

**СВОБОДНО ДОСТЪПНИ ВИДЕО МАТЕРИАЛИ В ПРЕПОДАВАНЕТО
НА АНГЛИЙСКИ ЕЗИК НА ДЕЦА**

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**FREE ONLINE VIDEO MATERIALS IN TEACHING ENGLISH TO YOUNG
AND VERY YOUNG LEARNERS**

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Abstract: Teaching English to young and very young learners is a challenge: they remember fast, but they also forget fast, they have short attention span, they need action and emotion. Therefore materials for them have to be attractive and colourful. Video materials unite sound and picture, motion and emotion, they activate a few types of memory and of intelligence and contribute to their development, they also develop multiple literacies and the 21st century skills. The article suggests a number of selected materials that can be used in teaching English to young and very young learners that contribute to the holistic development of the child (memory, intelligence, literacies and skills). The criteria for selecting materials are presented and ideas for using them in the foreign language classroom. Online video materials can successfully be used both in the classroom and in distance or online teaching.

Keywords: teaching English as a foreign language, young learners, video materials, songs

Introduction

Teaching young learners is a real challenge: they have short attention span, they need action, emotion, fun. They learn through all their senses. Therefore, they need short attractive activities, vivid materials, rich context. Video materials unite sound and image, colour and motion, they provoke emotions and lay context for a variety of suitable activities. There is a wealth of free on-line video clips suitable for young and very young learners; they can be chosen according to the topic, grammar or vocabulary covered, length.

Characteristics of young learners

Children are experiential learners, they need movement and action, materials have to engage more than one senses, they are spontaneous, talkative, social, curious, imaginative, they enjoy imitating, they easily get distracted¹ [1, 2].

There are various age groupings, but we chose the one by a Bulgarian author [3]: preschool age: 3–7 (very young learners), and early school years: 7–11 (primary school children or young learners). These two age groups have certain characteristics in common, but they also differ in some respects.

Cognitive development:

3–7

Their games become more complex, more interactive, they can include more than one roles. Their thinking is egocentric, animistic, magical, it is visual, gradually becoming logical. At this age children's attention becomes more selective, more adaptive and planned; they can concentrate: by the end of the period if they are interested, they can keep their attention for about 25–30 minutes; the capacity of the memory grows, at this age they use the strategies repetition and organization; their ability to reproduce objects, words, rhymes, pictures improves. [3, 4].

7–11

The games this age group play are more complex than the ones of the previous group, children invent their own games, they can understand the roles of a few participants. They start playing games with rules which contribute to their emotional and social development. During the games children experience cooperation, competition, they win and lose. Logical thinking continues its development: the child can already think a few steps

ahead, abstract thinking is developed (the link cause and effect). Memory strategies repetition and organization are more effective, the speed of information processing is increased. A few memory strategies can be applied at the same time. Children can already classify, arrange in relation to quantity and size; attention becomes more flexible, selective and planned. [3, 4].

All the activities with very young learners and some of the activities with young learners are organized in the form of games: they have to be pleasant and funny, to impress the children [5].

Keeping all these developmental and cognitive peculiarities in mind we can point video materials as very suitable for work with preschool and primary school children: they are comparatively short, they visualise the words, they combine sound and image, motion and colour, thus influencing various types of memory (visual, auditory, kinesthetic)^{2 3} and of intelligence [6]. Most of them are very suitable for realizing cross-curricular links: with some of them children can perform certain actions illustrating the meaning or dance, others provide links to mathematics (counting), to nature, environmental and social issues, to the surrounding world, to arts and crafts. With suitable activities children acquire certain phrases, formulae or even the whole text. We can avail of this potential to develop multiple literacies and 21st century skills, to work towards the holistic development of the child.

Video materials in English language teaching (ELT)

The video materials we choose have to contain text: whole sentences and not separate words. We consent to Lewis' [7] opinion that whole expressions are remembered easier than separate words, that breaking things into smaller pieces does not make them simpler. Hill et al [8] consider that learners acquire language in a ready for spontaneous use form if it is retained as a part of a larger frame. Ilieva [5] states that stories, songs and other texts for children create natural conditions for remembering long expressions in a foreign language and the activities based on these texts aid activating these expressions for use and later on opening these formulae. Kaminski [9] finds out that when working with picture books children build the text meaning by the pictures, that they can recover the story a year after they had met this text for the first and only time. A single meeting with the book helps them construct a meaningful context in which frames they can develop lexical knowledge. We extend this to video clips because here we have the visual element and some more elements that aid memory and long-lasting retention: melody, rhythm and rhyme and children usually watch or listen to them much more than once.

Most often video materials we use are songs for children produced or adapted for English language teaching especially^{4 5 6 7 8} and others. Hillyard [10] claims that children love singing and if they like the song, they can repeat it endlessly; repetition is a key strategy in language learning. Children learn through all their senses; they learn copying sounds and gestures, experimenting and investigating, making mistakes. Acquisition takes place if children like the activities, if they have fun. For children music is a resource of motivation, interest and joy. Through music children imitate language easily and easily remember, they acquire the stress and intonation patterns [11].

Using video instead of songs makes language still more vivid, and the material more attractive. Moobin⁹ claims that „The visual element is stimulating to students. Short videos provide a nice alternative to reading or listening exercises which students are usually exposed to.“ Katchen¹⁰ states that „carefully chosen films can be a useful and extremely motivational teaching tool for both practicing listening skills and stimulating speaking and writing.“ Video can be used as a basis to a lot of activities developing a variety of literacies and 21st century skills together with language and the communicative skills. In another publication Katchen [12] explains that „Basically, video can be used for listening practice, for observation of nonverbal and cultural behaviour, as a springboard for speaking and writing activities, and, of course, for learning something from the content presented on the video.“ Video materials not only visualize the language taught, but they bear some cultural information, message by the artist (if it is like a cartoon) or if children perform the song learners see other children illustrating the actions from the song, they pay attention to the arrangement of the stage or classroom, the clothes which is fruitful material for various discussions and further linguistic development.

Katchen [13] draws our attention to the fact that when using video, we have to think about its theme, language, the activities we can use/adapt; she also suggests ideas for alternatives to traditional activities like performing a Mini-Play among the standard activities like comprehension questions, for example. Web [14] accentuates that different authors point to the fact that in order for a word to be learned we need to meet it between 6 and 20 times, and what is more important than meeting the word is context. Songs suppose multiple listening and repetition and the video to them gives context and makes them rich soil for further activities – the learners are engaged in memorable production as well.

Joe [15] mentions three factors that contribute to language acquisition: quality of input, quality of output and frequency of meeting the lexical units. Children's songs with video clips provide input which is well visualized, that touches children's emotions and can be frequently played, the activities created on the basis of them provide opportunities for contextualized output and multiple repetition. In relation to multiple intelligences Katch-

en¹¹ stresses that „the more times and ways we are presented with information, the more likely we will learn it“ this unites quantity – frequency of meeting the word and the quality – a variety of contexts and situations for memorable input and for useful and contextualised output. Video materials are not only attractive, dynamic, memorable but these days they are also easily accessible¹². Video does not change its attraction when we use it during online education, while reading a book to the learners is different online and at school: at school children can come and touch it, can turn the pages, and primary school students can read it. Video when in class, it is played and stays there, while during distance online learning when the teacher shares the video, children take the link and can replay it again and again.

Ilieva [16] views the ways multiple literacies are developed through songs and their video clips and Ilieva and Terzieva [17] view the development of the 21st century skills with young learners. The components of multiple literacies and the contemporary skills are developed alongside language and the other subjects. contribute to the holistic development of the child and this is the primary aim of children’s education.

Analysis of video materials and practical ideas for using them with young and very young learners

In table 1 we offer analysis of selected songs (they are part of a larger corpus): the literacies and 21st century skills they develop, the cross-curricular links we can realize through them. We use the following criteria when selecting the songs: topic (suitable for the primary school or kindergarten), vocabulary, structures (e.g. a/an + noun, modal verbs, imperative; positive, negative and interrogative sentences in different tenses; question and answer), language functions (greeting people, meeting people, asking for likes and dislikes, abilities, etc.), the potential for multiple literacies and 21st skills development, the attractiveness of the video clip and its potential for provoking discussions connected to the other subjects in the curriculum, to be short, to be easy for singing, to be funny for the group, and as mentioned above, to have text – full sentences and not separate words.

The wealth and variety of materials gives opportunities to arrange a succession of clips on a topic (teeth hygiene and going to the dentist: 21-25 in the notes, food: 17, animals 20, clothes: 14 and 16), to combine topic, vocabulary and grammar (e.g. I can run practises sports and activities, verbs like run, jump, swim and the modal verb can, illustrating positive and question structures: I can ... and Can you?; My donkey has a headache unites under the topic of aches vocabulary like aches and illnesses, clothes, food and drink, grammar 3rd person singular -s in present simple tense has and needs, and the structure more than, use of like as a preposition; it is fruitful for drama activities: conversations with the doctor, with mum or friends).

For the exemplar series of activities we use the clip with the most number of literacies and 21st century skills (Don’t put your trousers on your head: 17 + 22 = 39). The song is funny and children like it, through it they acquire complex grammatical items that are above their current language level.

Table 1. Songs, literacies, skills and cross-curricular links

Song	Literacies	21 st century skills	Cross-curricular links
I can run ¹³	language, discourse, visual, health, participatory, personal, dance, kinesthetic, technological, multimedia, learning, gaming, emotional //13	comparing and contrasting, defining, describing, explaining, entertaining, imagining, following conversation, listening actively, speaking, turn taking, using technology, collaborate with others, cooperation, compromise, communication //16	PE (physical education), music
Don’t put your trousers on your head ¹⁴	language, discourse, visual, community, personal, home, school, street, social, dance, kinesthetic, technological, multimedia, critical, evaluative, emotional, redesign //17	analyzing, comparing and contrasting, describing, evaluating, explaining, creating / designing, entertaining, imagining, improvising, following conversation, listening actively, speaking, using technology, collaborate with others, cooperation, compromise, communication, using emotional intelligence //22	PE (physical education), music, surrounding world
Amazing superheroes ¹⁵	language, discourse, visual, environmental, nature, personal, cultural, social, dance, kinesthetic, technological, multimedia, critical, evaluative, intercultural, emotional //16	analyzing, comparing and contrasting, describing, evaluating, explaining, creating, designing, entertaining, imagining, improvising, following conversation, listening actively, speaking, using technology, collaborate with others, cooperation, compromise, communication, using emotional intelligence //20	PE (physical education), music, surrounding world, literature, culture, music

Put on your boots ¹⁶	language, discourse, visual, personal, social, dance, kinesthetic, technological, multimedia, emotional //10	describing, explaining, imagining, following conversation, listening actively, speaking, using technology, collaborate with others, cooperation, compromise, communication, using emotional intelligence //12	PE (physical education), music, surrounding world
Are you hungry? ¹⁷	language, discourse, visual, nature, home, health, nutritional, dance, kinesthetic, technological, multimedia, critical, emotional //13	describing, entertaining, imagining, improvising, following conversation, listening actively, speaking, turn taking, using technology, collaborate with others, cooperation, compromise, communication, using emotional intelligence //14	PE (physical education), music, surrounding world
Five little ducks ¹⁸	language, discourse, visual, environmental, geographic, nature, community, social, dance, kinesthetic, mathematical, technological, multimedia, critical, evaluative, emotional //17	analyzing, describing, entertaining, imagining, improvising, following conversation, listening actively, speaking, using technology, collaborate with others, cooperation, compromise, communication, using emotional intelligence //14	PE (physical education), music, mathematics, surrounding world
My donkey has a headache ¹⁹	language, discourse, visual, health, social, dance, kinesthetic, technological, multimedia, critical, evaluative, emotional //12	describing, explaining, entertaining, imagining, improvising, following conversation, listening actively, speaking, using technology, collaborate with others, cooperation, compromise, communication, using emotional intelligence //22	PE (physical education), music, surrounding world
Animal sounds ²⁰	language, discourse, visual, community, personal, environmental, nature, dance, kinesthetic, technological, multimedia, critical, evaluative, emotional //14	analyzing, describing, evaluating, explaining, entertaining, imagining, improvising, following conversation, listening actively, speaking, using technology, collaborate with others, cooperation, compromise, communication, using emotional intelligence //16	PE (physical education), music, surrounding world
Tooth bugs go away ²¹	language, discourse, visual, health, personal, social, dance, kinesthetic, technological, multimedia, emotional //11	describing, explaining, entertaining, imagining, improvising, following conversation, listening actively, speaking, using technology, collaborate with others, cooperation, communication, using emotional intelligence //13	PE (physical education), music, surrounding world
Going to the dentist ²²	language, discourse, visual, health, personal, social, dance, kinesthetic, mathematical, technological, multimedia, learning, emotional //13	describing, explaining, entertaining, imagining, improvising, following conversation, listening actively, speaking, using technology, collaborate with others, cooperation, compromise, communication, using emotional intelligence //22	PE (physical education), music, mathematics, surrounding world
Wobbly tooth song ²³ Brush your teeth ²⁴	language, discourse, visual, health, personal, social, dance, kinesthetic, technological, multimedia, learning, emotional //12	describing, explaining, entertaining, imagining, improvising, following conversation, listening actively, speaking, turn taking, using technology, collaborate with others, cooperation, compromise, communication, using emotional intelligence //23	PE (physical education), music, surrounding world
This is the way ²⁵	language, discourse, visual, health, personal, school, social, dance, kinesthetic, technological, multimedia, learning, emotional //13	describing, explaining, entertaining, imagining, improvising, following conversation, listening actively, speaking, turn taking, using technology, collaborate with others, cooperation, compromise, communication, using emotional intelligence //23	PE (physical education), music, surrounding world

Ideas for activities based on Don't put your trousers on your head

Aims: to practise the parts of the body and clothes, to learn the new phrases (don't ..., put ..., you should...)

Objectives:

- vocabulary: clothes (trousers, skirt, hood, gloves, shoes), parts of the body (head, legs, face, feet, knees), fasteners, buttons, zip; verbs: put on, wear, fasten up, trip, fall, run
- grammar: imperative – positive and negative (don't), should
- skills: listening, speaking, reacting to pictures

Activities

1. Funny ideas. Don't put your ... on your ... (your socks on your hands, your shirt on your legs, your hat on your feet / on your fingers, etc.). And the usual way of wearing them Put (your socks on your feet; your hat on your head, etc).

The teacher can lead the activity using pictures.

2. Picture – instruction. The teacher shows a picture of socks, the learners say You should put your feet in those. Gloves – You should put your hands in those.

3. Picture dictation: The learners receive a set of clothes of various colours and a paper doll (e.g. blue hat, orange hat, green hat, etc.; same with trousers, shorts, skirts, shirts, jackets, scarfs, socks, shoes, sandals, etc.).

The teacher gives instructions:

- e.g. Put on the blue shirt. (or if we want a funny effect: Put the blue shirt on his/her head/feet.)
- Put the blue trousers on his legs. (funny: on his arms / on his head)

Methodological comment: The two activities practise phrases from the song and help the children to open the formula for further use: in activity 1 two slots are open for substitution and in activity 2 – one slot. The activities can be visualized by pictures. Some of the pictures provoke laughter and bring fun in the classroom: relaxed, stress-free atmosphere is very important for successful learning. Children are provoked to think and analyse the situation by the questions „Can we go to school this way?“, „Can we walk this way?“ thus fostering personal, home, school literacy and developing some of the 21st century skills (comparing, describing, explaining, imagining, etc.). These skills can be developed in the learners' native language and only certain words introduced in English. When the learners sing the song they can do certain actions to illustrate what they sing or dance, this way realizing cross-curricular links to PE and music. As far as it is about parts of the body, the way we dress, we can make discussions that realise links to surrounding world. The children can be provoked to make an illustration to the story or think of similar examples and draw them. The new pictures can be used to continue the song with children's ideas, thus realizing links to arts. The song has the potential to develop some more grammatical points (got to (have got to), if structure, going to and will, as ... as).

Conclusion

Video for young learners is a very attractive material, a suitable context for language learning activities. We have chosen a collection of video clips with songs suitable for young and very young learners. We enumerate the literacies and 21st century skills these songs can develop, and the cross-curricular links we can realise through them. We offer exemplar activities. These ideas can be applied to other materials (songs, stories, rhymes, other video materials). We stop our attention on video because it influences more senses, it unites sound, visualization and emotion and is equally effective in classroom and online learning.

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