduced to a sentence and another pushed to a new position as a result can help pupils to understand and remember the rule. Motion paths can be used in PowerPoint 2002/XP or later, but a trick with earlier versions is to animate a word to flash once automatically a second after the previous event. You then copy and paste the same word at various points along the 'route' it needs to take, with the last copy set to appear rather than flash.

### **Developing independent and creative work**

Presentation software offers opportunities for pupils to work creatively, both on a design and a linguistic front, possibly in a cross-curricular context. For example, you may ask them in pairs to create a presentation on their local area to send to a partner school abroad. They need to think about their audience, investigate and apply new language and plan how to organise the information into suitable chunks. Ensure that pupils write the text during lesson time when they have access to you and other resources, with design effects added for homework. Be clear from the start what assessment criteria you will apply.

### **Practising for oral exams**

If pupils are preparing for a speech or other oral performance, perhaps as exam practice, you could ask them to create a simple presentation with keywords from their speech as bullet points. This process revises speech content and can then provide support to pupils in developing their presentation skills. As they are prompted by keywords in large-sized font at eye-level rather than on a scrap of paper in their hand, pupils can concentrate more on their pronunciation and quality of delivery of the speech. Images may also be used, in place of or alongside words.

### **Supporting dialogue work**

Rather than listing parts of a dialogue as a block of text for simple reading aloud, you can present a conversation in a contextualised and visual way in PowerPoint. A background image can be used on a slide, such as an office, hotel desk or shop, and characters can be shown to speak by the use of text in speech bubbles (AutoShape Callouts). For practice purposes, text can then be given with gaps or be set to appear on mouse click to prompt pupil input.

### **Developing advanced listening skills**

Prepare older students for the rigours of target language lectures with the use of a presentation to support understanding. With a little planning, you can set images and keywords (with English translations where necessary) to appear on mouse click, enabling students to keep up with the flow of your input.

You may find actual examples of presentations created by teachers by searching the Teacher Resource Exchange at <http://tre.ngfl.gov.uk/>. To read about tried and tested ideas for using presentation software, try searching the Useful ICT ideas, effective language lessons database on the Languages ICT website.

Note: examples are based on Microsoft PowerPoint and Microsoft Clips Online, but many ideas will be relevant to other presentation software available in schools. Reference to specific software products does not imply endorsement by CILT, the National Centre for Languages nor ALL.