

CALL Course Book



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About the CALL Coourse Book

The course book was originally compiled in the period 2002 to 2004 by the BP-BLTM project teams. The material was updated and extended by the POOLS project in the years 2005 to 2007.

The main content has been updated and more units were added in 2011 by team members from the POOLS-CX consortium. The project is a Transfer of Innovation project based on the first POOLS project. The content of the manual will be used during courses offered by the Centers of Excellence in Greece, Italy, Romania, and Turkey.

Introduction to Computer Assisted Language Learning

CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning) is often considered a language teaching method, but this is not really the case. In traditional CALL, the methodology was often claimed to be based on a behaviouristic approach as in “programmable teaching”, where the computer checked the student input and gave feedback (reward?) / moved on to an appropriate activity exercise. In modern CALL, the emphasis is on communication and tasks.

The role of the computer in CALL has moved from the “input – control – feedback” sequence to management of communication, text, audio, and video. Few people may realise that a DVD player is really a computer. Future domestic appliances will integrate and merge video, television, audio, telephone, graphics, text, and Internet into one unit as, in 2010, can be seen in newer generations of “mobile telephones / communicators”.

How do we use CALL for teaching the less widely used and taught languages, for example? The starting point should not be that students sit at computers to learn a language. The starting point should instead be that students are learning a language and as part of that process sometimes sit at computers¹.

When planning to use CALL, it is important to understand how a language is learned; language learning is a cognitive process, i.e. it is the result of the student’s own processing of language inputs. What is learned is mainly the result of this process and not just explanations, rules, and questions presented by a teacher or a computer. Based on her/his existing knowledge of the topic being worked on, the language and the language acquisition, the student processes the input and fits it into the language system s/he possesses. Language knowledge is not just recorded, but rather constructed by the student².

One of the worst fears when dealing with CALL and distance / online learning has always been the social aspect. It has been believed that the computer mediated community would imply some lack of social relations.

¹ Hvad venter vi på? - om it i fremmedsprogundervisningen p. 15

² Hvad venter vi på? - om it i fremmedsprogundervisningen p. 44

However, several presentations at EUROCALL conferences have revealed that distance learning classes using audio conferencing actually developed a strong sense of social community. (E.g. "The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Teacher: The Role of Social Presence in the Online Classroom." by Tammelin Maija from the Helsinki School of Economics, Helsinki, Finland and another presentation "Fostering (pro)active language learning through MOO" by Lesley Shield, Open University, Milton Keynes, United Kingdom).

CALL offers the language teacher and learner a number of activities that, when carefully planned as part of the pedagogical room, will help the learner learn a language.

eLearning courses for teachers

CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning) is a great possibility to make language classes livelier and more engaging but it requires the language teachers to become computer literates. At the 1993 CALICO Annual Symposium, which took place on the campus of the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, the Provost welcomed the participants with the words: "Computers shall never replace teachers, but teachers using computers shall replace those that don't"

Below you can find some of the many institutions that offer teachers help in becoming computer literate:

ECDL-F Ltd. (European Computer Driving Foundation) is the organization that develops and provides a range of different certification programmes for all those interested in computers.

One of the most basic and important certification programmes is the ECDL/ICDL. This course covers the main aspects of IT and concentrates on the development of core IT skills and on gaining the confidence to apply these skills in different software environments.

ECDL-F is the organization that is ready to meet everyone's needs. If you are a beginner, choose a course at the Foundation level (Equalskills or e-Citizen). If you want to improve your skills, look at the list of more sophisticated and/or specialized courses (ECDL Advanced, ECDL for Computer Aided Design (ECDL CAD), ECDL Certified Training Professionals (ECDL CTP)). If you have, or know someone who has, special needs, visit ECDL <http://www.ecdl.com/main/index.php> for information about ECDL for People with Disabilities (ECDL PD).

Another possibility recommended for acquiring or improving ICT skills, as well as for getting some useful guidance on using Information and Communication Technology in the language classroom, is to visit <http://www.languages-ict.org.uk> website. Here you will find information and advice on how to integrate desktop publishing, digital audio, digital still camera, digital video, email communication, multimedia, power point, excel and other aspects of IT in your language lessons.

www.ict4lt.org/en/index.htm provides 4 modules aimed at different needs of language teachers who are planning to use, or who already use ICT with their language learners.

The first module, which focusses on basic knowledge and skills, introduces users to the new technologies, their advantages for language learning and teaching, computer hardware and software which the language teacher has to be familiar with, text tools and how to use them, Internet and CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning).

Module 2 (intermediate level) provides information on CALL methodology (how to use multimedia, www resources online and offline) and gives an introduction to concordance programmes in modern foreign language classrooms.

For advanced language teachers there is Module 3, covering such aspects as CALL software design, creation of www sites, human language technology, and giving possibility to develop specific management skills needed for managing a multimedia language centre.

Module 4 – Computer Aided Assessment (CAA) – is both a challenge and a great possibility to make the teacher's life easier and more interesting.

If you are interested in in-service training possibilities for teachers and trainers in European languages as a second/foreign language, www.solki.iyu.fi/tallent is right for you. The module, which has been developed by experts from eleven European universities, supplies basic knowledge and guidance on ICT and language learning as well as advice on how to integrate ICT into the language teaching process.

<http://www.well.ac.uk> is known as a great place for those language teachers who are keen to learn more about the World Wide Web and to implement its advantages into the language learning and teaching process.

It is also recommended that you visit the LANCELOT project website: <http://www.lance-lotschool.com> LANCELOT School GmbH– LANGUAGE learning by CERTified Live Online Teachers - a virtual training centre for language teachers and part of the EU-funded project which bears its name.

Types of call related materials/activities

Adventure games

Adventure games are computer managed role plays where users are presented with situations that they have to deal with. Users choose what to do and input the result as text, speech (speech recognition software), or by clicking on options. Based on the input, the program branches out to resulting situations / gives feed-back.

Adventure games can be very entertaining when constructed for language learners, but unfortunately only very few have been designed for the less taught languages. An entertaining Portuguese example, Uma Aventura na União Europeia, by Mrs Teresa Pacheco, a teacher in the ESES - Escola Superior de Educação de Santarém can be found here: <http://nonio.eses.pt/asp/europa/index.htm>

If you want to create your own adventure games we suggest you try the Quandary software which is shareware: <http://www.halfbakedsoftware.com/>

Blogs (weB LOGS)

The term blog is derived from weblog and refers to a website that is regularly updated with new posts arranged in reverse chronological order so that the newest post is always at the top of the blog. People who make use of blogs are called bloggers, and writing for blogs is referred to as blogging.

Blogs have a number of typical features that make online publishing extremely effective and versatile.

Blogs are hosted by weblog providers such as www.wordpress.com, www.blogger.com, www.blog.de, <http://int.blog.com> etc. for free. You create a blog in just a few steps by following the provider's instructions and you decide whether there will be single or multiple authoring.

Each blog can contain various categories which can be opened by a simple mouse click.

Each post has a title and a time stamp so that the reader gets an idea of what it is about and when exactly it was posted. It is also automatically archived. Retrieval is possible through the search feature or by browsing the calendar, which is another common feature of blogs.

Publishing is easy as blogs provide templates which do not require any technical skills from the blogger. By clicking on the word 'comment' below the post, the reader can type their opinion on a post into another template.

Blogs are not only about text files, they may contain virtually all kinds of data such as hyperlinks, graphics, presentations, spreadsheets and – which makes them especially interesting for language teachers – audio and video files.

If the RSS feature is available, readers can subscribe to a blog, and will therefore be automatically notified whenever a change has been made.

If the blog disposes of a Permalink feature, then the permanent URL leading to a specific entry, which is no longer on the front page but in the archive, can be saved as a favourite.

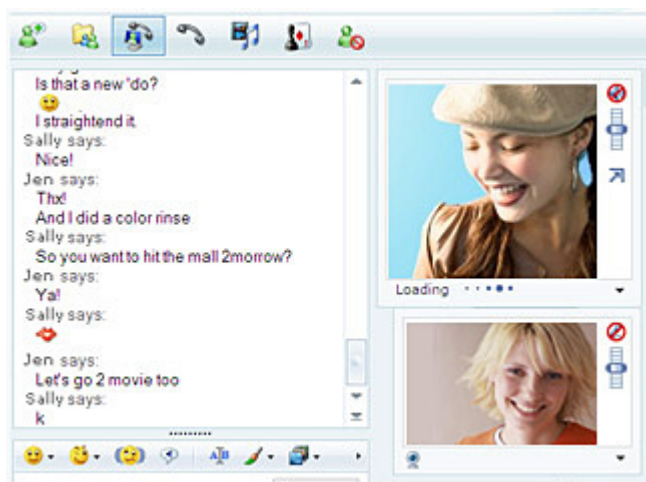
All these features illustrate the usefulness of blogs in a language teaching environment as a medium that develops reading, writing and communication skills.

As a language teacher you might want to start a class blog which enables you to

- provide online reading texts for your students
- provide additional materials like audio or video clips, images, charts etc
- organise Internet resources for the class by providing useful links
- give instructions, assign tasks
- make the students practice writing (for an audience)
- give teacher feedback
- stimulate student discussion
- encourage peer evaluation and peer support
- carry out project work and make students document their progress
- experiment to find still more uses of blogs...

Chat online

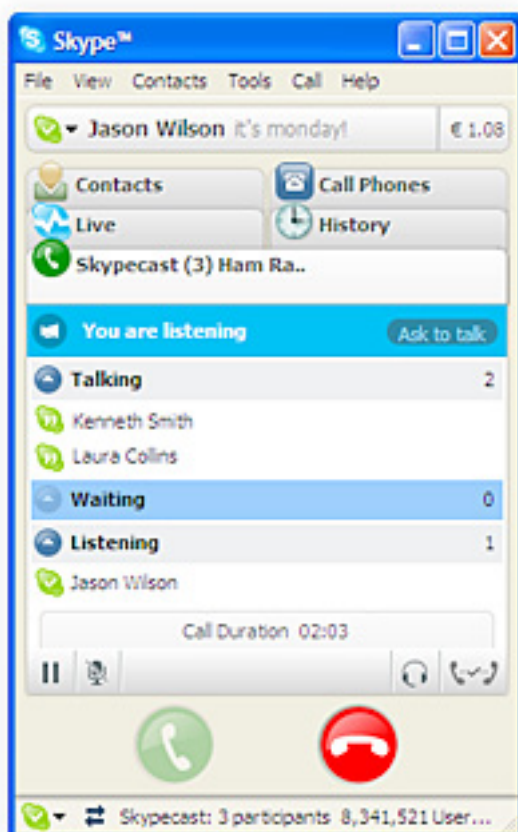
Chat centres can be a rewarding experience for the language learner. The user meets other learners online and can communicate with them through text, speech, and video. It is easy to set up a chat server, but difficult to gain users: it is a very lonely feeling to be the only visitor in a chat room;-) The main problems with chats are the lack of content and the difficulties encountered in organising and arranging chats using the less taught languages. However, when combined with tasks and suitable groups of students (age groups, interests etc.), chats can lead to real communication and, when followed by post task work, language learning.



One of the most used chat programs is Microsoft Messenger. To download and read more information, go to <http://get.live.com/messenger/overview>. Microsoft Messenger includes many useful features like:

- PC-to-PC Calling
- Video conversations
- Sharing Folders
- Address book

Another platform for online chats is Skype www.skype.com, where a feature named Skypecasts allows the user to participate in online community chats with up to 100 participants. Skype has a directory where it is possible to locate language learning chats or to host one yourself.



Friends Abroad from Babbel.com is a service that assists language learners in finding other learners to chat with: <http://www.babbel.com/go/friendsabroad> with more than 700.000 registered users from 200 countries

Cloze exercises

Cloze exercises are similar to the fill-in the blank exercise but in a cloze exercise the words to remove are selected automatically (i.e. every 5th word). This is an activity that can easily and in a few minutes be created with the "Hot Potatoes"³ software.

³ A software which is free when used for online exercises:
www.halfbaked.com [tp://hotpot.uvic.ca/](http://hotpot.uvic.ca/) <http://hotpot.uvic.ca/>

Commenting/correcting electronic texts/essays/exercises

When a student has handed in a text in an electronic form, it is bad practice just to print it out and to comment on it with the old fashioned red ink. It works much better when the teacher inserts suggestions into the text using the word processor or special programs. An example of a program for commenting texts can be found at: <http://www.cict.co.uk/software/markin/index.htm>. The program can be adapted to different languages.

Crosswords

Crosswords are often very popular with students and, when created from the vocabulary that the students have just been working, they can be a good tool for post task exercises. This is an activity that can easily and in a few minutes be created with the software “Hot Potatoes”⁴. And with Hot Potatoes students may even create exercises for one another.

Drills

Drills are often referred to as “Drill and Kill” exercises. A computer can do anything that the old fashioned language laboratories could do; Model: “He has one car”, Response “No, he has two cars”. “He has one computer”, “No, he has two computers” ... The user input can be either text or speech through the computer microphone.

Electronic dictionaries

Electronic dictionaries are very useful for the learners of the less taught languages. There are several examples of dictionaries that are either free or shareware on the Internet. Try the address <http://www.dictionaries.com> or perhaps search the web for online dictionaries with Google (this is preferable because new services appear frequently).

Electronic Portfolios

An electronic portfolio, also known as an e-portfolio, e-folio, or digital portfolio can be a simple collection of work on a diskette or, in the more advanced version, a student website where the student presents selected pieces of work. Some of the work may still be in progress thus demonstrating the learning process.

In education, portfolio refers to a personal collection of information describing and documenting a person’s achievements and learning. There is a variety of portfolios ranging from learning logs to extended collections of achievement evidence. Portfolios are used for many different purposes, such as accreditation of prior experience, job search, continuing professional development, certification of proficiency.

The pedagogical idea is that the student becomes aware of her/his learning styles, helping her/him to choose the right activities, thus increasing learning. Portfolios can also be used for assessing students. Read an article by TIM Caudery on portfolio assessment here:

⁴ A software which is free when used for online exercises: <http://hotpot.uvic.ca/>

<http://inet.dpb.dpu.dk/infodok/sprogforum/Espr11/caudery.html>

Blogs (see the blogs heading) may also serve as portfolios.

There is even free software that can serve as basis for electronic portfolios, e.g. the OSP

<http://www.osportfolio.org/>

and Confolio: <http://www.confolio.org/wiki/Introduction/Main>

A collection of portfolio templates can be downloaded from:

<http://www.coe.iup.edu/pttut/Portfolios.html>

The Moodle Course Management System <http://moodle.org/> can also be used for portfolios.

Fill-in the blank

The user works with a text where some of the words have been removed on the basis of a certain criterion (new vocabulary, verb forms, prepositions etc.), and the user has to find suitable words to solve the exercise. This is an activity that can easily and in a few minutes be created with the "Hot Potatoes"⁵ software.

Find the answers

The student is given a question and looks for the answer in documents, video, or audio using the Internet, CD-ROM, DVD or similar storage systems. The answers can then be presented to the teacher / class in different forms. When the "find the answer" exercise becomes more elaborate, it actually becomes a webquest (read more in the WebQuest entry).

Find the right sequence (or jumbled sentences)

In this activity a sentence or a story is cut into pieces that the user has to reorder in order to reconstruct the sentence or the story. This is an activity that can easily be created with the "Hot Potatoes" software.

Grammar

There are only a few grammar programs for the less taught languages and often they simply transfer book style exercises to a computer, with similar lack of success. However, there is at present one grammar website that can be recommended: the VISL site <http://visl.sdu.dk/> VISL stands for "Visual Interactive Syntax Learning" and is a research and development project at the Institute of Language and Communication (ISK), University of Southern Denmark (SDU) - Odense Campus. Staff and students at ISK have been designing and implementing Internet-based grammar tools for education and research since September 1996.

⁵ A software which is free when used for online exercises: www.halfbaked.com

At the start of the project, four languages were involved: English, French, German, and Portuguese. Many additional languages have since joined the project - as seen by the growing number of entries on the language list.

The following "tools" are available on the VISL:

Grammatical Analyses (pre-analyzed sentences and automatic machine parsing)
Games & Quizzes (testing of word classes and other grammatical topics)
Corpus Search (access to the BNC and other language corpora)
Machine Translation

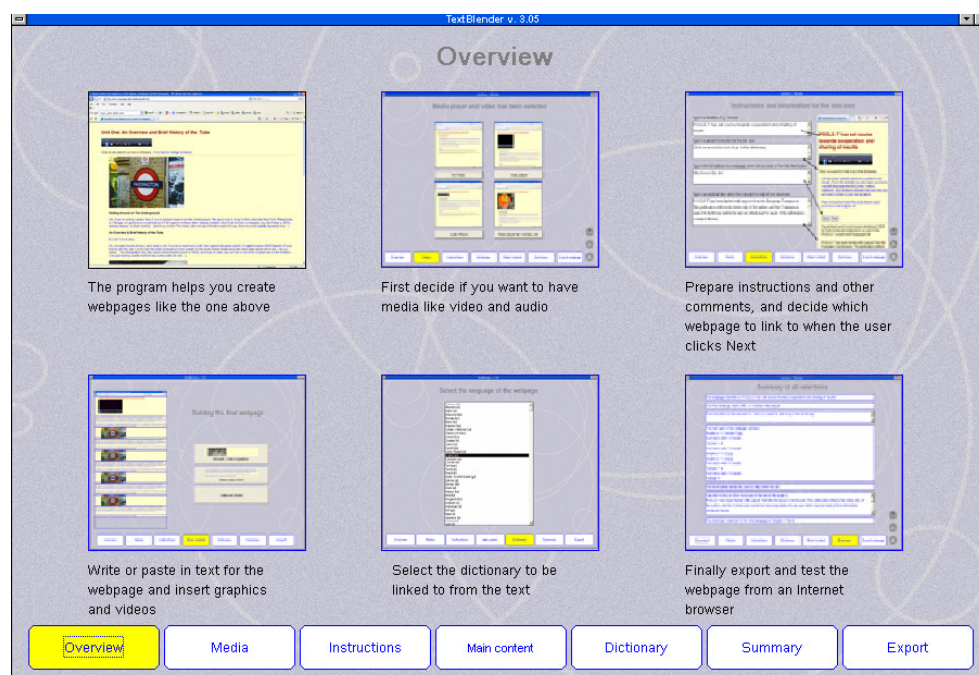
If you access one of the VISL languages through the entry page, you will be asked the question "Which VISL tool do you want to use?". You will find various options available for each language.

Hotwords

This is not really an exercise or activity, but is still very useful for the language learner. In a text, important words and cultural notes can be linked to appropriate explanations and translations. Hotwords can be made with most word processors.

One type of hotwords are webpages where all the words are linked to online dictionaries. To create such webpages you can use TextBlender, which is a program that can convert any text into an HTML document where all the words are automatically linked to an online dictionary, so students just have to click on a word to get help. TextBlender can also include videos and graphics.

All that is needed to convert a text is to type in a headline, then give a short instruction for the end user, and finally paste in the text in the text window, followed by clicking "Export". The program is available from <http://www.languages.dk/tools>



Listening exercises

In this activity the computer replaces a tape recorder. Other activities like multiple choice exercises are often also used in combination, to check if students have understood the content.

Matching words, sentences, or pictures

This activity can be very useful for several purposes even, for vocabulary training, where a student drags words to corresponding pictures. This activity can be created easily and in a few minutes using the "Hot Potatoes" software ⁶.

Multiple Choice

This type of exercise is very useful for a quick check of a student's understanding of the content of information given through audio, text, video etc. This activity can be created easily using the "Hot Potatoes" software.

Podcasts

Podcasting is a method of distributing multimedia files over the internet using "RSS" or "Atom syndication" formats. This allows a user to playback these files on any personal computer or mobile device, such as an Apple iPod (<http://www.apple.com>). If you make a podcast, you are the podcaster. There are other ways of distributing multimedia on the internet, but there podcasting has special features, including the use of syndication, which means that people can subscribe to a site that produces podcasts, and they will be informed automatically when a new podcast is available.

Another useful feature of podcasts is that they use open standards, like MPEG3, which means that there are many types of devices that can play them. There is both free and commercial software available to create podcasts and to play them, so you have a choice of how to make the technology work in your teaching environment.

The model for pushing multimedia has moved from only audio to include video as well, which is called Vodcasting. This is slightly more complex to create than a podcast, but still quite easy.

Many people use podcasts and vodcasts in their teaching environments. Because of the multimedia aspect, there is an obvious CALL application. And with the use of simple mp3 players that also allow you to record, like the iPod with a Griffin iTalk microphone, your students can easily record their speech and turn in digital audio for assessment or for group work with other students.

The BBC does two "podcasts" specifically for Gaelic learners on:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/scotland/alba/foghlam/learngaelic/an_litir_bheag/index.shtml
and

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/scotland/alba/foghlam/learngaelic/litir/index.shtml>. There are MP3 downloads of radio programs plus pdf transcripts of the show with notes and comments.

You can find some links to podcasts and articles on podcasts by going to the POOLS website www.languages.dk or the pools BLOG: <http://www.weblogs.uhi.ac.uk/pools/?p=59>

See also <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Podcasting>

⁶ A software which is free when used for online exercises: <http://hotpot.uvic.ca/>

that the participants can come from different countries. The disadvantage in advanced simulations is the high level of computer skills that is often involved.

Strike is an example of a simulation suitable for intermediate or advanced students. In the Strike simulation, students have individual "roles". The simulation takes place at ADAMENT (a factory) where a clash of opinions causes a strike.

The scenario: one of the electricians, who is always late for work, is sacked after an argument with the foreman. The shop steward calls a meeting during which the employees decide to strike. They claim that the factory is a nineteenth century sweatshop with a very bad working environment.

They also claim the electrician has been victimised by the foreman due to the many conflicts in the factory. None of the parties seems willing to budge an inch, but ADAMENT is being pressurized by one of the customers who urgently needs a specific product. The customer threatens to take the order elsewhere ...

The students are divided into two main groups according to their roles. Group one - Employer, managers, foreman etc. Group B - the shop steward, the electrician, different workers. Each group can meet online to prepare for meetings between the two groups. The teacher's / organizer's role is to ensure that the simulation stays "alive", i.e. if needed s/he can send the managers an e-mail from their customer, or send the employees an e-mail from the trade union stating that the strike is illegal and must come to an end. The simulation ends when the two parties come to an agreement.

Town Planning: another online simulation is called Town Planning. In this simulation the class is divided into two groups. The students in group A are town planners who have the task of preparing a proposal for the construction of a new neighbourhood at the Odense Fjord. Group B are ecologists who prefer the area to be preserved as a natural reserve, but they have to accept that there is a need for a new neighbourhood. Each group has its own online sessions with the teacher, where they start preparing their proposals for the other group. When ready, they invite the other group to an online conference, (there will probably be a number of conferences) during which the students negotiate and make suggestions using both online audio and an electronic whiteboard system.

Social Networking websites

A social network focuses on building and developing social relations among people, e.g., who share interests and/or activities. A social network service essentially consists of a representation of each user (often a profile), her/his social links, and a variety of additional services. Most social network services are web based and provide means for users to interact over the internet, such as e-mail and instant messaging. Although online community services are sometimes considered as social network services in a broader sense, social network service usually means an individual-centred service whereas online community services are group-centred. Social networking sites allow users to share ideas, activities, events, and interests within their individual networks.

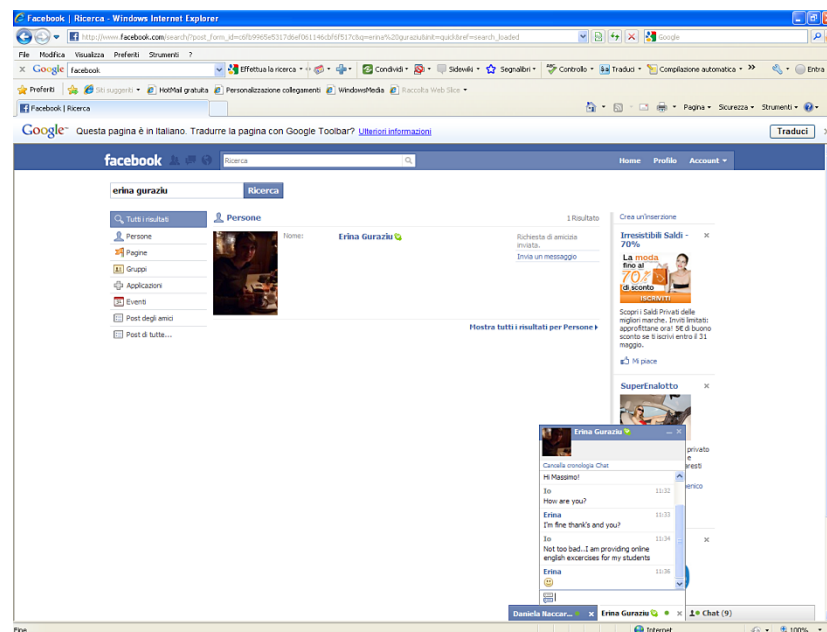
The main types of social networking services are those which contain category places (such as a former school-year or classmates), means to connect with friends (usually with self-description pages) and a recommendation system linked by trust. Popular methods now combine many of these, with Facebook, Bebo, Twitter and LinkedIn widely used worldwide.

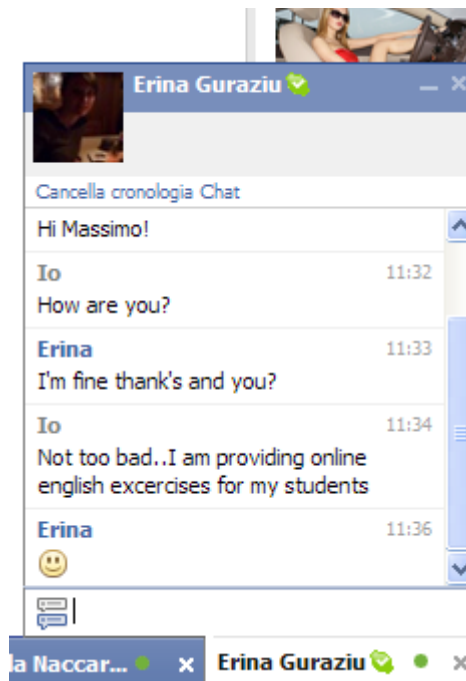
Some of the largest social networks were founded on the notion of digitizing real world connections, many other networks focus on categories, ranging from books and music to non-profit business to motherhood, as ways to provide both services and community to individuals with shared interests.

Facebook



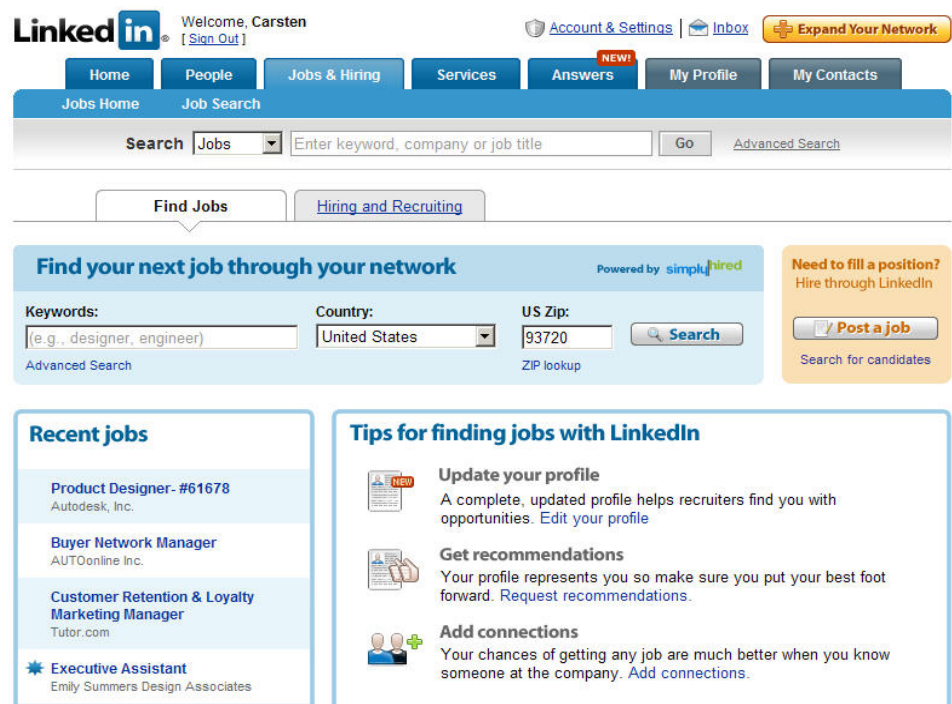
Facebook www.facebook.com is the most widely used social network by worldwide monthly active users. Since September 2006, anyone over the age of 13 with a valid e-mail address has been able to become a Facebook user. Users can add friends and send them messages, and update their personal profiles to notify friends about themselves. Additionally, users can join networks organized by workplace, school, or college. The website's name stems from the colloquial name of books given to students at the start of the academic year by university administrations in the US, with the intention of helping students to get to know each other better.





LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a business-oriented social networking site www.linkedin.com mainly used for professional networking. As of 8 April 2010, LinkedIn had more than 65 million registered users, spanning more than 200 countries and territories worldwide. The site is available in English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish.



Twitter www.twitter.com is a social networking and micro-blogging service that enables users to send and read messages known as *tweets*. Tweets are text-based posts of up to 140 characters displayed on the author's profile page and delivered to the author's subscribers, who are known as *followers*. Senders can restrict delivery to those in their circle of friends or, by default, allow open access. Since late 2009, users can follow lists of authors instead of following individual authors. All users can send and receive tweets via the Twitter website, Short Message Service (SMS), or external applications (notably including those developed for smartphones). While the service itself costs nothing to use, accessing it through SMS may incur phone service provider fees. The website currently has more than 100 million users worldwide.



Subtitles

Subtitles is a very useful tool for more purposes than most people think, e.g. for assisting deaf students working with a video. Subtitles also serve as an extra aid for language learning students who can both listen to a commentary and simultaneously read the words.

It is not at all complicated to make subtitles for a video and some tools are even free. An example is the Divxland Media Subtitler <http://www.divxland.org/>, which allows the user to prepare subtitles for videos. The subtitles can then be played back with the assistance of a "filter" (small program that makes your usual media player attach / play the subtitles). An example of such a filter, "VobSub", can be downloaded from:

<http://www.softpedia.com/get/Multimedia/Video/Codec-Packs-Video-Codecs/>

It is also possible to add subtitles on a permanent basis to video files like .avi files. Please see a tutorial here: <http://www.divxland.org/permanentsubtitling.php>

Students usually love preparing subtitles for small videos or excerpts from videos, and find the task very rewarding :-)

Tandem

The best way of learning a foreign language is communication with a native speaker who wants to learn your language. It is a give and take solution, where you are the teacher (of your own language) AND the student (of a foreign language).

Read more about Tandem Learning and watch videos with examples here:

<http://www.languages.dk/methods/tandem.html>

To look for other tandem partners, you can visit the European Tandem Network at this address: <http://www2.tcd.ie/CLCS/tandem/> or here:

<http://www.slf.ruhr-uni-bochum.de/>.

The website: <http://www.babbel.com/go/friendsabroad> is also a good place to start

Help and tips on how to learn as a tandem partner can be found here:

<http://www2.tcd.ie/CLCS/tandem/email/help/helpeng01.html>

E-mail tandems differ from face to face tandems (or online audio tandems like Netmeeting) because an e-mail tandem has to concentrate on written communication skills. Read about e-mail tandems at this address:

<http://inet.dpb.dpu.dk/infodok/sprogforum/Espr13/pors.html>

Task based learning

Task based learning can easily benefit from online resources. Read a quick introduction to task based learning in Michael Svendsen Pedersen's article "What does you have in your "Task" today?" <http://inet.dpb.dpu.dk/infodok/sprogforum/Espr4/msp.html>

Another interesting article (in English) from Sprogforum on task-based learning, and which is the result of an in-service course for language teachers who teach adult immigrants and refugees to Denmark at the country's language centres, can be found here: <http://inet.dpb.dpu.dk/infodok/sprogforum/Espr20/msp.html>

Vodcast

Video podcast (sometimes shortened to vidcast or vodcast) is a term used for the online delivery of on demand video clip content via Atom or RSS enclosures. The term is an specialized evolution for video, coming from the generally audio-based podcast and referring to the distribution of video where the RSS feed is used as a non-linear TV channel to which consumers can subscribe using a PC, TV, set-top box, media centre or mobile multimedia device.

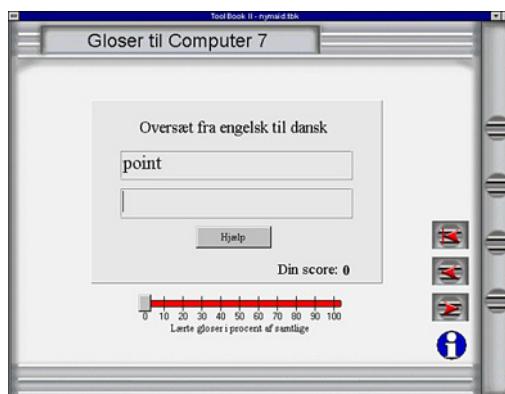
From a web server, a video podcast can be distributed as a file or as a stream. Both methods have their advantages and disadvantages. Downloading complete video podcasts in advance gives the user the ability to play the video podcasts offline on, for example, on a portable media player. Streaming allows seeking (skipping portions of the file) without downloading the full video podcast, better statistics and lower bandwidth costs for the servers; however, users may encounter pauses in playback caused by slow transfer speeds.

A podcasting client may work with a separate or integrated player. One such example of the latter is iTunes, which is an unusual case of a web feed aggregator being added to a media player rather than vice versa.

Source Wikipedia: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vodcast>

Vocabulary training

This is one of the oldest exercise types for computers. The computer asks a word and the student has to answer with a correct response. The student input can be through text or speech. This exercise type can be very fruitful, but only when the words learned are placed in a context. It can be very useful if the student can choose words s/he wants to learn and build up her/his own exercises. In this way the student creates a personal vocabulary portfolio.



Voicemail

Voicemail (or voice mail, vmail or VMS, sometimes called messagebank) is a centralized system of managing telephone messages for a large group of people. In its simplest form it mimics the functions of an answering machine, uses a standard telephone handset for the user interface, and uses a centralized, computerized system rather than equipment at the individual telephone. Voicemail systems are much more sophisticated than answering machines in that they can:

- answer many phones at the same time
- store incoming voice messages in personalized mailboxes associated with the user's phone number -enable users to forward received messages to another voice mailbox
- send messages to one or more other user voice mailboxes
- add a voice introduction to a forwarded message
- store voice messages for future delivery
- make calls to a telephone or paging service to notify the user a message has arrived in his/her mailbox
- transfer callers to another phone number for personal assistance
- play different message greetings to different callers.

Voicemail messages are stored on hard disk drives, media generally used by computers to store other forms of data. Messages are recorded in digitized natural human voice similar to how music is stored on a CD. To retrieve messages, a user calls the system from any phone, logs on using Touch-tones (clearing security), and his/her messages can be retrieved immediately. Many users can retrieve or store messages at the same time on the same voicemail system. Many voicemail systems also offer an automated attendant facility. Automated attendants enable callers to a "main" business number to access directory service or self-route the call to various places such as a specific department, an extension number, or to an informational recording in a voice mailbox, etc.

By the turn of the century (2000), voicemail had become a ubiquitous feature on phone systems serving companies, cellular and residential subscribers. Cellular and residential voicemail continue today in their previous form, primarily simple telephone answering. Email became the prevalent messaging system, email servers and software became quite reliable, and virtually all office workers were equipped with multimedia desktop PCs.

Instant messaging in voice: The next development in messaging was in making text messaging real-time, rather than just asynchronous store-and-forward delivery into a mailbox. It started with Internet service provider America Online (AOL) as a public Internet-based free text "chat" service for consumers, but soon was being used by business people as well. It introduced the concept of Internet-Protocol "presence management" or being able to detect device connectivity to the Internet and contact recipient "availability" status to exchange real-time messages, as well as personalized "Buddy list" directories to allow only people you knew to find out your status and initiate a real-time text messaging exchange with you. Presence and Instant Messaging (Instant Messaging) has since evolved into more than short text messages, but now can include the exchange of data files (documents, pictures) and the escalation of the contact into a voice conversational connection. Excerpts from Wikipedia

Webcams

A web camera (or webcam, real camera) is a real-time camera (usually, though not always, a video camera) whose images can be accessed using the World Wide Web, instant messaging, or a PC video calling application.

Web-accessible cameras typically involve a digital camera which uploads images to a web server, either continuously or at regular intervals. This may be achieved by a camera attached to a PC, or by dedicated hardware. Videoconferencing cameras typically take the form of a small camera connected directly to a PC. Analog cameras are also sometimes used (often of the sort used for closed-circuit television), connected to a video capture card and then directly or indirectly to the internet.



Excerpts from Wikipedia:

"Webcams are frequently used during online chats using Microsoft Messenger, Skype or similar online services."

Web pages with embedded audio

Using Ipadio to create webpages with embedded audio. Many language teachers and learners appreciate teaching materials that incorporate both written and spoken language. However, the creation of sound files has always seemed more complex than the creation of text files. In recent times a number of attempts have been made to harness digital telephone technology for the purpose. One example is provided by www.ipadio.com.

With Ipadio, you can use a landline or mobile phone to record an audio message, just as you might leave a voicemail on an answer phone. This message is then instantaneously rendered as a soundfile on the Internet with its own unique URL. A further feature with messages in English is an automatic transcription, which gives you a written version of the message as well (with a warning attached that there are likely to be some imperfections in the transcription).

In order to use this service, a user needs to create an account with Ipadio. There is no cost for individual consumers, though Ipadio also offers a business service. Details are available on the website. When you create an account you need to give Ipadio some details, including two telephone numbers you will want to use. In return, you get a PIN number to use whenever you call to make a recording. The whole procedure is very simple, and includes a “delete” option if you are not satisfied with your recording. Here are some examples, created by Gordon Wells. Gordon’s collected recordings (his “phlog”) are available on the Ipadio site itself:

<http://www.ipadio.com/phlogs.asp?section=2&phlog=17959&itemtype=phlog>

If you click on “more” in any of the phonecasts listed, you get additional information, including an English transcription in some cases. There is also space for comments. Foreexample:

<http://www.ipadio.com/phlogs/GordonWells/2010/02/19/Gordons-phlog-Talking-to-Archie-Campbell>

It should be noted that the transcription in the above phonecast has been tidied up, using the edit function. Here is an example of an unedited machine transcription:

<http://www.ipadio.com/phlogs/GordonWells/2010/02/09/Gordons-phlog-3rd-phonecast>

In a language teaching context, care is obviously required with this facility – but even correcting the mistakes could be a learning experience! Sound quality is also an important issue, and largely depends on the quality of the telephone connection. However, it should be noted that, in addition to the phonecast function, there is a “traditional” MP3 upload option as well. So, if you already have pre-recorded soundfiles on your computer, you can still use these with Ipadio. Lastly, there is also a valuable cross-posting function which enables you to upload or embed your phonecasts to other Social Media such as Facebook, Twitter, or any blogs you may run. This is particularly useful for language teachers, as it enables you to create your own multimedia web-based materials in a format of your own choosing. For example, Gordon has started incorporating both audio (Ipadio) and video (YouTube) in the Island Voices project blog <http://guthan.wordpress.com>. This is a Wordpress platform, and has been created to record project progress, disseminate news, and encourage interaction with learners and teachers. (Creating a Wordpress account is a painless process, as with Ipadio.) In two recent posts, Gordon has highlighted and previewed one of the topics for the new series of Island Voices videos. In the first he interviews a participant in Gaelic and English, using his telephone. This blog post about the interviews includes embedded links to both phonecasts:

<http://guthan.wordpress.com/2010/02/19/local-language-teacher/>

The following month he created another blog post, this time embedding the video.

<http://guthan.wordpress.com/2010/03/24/buain-na-monadh-peatcutting/>

Any or all of these webpages can, of course, also be linked to Wordlink and Multidict to allow instant online dictionary access. Potential language learning uses are immediately evident.

To sum up, Ipadio offers a valuable additional audio functionality in any language teacher’s repertoire of material creation tools. When it is teamed up with other web based programs and platforms, such as Wordpress, YouTube, and/or Wordlink/Multidict, the potential is there for some very powerful multimedia work to be created.

WebQuests

A WebQuest is an activity where the student answers questions/compiles information mostly found on the web. WebQuests are designed to focus on using and analysing information rather than looking for it. This means the teacher/constructor provides the student with the required links.

The best place on the web to learn about WebQuests is:

<http://webquest.sdsu.edu/webquest.html>

The WebQuest model was developed in early 1995 at San Diego State University by Bernie Dodge and Tom March, and was then outlined in Some Thoughts About WebQuests.

The main problems with using the WebQuest method for the less taught languages are the language level of the websites (usually very high) and that for some languages there is still (2003) very little content available on the web.

To create webquests you may use InstantWebquest, which is a web based software for creating WebQuests in a short time: <http://instantprojects.org/webquest/main.php>

More information: <http://webquest.org/> and <http://bestwebquests.com/>, which gives an excellent introduction to WebQuests and which contains a large archive of ready to use materials,

How to transfer analogue materials to digital materials

Copyrights

This unit is not intended to cover all aspects of copyrights, but rather to give some general guidelines.

First of all, copying for private use of materials that you own (legally bought materials) is now generally legal. There may, however, be problems with educational materials, but it seems fair use to make a backup copy to store away in order to protect the investment.

The idea behind copyright is to ensure that the producer gets her/his pay / reward for the work done. Copyrights expire after some years, but the expiration period changes constantly. For example, in 1998 The Sonny Bono Copyright Term Extension Act extended the term from the end of the author's life plus 50 to life plus 70 years. The works made for hire term was extended from 75 to 95 years.

Copyright issues are still being investigated. Lawrence Lessig is one of the pioneers to challenge the courts, who may find it acceptable that e.g. Disney earns money from producing Snow White, but find it unreasonable that, without paying anything, due to the Sonny Bono Act in 1998, Disney is protected for decades for the creation based on the story written by the Brothers Grimm.

A general trap is to use background music in videos. Only music which has been bought with a license to be used as background music in videos and film may be used for this purpose. So unless you yourself have composed the music, avoid using music in videos. However, it is legal to make video recordings where music is part of the natural background and has not been inserted as part of the editing process (e.g. in a disco), but take care!

Excerpts from Wikipedia about copyrights

Copyright is a set of exclusive rights regulating the use of a particular expression of an idea or information. At its most general, it is literally "the right to copy" an original creation. In most cases, these rights are of limited duration. The symbol for copyright is ©, and in some jurisdictions may alternatively be written as either (c) or (C).

Copyright law covers only the particular form or manner in which ideas or information have been manifested, the "form of material expression". It is not designed or intended to cover the actual idea, concepts, facts, styles, or techniques which may be embodied in or represented by the copyright work. In some jurisdictions, copyright law provides scope for satirical or interpretive works which themselves may be copyrighted. For example, the copyright which subsists in relation to a Mickey Mouse cartoon prohibits unauthorized parties from distributing copies of the cartoon or creating derivative works which copy or mimic Disney's particular anthropomorphic mouse, but does not prohibit the creation of artistic works about anthropomorphic mice in general, so long as they are sufficiently different to not be imitative of the original. Other laws may impose legal restrictions on reproduction or use where copyright does not - such as trademarks and patents.

Copyright laws are standardized through international conventions such as the Berne Convention in some countries and are required by international organizations such as European Union or World Trade Organization from their member states.

Obtaining and enforcing copyright

Typically, a work must meet minimal standards of originality in order to qualify for copyright, and the copyright expires after a set period of time (some jurisdictions may allow this to be extended). Different countries impose different tests, although generally the requirements are low; in the United Kingdom there has to be some 'skill, originality and work' which has gone into it. However, even fairly trivial amounts of these qualities are sufficient for determining whether a particular act of copying constitutes an infringement of the author's original expression. In Australia, it has been held that a single word is insufficient to comprise a copyright work.

In the United States, copyright has been made automatic (in the style of the Berne Convention) since March 1, 1989, which has had the effect of making it appear to be more like a property right. Thus, as with property, a copyright need not be granted or obtained through official registration with any government office. Once an idea has been reduced to tangible form, for example by securing it in a fixed medium (such as a drawing, sheet music, photograph, a videotape or a letter), the copyright holder is entitled to enforce his or her exclusive rights. However, while a copyright need not be officially registered for the copyright owner to begin exercising his exclusive rights, registration of works (where the laws of that jurisdiction provide for registration) does have benefits; it serves as *prima facie* evidence of a valid copyright and enables the copyright holder to seek statutory damages and attorney's fees (whereas in the USA, for instance, registering after an infringement only enables one to receive actual damages and lost profits). The original holder of the copyright may be the employer of the actual author rather than the author himself if the work is a "work for hire". Again, this principle is widespread; in English law the Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988 provides that where a work in which copyright subsists is made by an employee in the course of that employment, the copyright is automatically assigned to the employer.

Copyrights are generally enforced by the holder in a civil law court, but there are also criminal infringement statutes. Criminal sanctions are generally aimed at serious counterfeiting activity, but are now becoming more commonplace as copyright collectives such as the RIAA are, more and more, targeting the file sharing home Internet user. Thus far however, these cases have usually been settled outside of court, with demands for payment of several thousand dollars accompanied by nothing more than a threat to sue the file sharer, which will be ruinous to many defendants in practice, thus such cases rarely make their way to civil law courts.

It is important to understand that absence of the copyright symbol does not mean that the work is not covered by copyright. The work once created from originality through 'mental labor' is instantaneously considered copyrighted to that person.

Copyright notices

Use of a copyright notice — consisting of the letter C inside of a circle (that is, "©"), the abbreviation "Copr.", or the word "Copyright", followed by the year of the first publication of the work and the name of the copyright holder — was part of previous United States statutory requirements. (Note that the letter C inside of parentheses ("(c)") has never been an officially recognized designator.) But since 1976, when the U.S. passed a new Copyright Act that followed the model of the Berne Convention, the use of copyright notices has become optional to claim copyright, as the Berne Convention makes copyright automatic.[8] However, notice of copyright (using these marks) does have consequences in terms of allowable damages in an infringement lawsuit in some places.

The phrase All rights reserved was once a necessary formal notice that all rights granted under existing copyright law are retained by the copyright holder and that legal action may be taken against copyright infringement. It was provided as a result of the Buenos Aires Convention of 1910, which required some statement of reservation of rights to grant international coverage in all the countries that were signatory to that convention. While it is commonplace to see it, this notice is now superfluous, as every country that is a member of the Buenos Aires Convention is also a member of the Berne Convention, which holds a copyright to be valid in all signatory states without any formality of notice.

This phrase is sometimes still used even on some documents to which the original author does not retain all rights granted by copyright law, such as works released under a copyleft license. It is, however, only a habitual formality and is unlikely to have legal consequences.

The exclusive rights of the copyright holder

Several exclusive rights typically attach to the holder of a copyright:

- to produce copies or reproductions of the work and to sell those copies (including, typically, electronic copies)
- to import or export the work
- to create derivative works (works that adapt the original work)
- to perform or display the work publicly
- to sell or assign these rights to others

The phrase "exclusive right" means that only the copyright holder is free to exercise the attendant rights, and others are prohibited from using the work without the consent of the copyright holder. Copyright is often called a "negative right", as it serves to prohibit people (e.g. readers, viewers, or listeners, and primarily publishers and would be publishers) from doing something, rather than permitting people (e.g. authors) to do something. In this way it is similar to the unregistered design right in English law and European law. The rights of the copyright holder also permit him/her to not use or exploit their copyright for its duration. This means an author can choose to exploit their copyright for some of the duration and then not for the rest, vice versa, or entirely one or the other.

There is however a critique which rejects this assertion as being based on a philosophical interpretation of copyright law as an entity, and is not universally shared. There is also debate on whether copyright should be considered a property right or a moral right. Many argue that copyright does not exist merely to restrict third parties from publishing ideas and information, and that defining copyright purely as a negative right is incompatible with the public policy objective of encouraging authors to create new works and enrich the public domain.

The right to adapt a work means the right to transform the way in which the work is expressed. Examples include developing a stage play or film script from a novel; translating a short story; and making a new arrangement of a musical work.

Fair use and fair dealing

Copyright does not prohibit all copying or replication. In the United States, the fair use doctrine, codified by the Copyright Act of 1976 as 17 U.S.C. Section 107, permits some copying and distribution without permission of the copyright holder or payment to same. The statute does not clearly define fair use, but instead gives four non-exclusive factors to consider in a fair use analysis. Those factors are:

- the purpose and character of your use
- the nature of the copyrighted work
- what amount and proportion of the whole work was taken, and
- the effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work.

In the United Kingdom and many other Commonwealth countries, a similar notion of fair dealing was established by the courts or through legislation. The concept is sometimes not well defined; however in Canada, private copying for personal use has been expressly permitted by statute since 1999. In Australia, the fair dealing exceptions under the Copyright Act 1968 (Cth) are a limited set of circumstances under which copyright material can be legally copied or adapted without the copyright holder's consent. Fair dealing uses are research and study; review and critique; news reportage and the giving of professional advice (ie legal advice). Under current Australian law it is still a breach of copyright to copy, reproduce or adapt copyright material for personal or private use without permission from the copyright owner. Other technical exemptions from infringement may also apply, such as the temporary reproduction of a work in machine readable form (eg, in an information technology storage system).

In the United States the AHRA (Audio Home Recording Act Codified in Section 10, 1992) prohibits action against consumers making noncommercial recordings of music, in return for royalties on both media and devices plus mandatory copy-control mechanisms on recorders.

Section 1008. Prohibition on certain infringement actions

No action may be brought under this title alleging infringement of copyright based on the manufacture, importation, or distribution of a digital audio recording device, a digital audio recording medium, an analog recording device, or an analog recording medium, or based on the noncommercial use by a consumer of such a device or medium for making digital musical recordings or analog musical recordings.

Later acts amended US Copyright law so that for certain purposes making 10 copies or more is construed to be commercial, but there is no general rule permitting such copying. Indeed making one complete copy of a work, or in many cases using a portion of it, for commercial purposes will not be considered fair use. The Digital Millennium Copyright Act prohibits the manufacture, importation, or distribution of devices whose intended use, or only significant commercial use, is to bypass an access or copy control put in place by a copyright owner. An appellate court has held that fair use is not a defence against engaging in such distribution. It is absolutely vital to remember that copyright regimes can and do differ between countries, even countries which both adhere to the same copyright Convention. It would be dangerous to assume that an activity permitted by the laws of one country is necessarily permitted elsewhere.

Read about EU copyrights: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/EU_Copyright_directive

Copying and recording audio

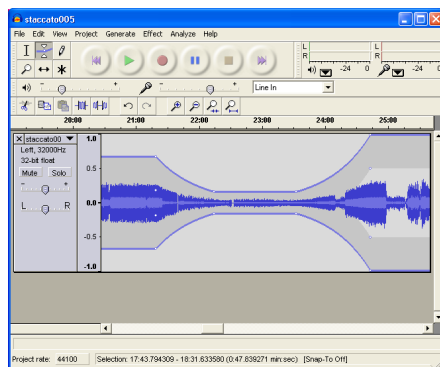
Most sound cards have four 1/8" jacks- two outputs and two inputs at the back of the computer. One of the inputs will be marked as the microphone input by the word "Mic" or by an icon of a microphone. Don't use that one!

Instead, find the Line input. Check the markings on the back of your sound card to determine which one it is - there are usually either symbols or text labels back there to help you out. If the labels are not clear, refer to your manual. Make sure that the plug you use going into your sound card is a 1/8" stereo connector. The next step is to start the recording / editing software. The POOLS teams can recommend Audacity: Audacity is free, open source software for recording and editing sounds. It is available for Mac OS X, Microsoft Windows, GNU/Linux, and other operating systems.

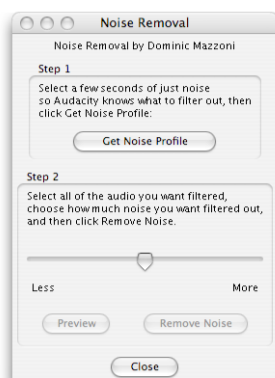
To download the software go to <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/>

The Audacity software allows you to:

- record live audio
- convert tapes and records into digital recordings or CDs
- edit Ogg Vorbis, MP3, and WAV sound files
- cut, copy, splice, and mix sounds together
- change the speed or pitch of a recording
- and much more!



After recording, it is possible to fine tune the results, with a noise filter for example.



The resulting files can then be written to different file formats (e.g. mp3 files that can be distributed online and podcast).

Best of all, Audacity has excellent documentation and step by step tutorials. Please go to <http://audacity.sourceforge.net/help/tutorials>

How to copy VHS to DVD

The simple way is to use a DVD stand alone recorder and then connect a VHS player to it.



If the result is not acceptable due to noise or bad quality tapes, then it can be enhanced with a video stabiliser, an apparatus which in some cases also makes it possible to copy copy-protected commercial tapes, BUT in many countries such a procedure is illegal!



Copying VHS and other video recordings to a computer

To copy from a video player (and some older cameras), some hardware must be purchased. A recommended solution is to purchase a Plector "Digital Video Converter", a small device that comes complete with all the required software for recording and copying. It is attached to a computer by the USB port.



The "Digital Video Converter" is connected to the computer by a USB cable



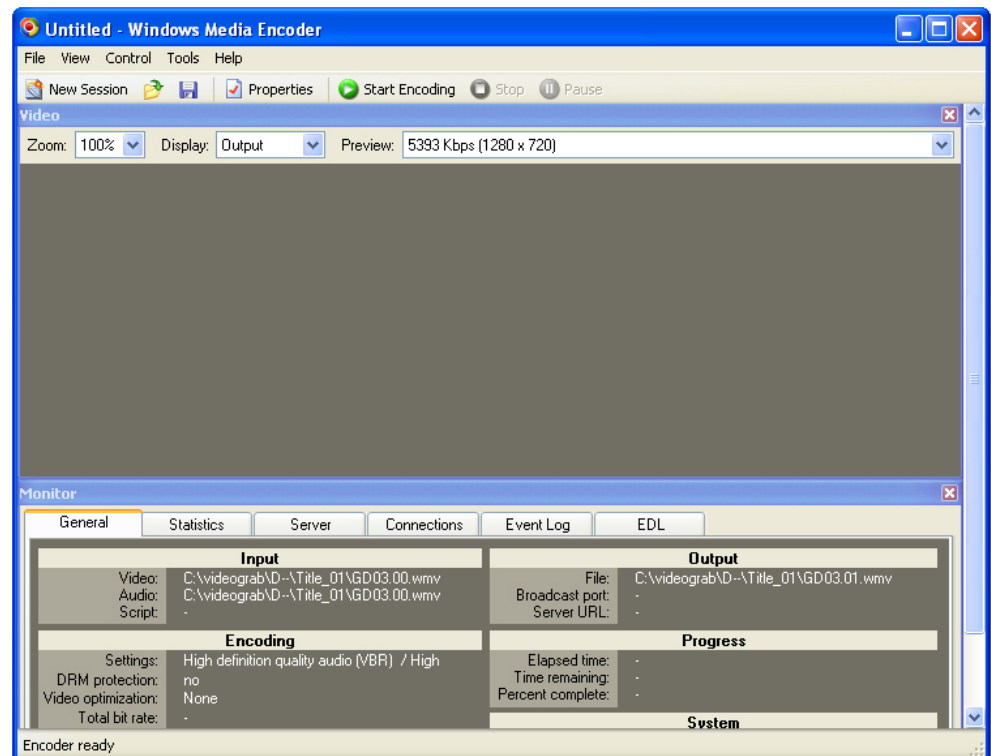
The Plexor CornvertX “Digital Video Converter” has input for audio, video and also S-video

VHS to files suitable for websites (e.g. wmv files)

The first step is to get the video onto the computer. Please read “Copying VHS and other video recordings to a computer”. When the video has been grabbed, there are several ways of converting it into a web based format like .wmv. Most devices (e.g. The Plexor CornvertX “Digital Video Converter”) that can be purchased come complete with all the software needed to save as .wmv files.

Another option is the free Microsoft Windows Media Encoder, which can record, broadcast live events, and convert video files. To download and read more about this software go to:

http://www.microsoft.com/expression/products/EncoderStandard_Overview.aspx



Microsoft Media Encoder

Teaching Foreign Languages to Hearing Impaired Students

Learning about deaf and hearing impaired students:

SIGNALL is a transnational language competency and training project which aims to increase awareness of Deaf culture and sign languages amongst organisations, employers and hearing people. It aims to cultivate a behavioural change and commitment by organisations, employer bodies, educational establishments, public authorities and society as a whole in the way people who are deaf are perceived and treated.

Participant countries include the Czech Republic, Finland, Ireland, Spain and the UK.

SIGNALL's awareness information pack aims to provide a mechanism that will witness a change in the way society in general behaves towards hearing impaired people - not by being tolerant as in the past, but through social integration, access and understanding.

Products include a book, a DVD documentary, a CD-ROM and a website.

For more information, please visit www.signallproject.com

Sign language is not international. For instance, the sign language for Spain will be different from the one for Costa Rica even though the spoken language is the same. So hearing impaired people who are internationally mobile feel encouraged to learn lip-reading and possibly even to pronounce a foreign language.

In fact, hearing impaired people have to decide on their goals for a foreign language class: e.g. learning to pronounce, speech-read or read/write. Furthermore, they have to discuss with their teacher how they plan to conduct the lessons: e.g. using voice, finger-spelling everything, mixed signing/finger-spelling, cued speech⁷.

However, no matter how deeply hearing impaired students want to delve into a foreign language, audio-visual materials are helpful irrespective of whether the goal of foreign language learning is merely a perceptive or also a productive one.

Tips for Teaching Hearing Impaired Students by means of Audio-Visual Materials

- Take advantage of a variety of assistive listening devices (e.g. amplifiers) for watching foreign TV or foreign language movies.
- Use more reading/writing activities such as transcribed audiocassette activities or computer assisted language learning software.
- Whenever possible, use video-clips or movies that have subtitles in the foreign language.

⁷Cued speech = Visual representation of sounds

Subtitling Audio-Visual Materials

The decision to subtitle audio-visual language learning materials implies further decisions, for instance:

- Should you offer full transcriptions of the text spoken in a foreign language or merely the gist of it?
- Should you offer foreign language transcriptions with or without translation into the mother tongue of the student?
- Should you straighten out flaws in the spoken original when subtitling or stick to the original (even linguistically faulty) version?

Research

- A transnational language competency and training project which aims to increase awareness of Deaf culture and sign languages amongst organisations, employers and hearing people. <http://www.signallproject.com>
- Educational subtitling for deaf children

Damper, R. I., Baker, R. G., Lambourne, A. D., Downton, A. C., King, R. W. and Newell, A. F. (1984) Educational subtitling for deaf children. In Proceedings of Proceedings of Second International Conference on Rehabilitation Engineering, pp. 304-305.

- Teaching English to Deaf Learners in China <http://www.eslcafe.com/forums/teacher/viewtopic.php?t=1056>
- Creating an Online English Course for Deaf by Elina McCambridge emccambr@sun3.oulu.fi first results expected to be published online in spring 2007
- An English link list on forums and research institutions serving the needs of deaf people <http://www.deafblind.com/deafness.html>

Visually impaired students and accessibility of materials

When developing audiovisual materials that may be used by visually impaired students it is necessary to rethink the video materials, for example, and include voice over with additional information (e.g. the man left the room + general descriptions).

The article below is mainly based on articles from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia.

Web accessibility refers to the practice of making Web pages accessible to people using a wide range of user agent software and devices, not just standard Web browsers. This is especially important for people with disabilities such as visual impairment. In order to access the Web, some users require special software or devices in addition to a standard web browser, or specially designed web browsers. Design for accessibility is a sub-category of good design for usability.

Accessibility is the practice of making web pages easier to navigate and read. It is intended to assist those with disabilities, but it can be helpful to all readers. Articles adhering to the following guidelines are easier to read and edit by those wikipedians.

Benefits of Web accessibility

Designing websites with accessibility in mind can often enhance usability for all users. Good design can also deliver easier access for automated software programs that read website content, such as search engines.

One important aspect of accessibility is to let people access content in their preferred way. This can also benefit all users, not just those with disabilities: for example, some users may wish to adjust text sizes because they are using a very small display on a mobile phone, or they may need to use keystrokes to control their computer because they do not have a mouse or prefer not to use one. Search engines cannot generally make much use of graphics.

For example, hyperlinks that can only be followed by clicking on them with a mouse are impossible to use for those who can only use a keyboard or screen reader to interact with their computer. Information provided only in audio format cannot be accessed by people who are deaf, and, if provided only in graphic format information, is invisible to people who are blind.

Designing sites in accordance with Web accessibility principles is necessary to enable access for all users.

A set of guidelines and two accessible web portals designed for people developing reading skills are peepo.com and peepo.co.uk with enhanced graphics, unique style controls and improved interactivity (requires SVG supported browser).

User agent devices

Most people access the Web using a Web browser on a computer. Other ways of accessing the Web include a Personal Digital Assistant (PDA) or a mobile phone. Search engines accessing Web content via a web spider are also common.

A wide range of techniques and technologies are available to facilitate Web access for people with disabilities, or for users in general. These can be divided into two (non-exclusive) classes: enabling technologies, which circumvent a major disability such as blindness; and assistive technologies for lesser impairments.

Enabling technologies include

- speech or voice browsers to read textual content aloud
- speech-recognition software that can accept commands spoken to the computer, or turn dictation into grammatically correct text.
- the Braille terminal, consisting of a Refreshable Braille display which renders text as Braille characters (usually by means of raising pegs through holes in a flat surface) and a Braille keyboard (either a conventional "QWERTY" type or one designed for the Braille system).



Assistive technologies

In addition to dedicated Web content user agents, a wide range of assistive technologies is available to help people with computer accessibility. These technologies can greatly assist access to Web content for people with disabilities. Examples include:

- speech recognition software, which can be useful for those who have difficulty using a mouse or a keyboard.
- screen magnification software, which enlarges what is displayed on the computer monitor, making it easier for vision impaired users to read.
- keyboard overlays which can make typing easier and more accurate for those who have motor control difficulties.
- screen reader software, which uses synthesised speech to read out either selected elements of what is being displayed on the monitor (helpful for users with reading or learning difficulties), or which can read out everything that is happening on the PC (used by blind and vision impaired users).
- translation software to allow users to read websites in foreign languages, especially for those who have been diagnosed as having a learning disability.

General advice and guidelines for accessible web page creation

(source Wikipedia accessibility guidelines <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wikipedia:Accessibility>)

Article structure

Avoid floating the table of contents if possible, as it breaks the standard look of pages. If you must use a floated TOC, put it below the lead section for consistency. Users of screen readers expect the table of contents to follow the introductory text; they will also miss any text placed between the TOC and the first heading.

Headings should be descriptive and in a consistent order (See also — References — Further reading — External links).

Avoid using heading titles with the same name as one of the form names on the page, like "search" or "go".

Disambiguation links should be the first elements of the page, before any image or infobox. A text only browser or screen reader present the page sequentially, and otherwise the dab-link will be read between the image and the lead section

Text

When editing, never break up a line unless absolutely necessary, as the easiest way to edit with a screen reader is to navigate line by line.

Spelling and grammar errors can dramatically affect the sound of the text ("initative" instead of "initiative"), which can make the text more difficult to read.

Provide a transliteration for all text in a non Latin writing system. Screen readers without Unicode support will read a character outside Latin-1 as a question mark, and even in the latest version of JAWS, the most popular screen reader, Unicode characters are very difficult to read.

Don't use techniques that require physical action to provide information, such as tooltips or other "hover" text.

Links

Do not overlink. Screen readers put each link on its own line. Create good link descriptions, especially for external links. (avoid "click here!" or "this" kinds of links)

Avoid putting links in section headings, unless the link text is the only text in the title. Screen readers will stop reading the heading title when they encounter a link, and if the link is the first part of the heading title, they will only read the link text. For example, a heading title of "The Simpsons" will be read as "The", and a heading title of "hackers in popular culture" will be read as "hackers".

Use as little code as possible, so the text in the edit window is easier to read (for example: don't use `[[clock|clocks]]` when `[[clock]]s` will work).

Colour

Ensure that colour is not the only way used to convey important information. Especially, do not use coloured text unless its status is also indicated by using another method such as italic emphasis or footnote labels. Otherwise blind users or readers accessing Wikipedia through a device without a colour screen will not receive that information.

Many readers may be partially or fully colour blind. Ensure that the colour combinations used (infoboxes, navigational boxes, graphs, etc.) have an adequate contrast. Use a colour scheme generator to select the colours, and tools for simulating colour blind vision (colorfilter.wickline.org or vischeck.com) to check the result.

Web pages can be checked on-line with AccessColor, which analysis the HTML source for a web page and the Cascading Style Sheets associated, and then calculates that the colour contrast and colour brightness between the text and background colours conform WCAG 1.0

Suitable colour contrast for people with vision impairments, including colour blindness, can be tested with the Colour Contrast Analyser that uses the draft algorithms from W3C

Tables

Screen readers and other web browsing tools make use of specific table tags to help users navigate the data contained in them.

Caption (| +)

A caption is the title of a table, describing its nature

Summary (summary="...")

The summary can provide a longer description of the purpose and structure of the table for non-visual browsers.

Row & column headers (!)

Like the caption, these help present the information in a logical structure. The headers can be read first, and then the related data can be navigated.

Voice browsers might read aloud a data table in the following order:

Caption: [caption text]

Summary: [summary text]

[column header 1]: [row header 1], [column header 2]: [cell 1,2], [column header 3]: [cell 1,3]

[column header 1]: [row header 2], [column header 2]: [cell 2,2], [column header 3]: [cell 2,3]

Layout tables

Some navigation, series, and info boxes are made using tables. Avoid using tables for layout purposes only. The best option is to use HTML's <div> blocks and style attributes because they provide flexibility.

For simple layouts, tables can be an option. If the only point of the table is to get a floating effect, then align="right" etc. will work with some browsers not supporting CSS at all. This is in fact a verbose approximation of <div> plus CSS, and not the design sin known as (nested) "table layout". However, to avoid accessibility barriers, when using tables for layout purposes don't use any caption, row, or column headers, and also no summary attribute. These structural table elements should be used only for data tables. Don't use structural elements for presentation purposes, use style sheets.

Images

Images should contain a caption, either using the built in image syntax or a secondary line of text. The caption should concisely describe any information contained in the image.

Where possible, any charts or diagrams should have a text equivalent, or should be well-described so that users who can't see the image can gain some understanding of the concept.

Detailed image descriptions, where not appropriate for an article, should be placed on the image description page, with a note saying that activating the image link will lead to a more detailed description.

Style and markup

Avoid inline CSS style= attributes where a similar common class is available, e.g. class="wikitable".

Avoid inline CSS if simple legacy markup has the same effect for more browsers, e.g. align="right".

Test inline CSS effects with disabled CSS. Inline CSS isn't supported by several browsers, media, and XHTML versions.

Don't use tags or inline CSS to play with font sizes. If really necessary, use <small> or <big> also supported by Lynx to a certain degree (even nested).

Don't use tags to manipulate foreground colours, unless you also use legacy bgcolor= markup to set the background colour. It is better to use simple logical style tags like , <code>, or for semantic differences.

Inline CSS is ideal for decorative purposes including decorative colours, but then don't mix CSS with legacy markup: Old browsers respect the legacy markup and ignore the CSS.

Combining logical style tags with CSS colours is a good idea (of course depending on the colours for browsers supporting CSS).

Don't use the physical style tags <u>, <i>, or . It is preferable to use Wiki markup " or '", or logical style tags.

Above all, use common sense, a deprecated <u> could be perfectly okay if it's used to indicate something like an un-clickable link.

Website accessibility audits

A growing number of organisations, companies and consultants offer website accessibility audits. These audits, a type of system testing, identify accessibility problems that exist within a website, and provide advice and guidance on the steps that need to be taken to correct these problems.

A range of methods are used to audit websites for accessibility:

Automated tools are available which can identify some of the problems that are present.

Expert technical reviewers, knowledgeable in web design technologies and accessibility, can review a representative selection of pages and provide detailed feedback and advice based on their findings.

User testing, usually overseen by technical experts, involves setting tasks for ordinary users to carry out on the website, and reviewing the problems these users encounter as they try to carry out the tasks. Each of these methods has its strengths and weaknesses. Automated tools can process many pages in a relatively short length of time, but can only identify some of the accessibility problems that might be present in the website.

Technical expert review will identify many of the problems that exist, but the process is time consuming, and many websites are too large to make it possible for one person to review every page.

User testing combines elements of usability and accessibility testing, and is valuable for identifying problems that might otherwise be overlooked, but needs to be used knowledgeably to avoid the risk of basing design decisions on one user's preferences.

Ideally, a combination of methods should be used to assess the accessibility of a website.

Standards and guidelines

The main page for the W3C Web Accessibility Initiative (WAI):

<http://www.w3.org/WAI/>

WCAG Overview

http://www.microsoft.com/expression/products/EncoderStandard_Overview.aspx

The W3C WAI Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0:

<http://www.w3.org/TR/1999/WAI-WEBCONTENT-19990505/>

Resources for designers

Accessibility101 – UK Web Accessibility FAQ

<http://www.accessibility101.org.uk/web-accessibility-facts.htm>

Accessibility Advice from The National Library for the Blind (NLB)

http://www.nlb-online.org/mod.php?mod=userpage&menu=61&page_id=371#content

Accessibility at Web Design Reference - A large online reference dedicated web design and development

<http://www.d.umn.edu/itss/support/Training/Online/webdesign/accessibility.html>

National Disability Authority (Ireland) - ICT Accessibility

<http://www.nda.ie/cntmgmtnew.nsf/0/34774EDB9EDC2A1E80256F8600431030?OpenDocument>

RNIB Web Access Centre

http://www.rnib.org.uk/xpedio/groups/public/documents/code/public_rnib008789.hcsp

Why W3C Compliant? The Importance of Valid Web Codes by Mihaela Lica

<http://www.pamil-visions.com/W3C-compliance.php>

Unified Web Evaluation Methodology

<http://www.wabcluster.org/uwem1/>

Just Ask: Integrating Accessibility Throughout Design from Shawn Lawton Henry

<http://www.uiaccess.com/accessucd/overview.html>

Section 508 Training Courses (free!)

<http://www.section508.gov/index.cfm?FuseAction=Content&ID=5>

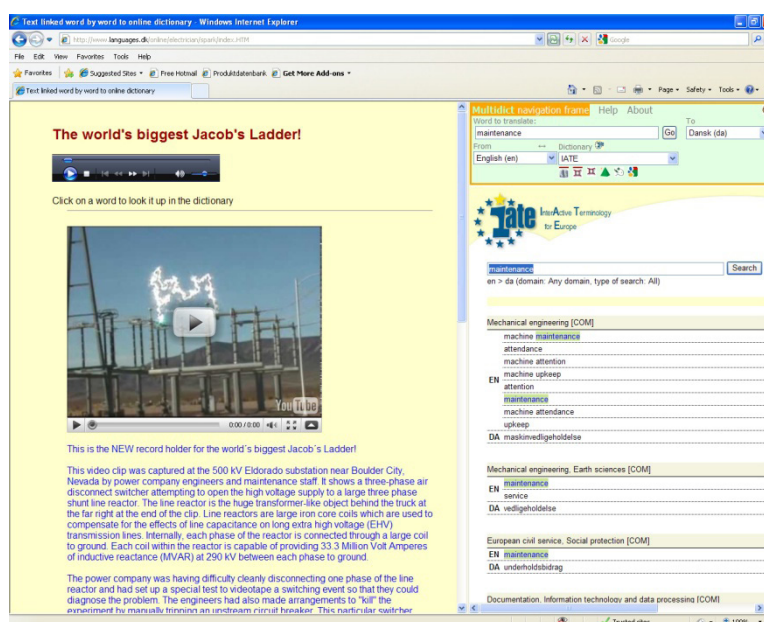
Web accessibility checkers

The W3C database of Web Accessibility Evaluation Tools - revitalised in early 2006 and regularly updated:

<http://www.w3.org/WAI/ER/tools/Overview.html> How to make your own CALL exercises.

The TextBlender

An easy way of making a webpage with video, graphics, and texts where all words are linked to online dictionaries is to use the TextBlender, which was produced by the POOLS-T project (2008-2010). TextBlender can be downloaded from www.languages.dk/tools. The software is free (CopyLeft) and on the website you can watch step by step instruction videos on how to prepare a webpage and put it online using a software / web service called dropbox. Dropbox can be downloaded from www.dropbox.com and gives the user two Gigabyte of free web space, enough for hundreds of CALL units produced with the TextBlender.



A typical output from the TextBlender. The webpage is to the Left, the dictionary lookup to the right

TextBlender can link to further exercises, for example produced using the free software Hot Potatoes. If you know how to use a word processor and know how to store your work in different places on your hard disk or even better - on the net (e.g. for free with Dropbox.com), then you have all the basics needed for making CALL exercises. Step by step videos on how to produce exercises with Hot Potatoes can be watched from www.languages.dk/tools

There are many authoring systems offering an easy way to create exercises, however many of these are complicated to learn and to use (despite what is promised on the cover!). Many authoring systems are expensive and some even ask for a license fee for each end user. But do not despair: there is also free software which is easy to use. We recommend you try out the free⁸ software called Hot Potatoes, made by "Half Baked Software". You can download "Hot Potatoes" from the Hot Potatoes homepage: <http://hotpot.uvic.ca/>

⁸ Free, but only if the exercises you make are placed on the Internet without any charge to the end user

The Hot Potatoes suite offers a wide range of exercises. From the welcome screen you click on the type you want:



The best way to learn to use Hot Potatoes is to work through the on-line Tutorial provided with the program. , by doing so you actually work your way through the different types of exercises you can make with the program.

Hot Potatoes can be adapted/translated into any language so all instructions and feed-backs are given in the target language.

If you want to try what other teachers have created using Hot Potatoes, you can visit <http://web.uvic.ca/hrd/hotpot/sites6.php>, where you can work with many different languages such as Arabic, English, Finnish, French, English, Galician, Latin, Indonesian, Italian, Jersey, German, Italian, Maori, Portuguese, Salish, Spanish, and Swedish.

An example of the resources available from these links are “Video on Demand Resources” from the Ashcombe School, UK:

http://www.ashcombe.surrey.sch.uk/Curriculum/modlang/spanish/index_sp_video.htm.

In mid 2006 the site offered free of charge a total of 35 French Videos, 23 German Videos, 16 Spanish Videos, and 8 Italian Videos. Each video is accompanied by exercises made in Hot Potatoes. The videos cover topics like: Self, Family & Friends, Leisure/Entertainment, Free Time, Pocket Money, Local Environment, My house and home, Home and Home Life, Daily Routine, Education, School subjects, Travel and Transport, Holidays and Tourism, Food and Drink, Shopping & Services, Healthy Living, Healthy lifestyle, Work, and Career & Plans.

Below you find a very simple walk through of the exercise types that you can create with Hot Potatoes

A multiple choice quiz (this is a type of quiz – see below)

JBC is a function of JQuiz and can be used to make a multiple choice quiz. In the quiz you can make as many questions you want, each with an unlimited number of optional answers.

The screenshot shows the JQuiz software window titled "JQuiz: [Untitled]". It features a menu bar (File, Edit, Insert, Manage Questions, Options, Help) and a toolbar with various icons. The main interface includes a "Title" field, a question number selector (Q1), and a dropdown menu set to "Multiple-choice". Below these are three columns: "Answers", "Feedback", and "Settings". The "Answers" column contains four rows labeled A, B, C, and D, each with a text input field. The "Feedback" column contains corresponding text input fields. The "Settings" column has a "Correct" checkbox for each row. At the bottom, it says "Config: english6.cfg".

You simply type in a number of choices. For each choice you have to choose a feedback and decide if it is correct. If more than one answer is correct, you can decide that the student must click on all correct answers.

The screenshot shows the JBC software window titled "JBC: [Untitled]". It has a similar menu bar and toolbar to JQuiz. The "Title" field contains "Computer Assisted Language Learning". The question number is Q1, and the question text is "Hot Potatoes does not cost anything when". Below the question are two columns: "Answers" and "Feedback". There are five rows of answers, each with a checkbox, a text input field for the answer, and a text input field for the feedback. The first four rows have checkboxes that are not checked, and the fifth row (D) has a checked checkbox. The feedback for the checked answer is "Correct!". At the bottom, it says "Config: english5.cfg".

The resulting exercises look like this:

<= Index =>

Computer Assisted Language Learning
Multiple-choice exercise

Choose the correct answer for each question.

<= 1/1 =>

1. Hot Potatoes does not cost anything when

☐ A You have registered the program

☐ B You are a teacher

☐ C You place the exercises on your Intranet

☐ D The exercises are free and placed on the Internet

☐ E The students do not pay for using the exercises

A Quiz program

JQuiz is the Quiz program which lets you ask questions and provide answers. It is more demanding for you because you must imagine all the possible correct answers that a student might write, otherwise the student may be told that a correct answer is wrong!

JQuiz: [Untitled]

File Edit Insert Manage Questions Options Help

Title

Q 1

Correct Answers

1

2

3

4

Config: english5.cfg

After having given the exercise a title and asked the question, you simply fill in the possible correct answers, which can be unlimited in number. The generated result looks like this:

<= Index =>

Computer Assisted Language Learning
Short-answer quiz

Type your answer, then press "Check". If you need help, you can click on the "Hint" button to get a free letter.

<= 1/1 =>

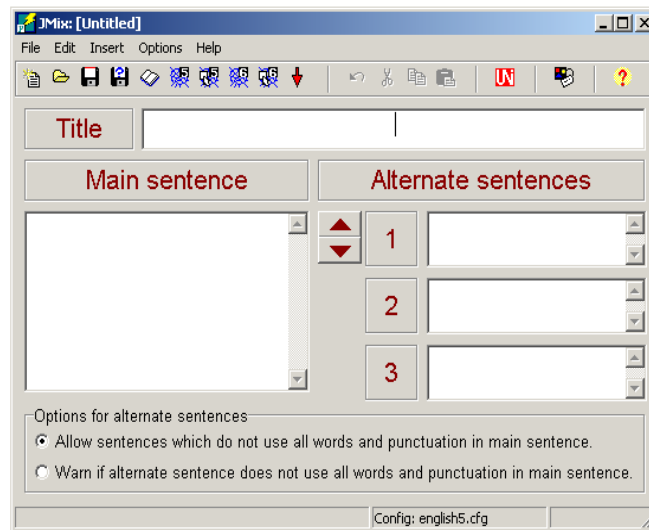
1. What is the usual abbreviation of Computer Assisted Language Learning?

Check Hint

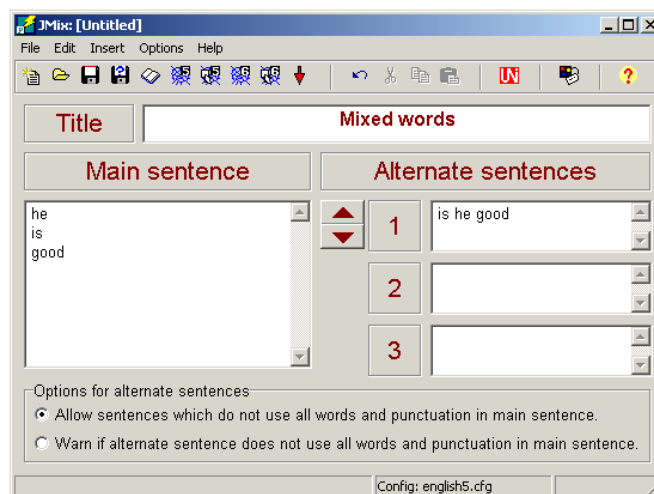
The student can ask for a hint and will then be given the next correct letter. JQuiz also offers "hybrid" and "multi-select" options.

Jumbled sentence exercises

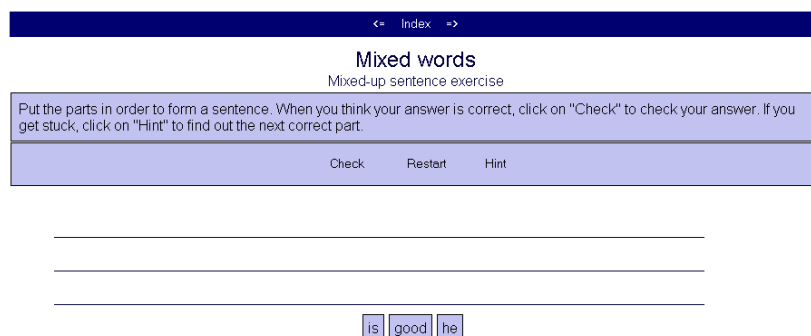
JMix is for making Jumbled sentence exercises that are very good for language beginners. The student is presented with a number of words that s/he has to place in a correct sequence.



To make an exercise you have to type in a sentence in the “Main sentence” window, but with the “Main sentence” you must press Enter after each word. You may also create alternative correct sentences, e.g. the words “he is good” should be accepted as well as “is he good”.



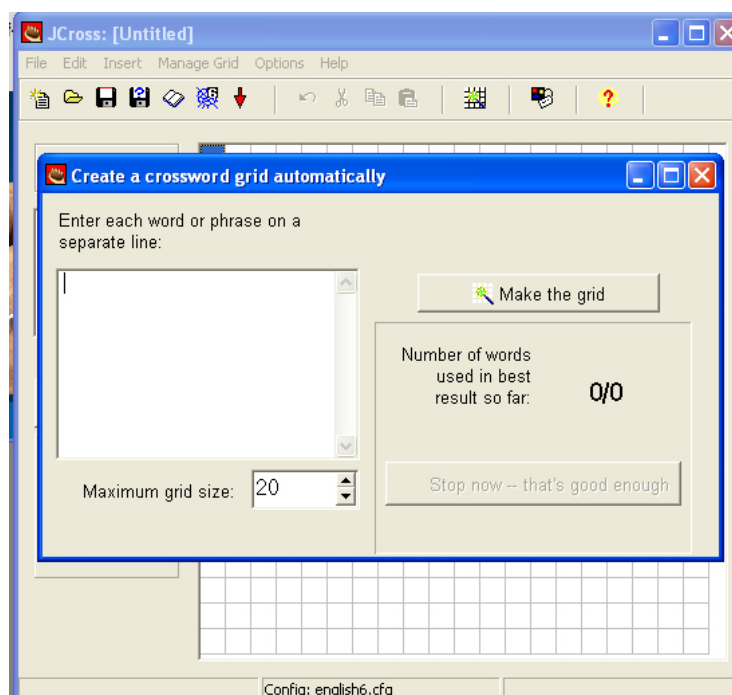
The resulting exercise may look like this:



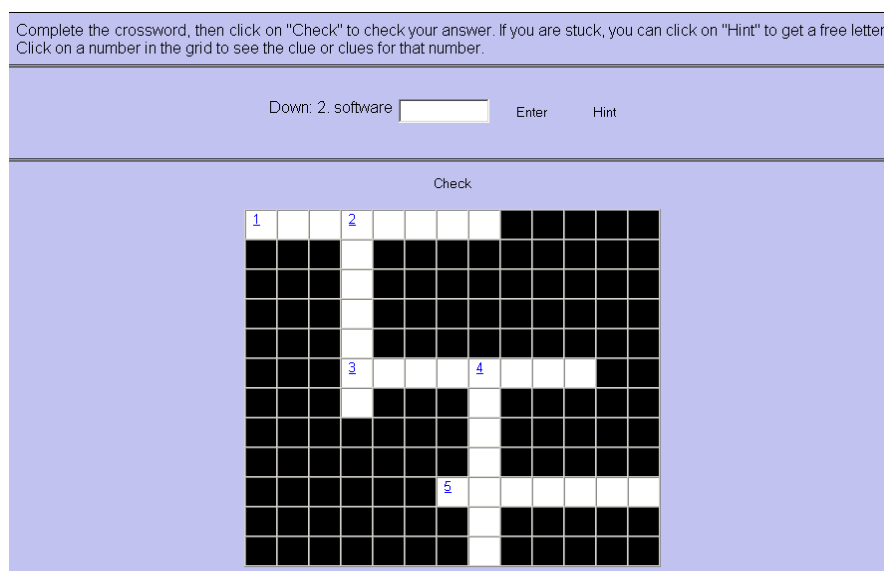
The user drags the words and places them in the correct sequence.

Crossword exercise

JCross is for making crossword exercises which are very rewarding for beginners. It is also a very easy exercise to construct when using Hot Potatoes. You simply type in the words you want and let the program create the grid for you.

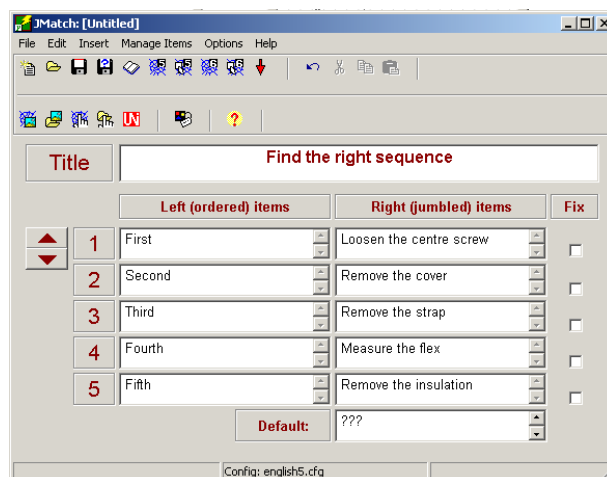


The result of two minutes work may look like this:

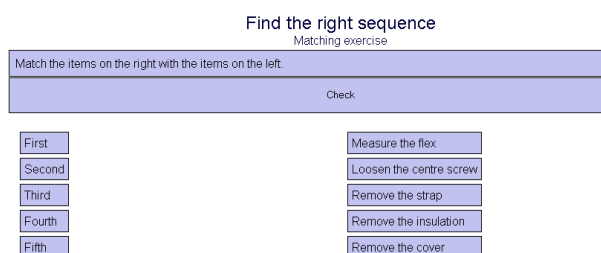


Matching exercise (Drag and drop)

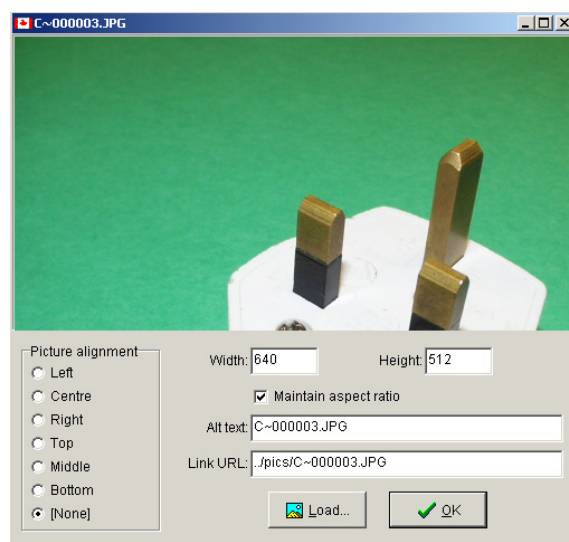
JMatch is the matching exercise type which is another very good exercise for all levels of students. You can have an unlimited number of items to match. Items can be words OR pictures, so you can easily create a picture based vocabulary trainer! In this example we have taken a sequence of five instructions on how to wire an electric plug



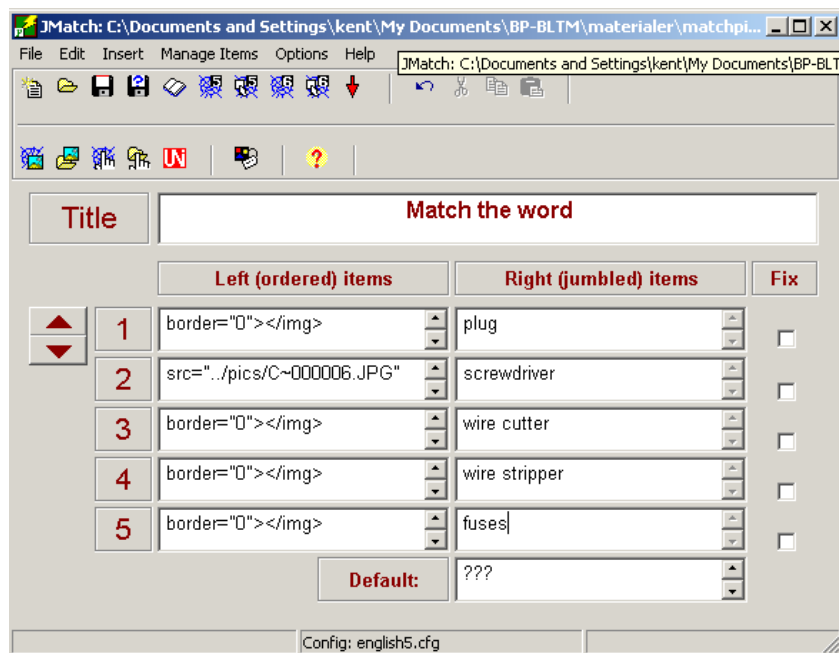
The student will be presented with the five items and will then have to drag the matching items to the correct places:



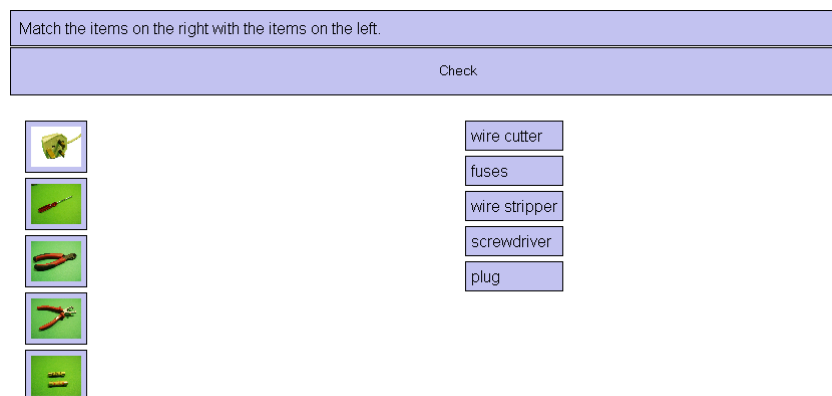
To insert pictures is a little more difficult. First you need to have the pictures ready in the same folder as the resulting exercises, next you need to insert them instead of text. To do so, you select "Insert" in the top menu and then select "Picture from local file". You then choose the picture. After choosing a picture, you need to decide on its size. All pictures should be the same size (e.g. Width 50 pixels 100 or 50 is usually a good choice):



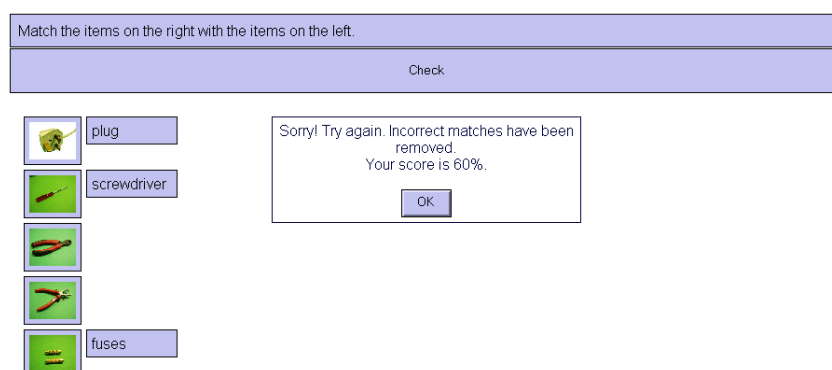
The program then automatically creates the required html code and puts it in the item box:



The resulting exercise may look like this:

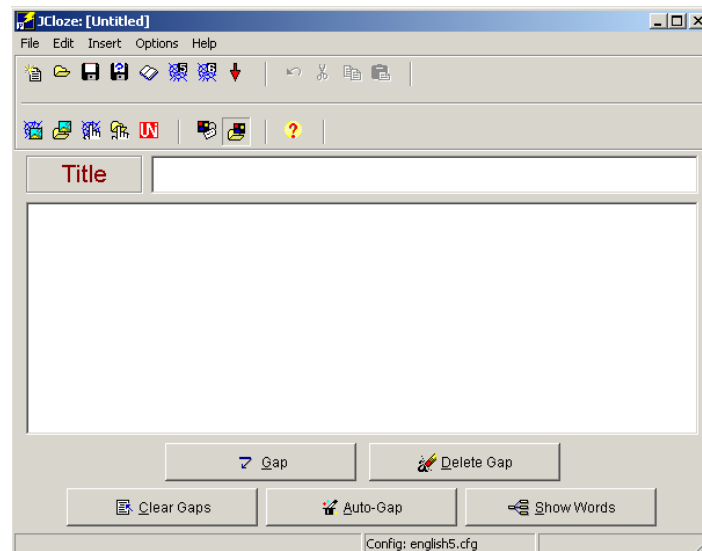


The student has to drag the text to the correct picture. In this example, the student has made some errors:

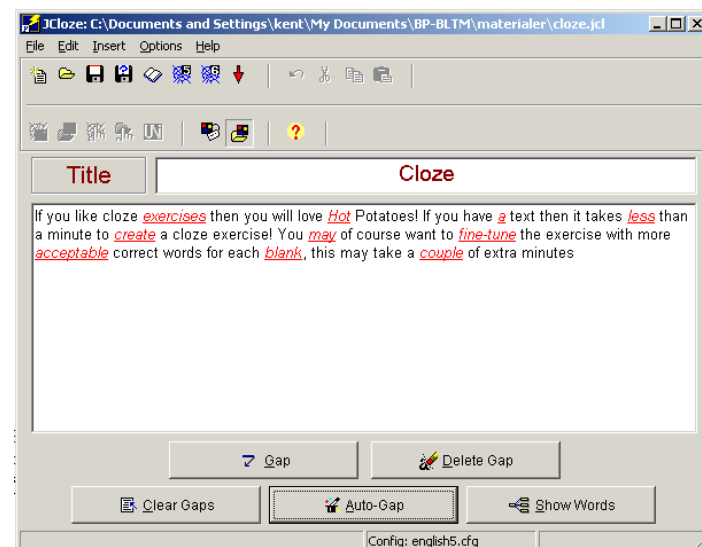


Fill in the blank or Cloze exercise

JCloze is for Cloze exercises: If you like cloze exercises then you will love Hot Potatoes! If you have a text, then it takes less than a minute to create a cloze exercise! You may of course want to fine-tune the exercise with more acceptable correct words for each blank, this may take a couple of extra minutes...



First you give your exercise a title and then you are ready to paste the text. Once you have done this, click on “Clear Gaps” this is needed to remove hidden information produced by some word processors. Now all you have to do is click on “Auto-Gap” and choose e.g. to remove every fifth word.



After 30 seconds work by the teacher, the students can “enjoy” many minutes work:

Fill in all the gaps, then press "Check" to check your answers. Use the "Hint" button to get a free letter if an answer is giving you trouble. You can also click on the "[?]" button to get a clue. Note that you will lose points if you ask for hints or clues!

Check Hint

If you like cloze _____ then you will love _____ Potatoes! If you have _____ text then it takes _____ than a minute to _____ a cloze exercise! You _____ of course want to _____ the exercise with more _____ correct words for each _____, this may take a _____ of extra minutes

Check Hint

How to make your own paper based exercises

There are several tools available for the teacher who wants to produce paper based exercises. For example, many of the online exercise types produced with Hot Potatoes also have a print option (e.g. the crosswords).

Another suite of exercises can be found at <http://www.thelanguagemenu.com>. Several of the tools found there can be used for free, there is also a free trial week in case you want to get a feel of the advanced facilities / tools.

Some example outputs from the Web Project

Go to the project website to download / work through the exercise types below:

<http://eng.teachers.thelanguagemenu.com/>

Board game generator

Choose between 3 sizes, add pictures from the clipart gallery or write your own texts, questions or grammar exercises, and let your students work on their grammar or vocabulary by playing a game. You can also make up your own flash card questions for the board games with the flash-card generator, laminate them and use them together.

The Bingo maker has 3 possibilities: make your bingo boards with pictures, mix pictures and words or just use words, and choose your bingo board size according to your own needs. The clipart gallery gives you hundreds of possibilities for this tool. Choose or randomise. Just create, generate a pdf-file and print. With the refresh button you can change the pictures in seconds.

Crossword maker

Create two types of crosswords in no time. Crossword puzzles are an easy way to practice vocabulary. Use the vocabulary from the clipart gallery to create bilingual crosswords in several categories.

Word search

Just enter the words you wish to have hidden, with or without clues. The tool creates a worksheet with answers quickly and ready to print. Use it with the multilingual clipart gallery.

Fill in the blank

Create your own worksheets. In a hurry? Use the database with hundreds of sentences to choose from.

Make your own flashcards

Just add a sentence you wish to have on the flashcard, generate a pdf document and print. For longer lasting material to be reused, laminate the cards. Use this tool to create discussion themes for your class, bilingual word drills or informative cards. You may also choose a picture from the clip-art card gallery and add your own text next to the picture, and print.

Label the pictures

This works with pictures, with or without hints and/or answers. Perfect for bilingual use as well. Just choose the native language and let the students write the vocabulary in the target language.

Matching exercise generator

Use the generator to create your own worksheets with pictures, add your own text or just a word for your students to match the picture with the text.

Multiple choice

Make your multiple choices worksheet quickly with the worksheet generator. Write your question and give some alternatives and create a pdf document. It only takes a minute. Use for vocabulary drills, bilingual exercises, explanations, maths, questions and answers worksheets etc.

Missing words

Add a text to the missing words generator, choose the interval of the words to be missing, decide on the fontsize and print your pdf file and the worksheet is ready to use. Now you have a text with missing words and a small word bank to choose the right word from.

Split words

Split the words in two, let your students put them together, with or without hints. Excellent to practice suffixes and prefixes, or just to work on vocabulary. Write the word in two parts, add a hint if you wish, and print your pdf file. Easy to make.

Framework

Choose this tool when you want your students to fill in words in the framework, pictures or words chosen from the clipart gallery. Write the words yourself. Can also be used for bilingual students to translate the "hint" words. Choose between the normal setting or black background. You may also print answers.

Scrambled sentences

Write a sentence and print a pdf document. The generator scrambles the sentence and you have a ready work sheet for your students to practice word order with. Easy as one, two, three.

Word spiral

The word spiral works in the same way as the crossword, but the program generates the squares in a spiral. You may also create a spiral that has the first and last letter intertwined. A tool for bilingual use as well.

Lined

A tool to make written exercises for your students. Use your own words, choose words or pictures from our clipart gallery and ask your students to explain what these items are used for, how to use them, write a sentence about the word, add synonyms for the word. Quick and easy for all levels.

To try out these resources, go to:

<http://www.thelanguagemenu.com> or <http://eng.teachers.thelanguagemenu.com/>

Computer Assisted Language Learning within the framework of Task Based Learning

Why Task Based Learning?

The TBL methodology has gained many devoted supporters in the last decade. The methodology can be described as a complete change of paradigm within the world of language teaching, a change from the behaviouristic PPP paradigm (present, practice and produce) to a learner centred approach - the TBL paradigm. In the PPP method, the aim is to present a certain form or structure, make the learners practice this form and afterwards produce a number of sentences within the specific form. With this approach language teaching first of all becomes a very closed and rigid process, where the teacher is constantly in control of what the learners work with, do and say. Here, the teacher works within a framework where answers from learners are ruled incorrect or correct in relation to the taught form. For example, if the answers given by learners do not match the taught form, which was presented by the teacher, the answers will be listed as incorrect, despite the fact that the answer was a correct English sentence, only not using the right form or word.

Now you might ask yourself why it is important to know about the PPP method. By comparing the two methods, we can emphasize the many advantages of TBL. Basically, it is a question of belief and if you believe in TBL, you believe in the idea that language learning is a natural and uncontrollable process. Peter Skehan, who teaches on the MA and MPhil/PhD programmes at Thames Valley University, London, says:

“Teaching does not and cannot determine the way the learner’s language will develop. The processes by which the learner operates are “natural” processes. Teachers and learners cannot simply ‘choose’ what is to be learned. To a large extent the syllabus is ‘built in’ to the learner.”⁹

Many books and articles have been written about both TBL and the PPP method. Here is what Michael Lewis, author of several source books, says about the PPP method:

“A paradigm based on, or remotely resembling, Present-Practice-Produce (PPP) is wholly unsatisfactory, failing as it does to reflect either the nature of language or the nature of learning. The fact is the PPP paradigm is, and always was, non-sense.”¹⁰

⁹ Jane and Dave Willis, eds. , Challenge and Change in Language Teaching (Hong Kong: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 1998), p. 19

¹⁰ Jane and Dave Willis, eds. , Challenge and Change in Language Teaching (Hong Kong: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 1998), p. 17

There are many other arguments from different scholars and language teachers against the use of the PPP method. Some of the most striking are arguments like the following by Peter Skehan, who says

“the PPP method enables the teacher to orchestrate classroom behaviour, ie to use a maintaining authority, ie by using the bundled techniques to show to students exactly who is in charge.”

“a belief that learners will learn what is taught in the order in which it is taught”¹¹

PPP has served to perpetuate a comfortable position for teachers and for teacher trainers³

Another reason for keeping the PPP method in mind is that the method has probably been the most globally used language teaching methodology in the last fifty years; and it is still used by many language teachers and text book writers.

But let us have a look at some of the arguments in favour of TBL. As the name of the method indicates, the methodology is based on learning language by the use of different tasks in order to bring life, spontaneity and individuality into the classroom – in short learning by doing. The aim of the TBL method is that each learner, by working with different tasks and primarily with other learners, goes through an individual internal learning process. The most important job for the teacher is to supply the teaching material, the tasks and to help create a relaxed atmosphere in the classroom.

A TBL sequence could for example be based on creating a timetable for a week.

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Morning					
Midday					
Afternoon					
Evening					

Introductory tasks, written and oral, could easily be conducted, introducing names of days, day times, specific expressions, etc. etc. The introductory tasks will give the learner a basis of words and expressions to use as s/he pleases before moving on to other tasks. In this case, the introductory tasks could be followed by a task where the learner must fill in the timetable according to her/his life. This personal timetable will then form the basis of an oral task, where two learners ask each other questions about their timetables. For example: “What do you do on Tuesday afternoon” and so on.

The teacher is not supposed to interfere in the communication between two learners in a task, unless they ask for assistance or unless a natural opening for teacher commentary occurs. The teacher must listen and observe and wait with language commentaries and focus points until all learners in the classroom have worked through the tasks. This is a very important phase.

¹¹ ibid, p. 17

Here the teacher must be the catalyst for a language focus process, with the aim of making the learners aware of and conscious of their own learning abilities as well as different language complexities – a consciousness raising or clarification process based on the different observations and questions from all learners. Clearly, this leaves the teacher in a completely new role, where he or she cannot plan a language teaching sequence beforehand. Here is what Michael Lewis says about language teaching and TBL:

“Language is successfully acquired only when it is available for spontaneous, personal use with other people”.¹²

“The teacher helps students make explicit their perceptions of similarity and differencehelps them to correct, clarify and deepen those perceptions”.¹³

“The teacher’s primary role is the selection of materials and tasks and the creation of an appropriate atmosphere”.¹⁴

It is very important not to forget or skip the consciousness raising process, a process which should come at the end of either every task or a full task sequence. It is here that the learner can ask questions or make different observations in relation to the work with the tasks. It is here that the teacher must help students to reflect on their own work with the language that individual learner used in the tasks. The teacher must monitor and correct language mistakes and direct attention towards language complexities. The most important thing to remember at this point is that the clarification process must be based on the observations and reflections of the learners.

Another important job for the teacher, if he or she wants the tasks to work well, is to properly describe how a task is meant to be conducted. If this is not done with enough focus and detail, some learners might spend more energy on figuring out how the task is meant to work, rather than on the language learning activity itself. This is especially the case with beginners or learners who are not familiar with the TBL method.

¹² Jane and Dave Willis, eds., *Challenge and Change in Language Teaching* (Hong Kong: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 1998), p. 13

¹³ *ibid* p.15

¹⁴ *ibid* p.15

It is not difficult to use TBL with learners at a beginner level, but one must be aware that it is necessary to give beginners many examples of the new language, in different media, including text, sound and pictures, as long as the examples are always understandable. Crucially, the tasks must not be overcomplicated and they must be simple in structure. In addition, the tasks should focus on things and topics which are familiar and recognisable to the new learners. Jane Willis has made a handy list of priorities for the teacher:

- establishing a relaxed, anxiety-free atmosphere in the classroom
- providing a lot of exposure that learners can make approximate sense of
- building on what they know, but without expecting perfection
- not forcing them to speak at first if they prefer not to
- reassuring them of their progress, and generally boosting their confidence.¹⁵

Jane Willis has written a book of her own about Task Based Learning where she operates with terms like “pre-task, task cycle and language focus”.¹⁶ In the chapter about Task Based Learning, the Jane Willis model is described in full detail.

In the following example we will present a learning sequence where we try to integrate the ideas of TBL with the ideas of CALL. The CALL exercises will function as introductory tasks, which aim to build up a vocabulary for the following oral and written tasks.

¹⁵ Jane Willis, A Framework for Task-Based Learning (Malaysia: Longman, 2000), p. 118

¹⁶ ibid p.52

A task based example “The Wired Plug”



In this lesson, Computer Assisted Language Learning is used to give students a vocabulary based on technical phrases, and the students will learn about instructions. Important skills in vocational training include being able to give and receive instructions..

The materials and videos for this lesson are available in Basque, Danish, Dutch, English, Gaelic, German, Romanian, and Spanish.

The following outlined lesson plan can be used for most students irrespective of their specialities because many of the instructions can be used in different trades.

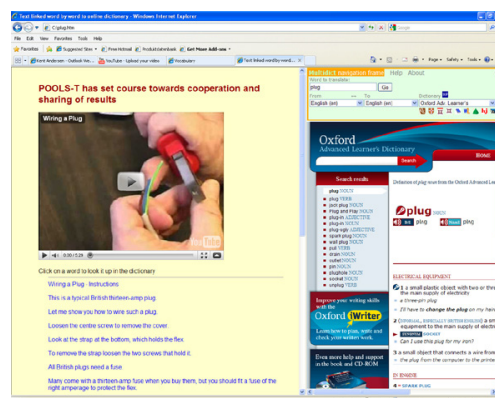
The electronic lesson materials support two levels, elementary and intermediate. By using the multimedia materials, it is possible to have different learner levels in the same class.

List of materials:

- Electric plugs; it is best if British plugs are available because these are more “complicated”, but other plugs may be used.
- Flexible wire
- Screwdrivers
- Wire cutters
- Wire strippers (but wire cutters can be used if these are not available)

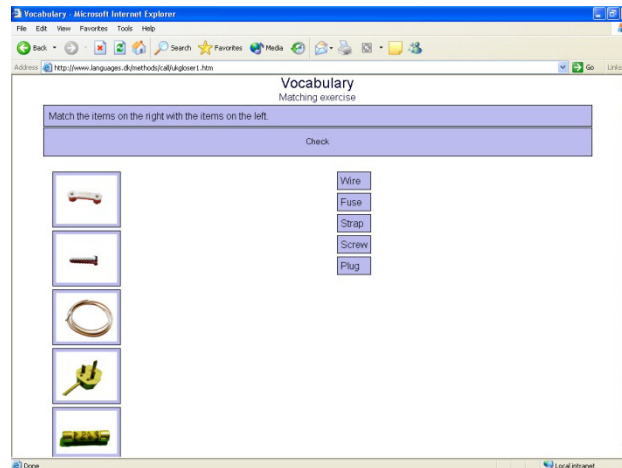
Lesson plan

- The students are introduced to the CALL materials, in this case a web based application with video and text, followed by exercises: <http://www.languages.dk/online/en/plug.htm>
- The students work through the web based multimedia material doing the following activities:

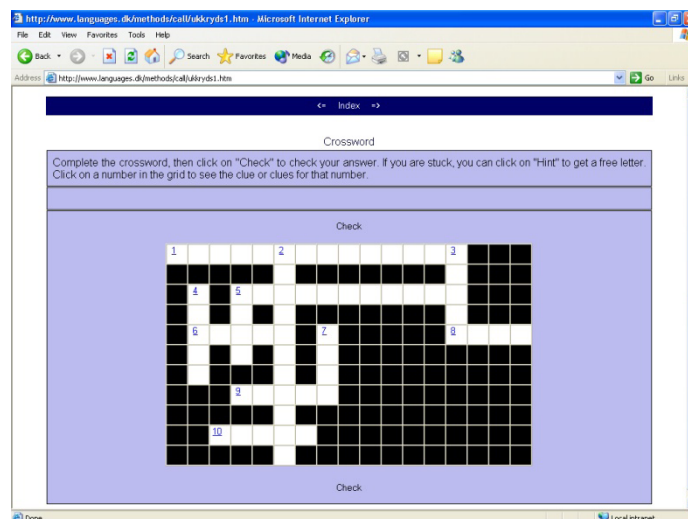


Watch the video giving instructions on how to wire a British plug. Read the text while listening to the video. Click next when finished.

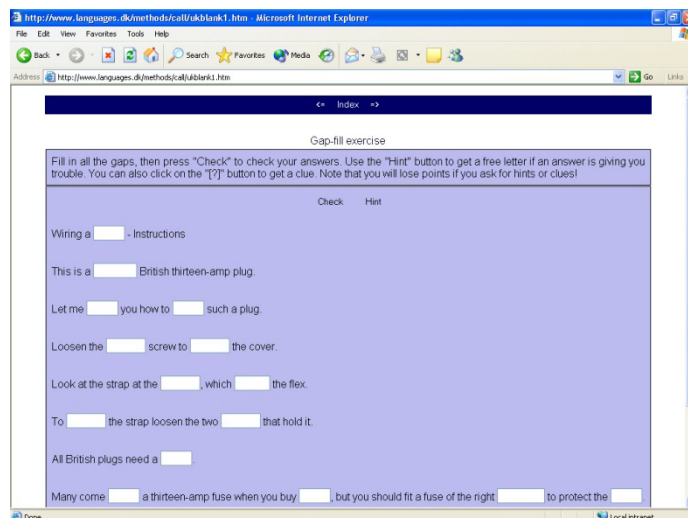
Place words next to photos of tools to learn the technical vocabulary.



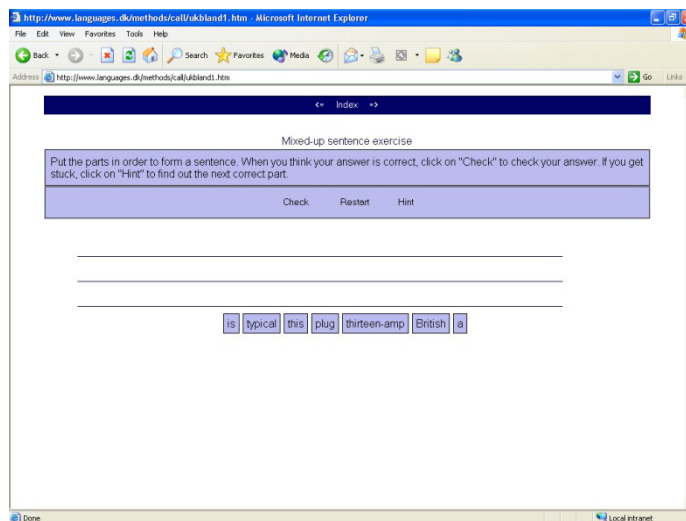
Complete the crossword containing the technical vocabulary



Complete the "fill in the missing words" exercise from the video text

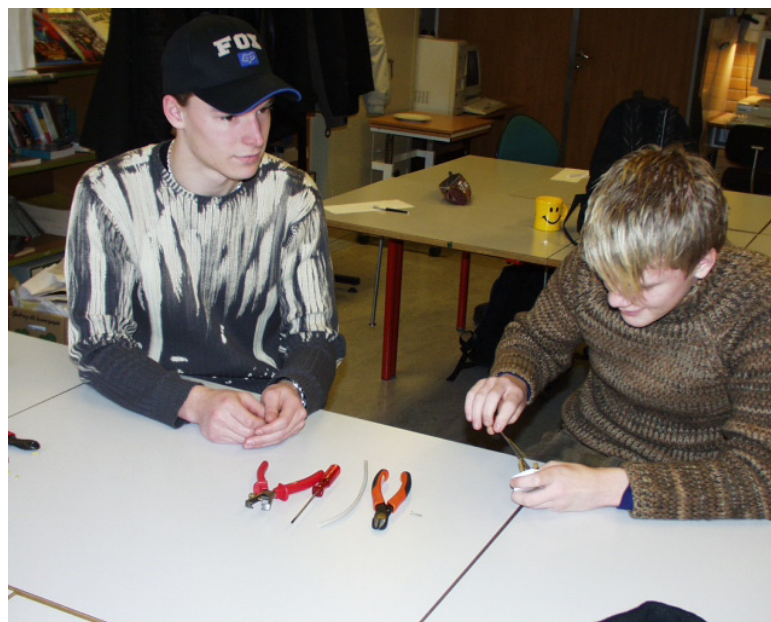


Complete the “fill in the missing words” exercise from the video text



Complete the “jumbled words” exercise to make instructions

3. When the students have finished the work on the computers, remembering that students need not finish simultaneously, they receive a text version of the same instructions. The texts can be downloaded from <http://www.languages.dk/methods/materials.html>
4. The students work in pairs; student A instructs student B on how to wire a British plug. Student B may help student A with the language, but s/he must not do anything that student A does not instruct her/him to do. The text may be used as supplementary help, but the students should try to avoid this.



5. The students change roles and repeat the activity above

End of pre-task.