BRITISH COUNCIL

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let's clan

GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

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The aim of this guide is to provide teachers with information about why Let's Clan is a valuable classroom resource for teachers and students, and to offer practical ideas about how to use Let's Clan in the classroom.

What is Let's Clan?

In June 2013 RTVE officially launched Let's Clan. This initiative, aimed at increasing exposure to English through children's programmes, allows viewers to access TV series in original version using the dual function. Viewers can see that this function is available when the Let's Clan logo appears in the corner of the screen. In the near future, RTVE plan to launch their own English learning productions ´Peter and Jack' and 'Work and Play' (Los Lunnis)

What is the British Council's role?

In addition to this guide, the British Council has also produced a guide for parents for the RTVE webpage, outlining the benefits of watching television in English and offering tips and techniques on how parents can use Clan TV at home with their 3-6 year old child to support their language learning.

It has also created information sheets for parents on five of the Clan series with typical language and ideas about how to make TV viewing interactive. These are available to download from their webpage http://www.rtve.es/television/lets-clan/ in English and Spanish. More of these will be made available over the coming months.

Why use Let's Clan in the classroom?

• Cartoons are motivating for very young learners. They capture their attention and spark their imagination. They are drawn in by the attractive visuals, catchy music and entertaining storylines.

• They provide a context for presenting new vocabulary and simple structures. The visual element makes it easier for students to deduce the meaning of the spoken word because they can see who is speaking, where they are and what is happening. The paralinguistic features such as gesture and facial expression also offer significant clues as to the meaning of the linguistic message.

• They serve as a natural model for intonation, rhythm and stress as well as giving children exposure to a diverse range of accents.

• They are easily accessible in the classroom through the RTVE webpage.

• Repetition is a prominent feature of many cartoons. This can aid learning and allow children to gain confidence in the language.

• Cartoons can promote socio-cultural values (getting along with others, politeness, moral values).

• Besides language learning, cartoons can help children develop in other areas, such as memory, logic, problem-solving and observation skills.

• You can use the topic/storyline as a springboard to other activities and subjects.

Top Tips

Selecting viewing material

• Select cartoons which appeal to your learners. Consider whether they would want to watch them in their mother tongue. Give them a choice of what they want to watch (obviously this choice will be limited to those the teacher has selected as appropriate. You may want to make these 'hidden' options whereby the students choose an envelope/number. They will still feel that they have some control over the decision).

- Choose material which is appropriate for their English level, taking the density of language, speech rate and clarity of the audio into account. Also consider whether it is age appropriate, bearing in mind the cognitive and linguistic demands.

Selecting tasks

- When choosing the target language, think about whether it is useful. Select high frequency words/ phrases which relate to your students' personal experience and immediate environment as opposed to less frequent vocabulary.

- As teachers, many of us are used to using material designed specifically for use in the EFL classroom. As this media is authentic and cannot be graded, it is important to grade the task, e.g. design tasks where students listen for individual words rather than more complex structures.

- Intersperse viewing with tasks so that the students watch only a short section of the episode at a time. Breaking the episode up into manageable units will prevent them from losing interest and watching passively.

Considerations

- •Most children watch cartoons at home regularly solely for enjoyment. They probably won't think of it as something to watch in the classroom in order to learn English. Make it clear to them that they have a task to do. Also, consider the set-up of the classroom (if they are sitting on the floor, they may be tempted to lie down).

- Be aware of parent perception of watching video in class. They may perceive it as a waste of time. When communicating with parents, whether it be meeting face-to-face or through termly newsletters, explain the educational value of using cartoons in class and perhaps give a few examples of the type of task they are expected to do.

- Obviously 3-6 year old children have limited language resource and will not be able to communicate effectively in prediction and communication activities in English. In this case, using L1 in a limited and structured way may be desirable in order to provide contextual support.

Practical classroom activities

Obviously, the activities that you choose to use in class will depend on the level of your students and the cartoon you choose to use. The video is used to give language input and students may produce little or no language while watching. It is at the pre and post-viewing stages that production is most likely to take place. A 3-year-old may produce very little and our objective might be simply to demonstrate that they have understood the target language, whereas we may challenge a 6-year-old to attempt to produce the language more consistently.
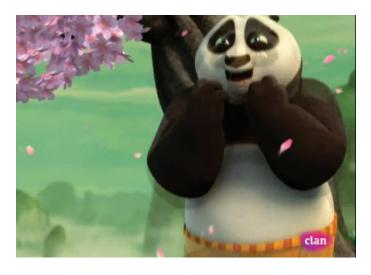
Before

Introducing the topic

- Introduce the cartoon and create a context. Ask the students if they have seen the cartoon before, if they know the characters names and if they know anything about the characters.

Prediction activities

- Use screen shots of the main parts of the story. Ask students to put the pictures in sequence (either number the pictures on a worksheet or order cut-out pictures).

- Tell the students the title of the story. Ask them for ideas about what will happen and to predict things they might hear or see. They can check predictions using a list of words or pictures. This can be made easier for very young learners by showing them a group of items with distractors,

e.g. If Peppa Pig is going to the supermarket you could ask them what they think she will buy (show e.g. 6 food items, a watch and a shoe).

- Show a screen shot from the beginning of the video. Ask students to describe the picture (who they see, what they are doing etc.). Then ask them who else will appear, where they will go, what they will see etc.

Pre-teaching vocabulary

Pre-teaching vocabulary helps students to understand and will encourage them to listen. According to Sarah Phillips (1993: 68), "vocabulary is best learned when the meaning of the word(s) is illustrated, for example by a picture, an action, or a real object".

Introduce vocabulary by using flashcards, realia or mime, then drill the words/phrases. You can then use these ideas to give students receptive or productive practice:

- Teach the words with actions or sounds, e.g. musical instruments (banging a drum, playing the guitar). You say the word and they do the action then vice versa.

- Stick flashcards around the room. Tell students to 'run to the car', 'jump to the train' etc.

- Cover flashcards with a piece of card then slowly reveal the picture for students to guess.

- If you are using real objects, place the items in a bag. Students take turns to feel what's inside the bag and try to guess what it is.

- Place flashcards or objects where students can see them. Ask them to close their eyes. Remove an item. Ask students what's missing.

- Put four flashcards from the same group up on the board with another one that doesn't belong in that group (e.g. train, car, plane, bus, trousers). Students have to say which one is the odd one out.

- Nominate a student to take a flashcard from the pile (face down). The other students ask questions to guess the flashcard, e.g. 'is it a banana?'

During

- Students check their predictions for the activities mentioned above.
- Tell students to listen out for specific pre-taught vocabulary or structures. When students hear the target language they do an action, e.g. stand up. Alternatively, they could have mini-flashcards to hold up.

- Give students a worksheet with the vocabulary items on it (pictures or words if the students can read) and a couple of distractors. Ask students to circle/tick the items they hear as they watch or play class bingo.

- Stop the video halfway through/at an interesting part. Ask the students to predict the continuation.

- A number of these cartoons give viewers the opportunity to interact with the narrator/ characters, e.g. in Pocoyo the narrator asks the audience questions, e.g. "can you tell me what Pocoyo is carrying?". Stop at these parts and encourage the students to answer. Similarly, in some cartoons like Dora the Explorer the characters ask things like "can you count with me?" or to help solve a problem. Encourage students to join in.

- Students have a worksheet with a number of questions on it. These could be represented by pictures, e.g. Where did Dora go? (picture of Dora and two or three options). Students select the correct option. Alternatively, it could be a matching activity, e.g. the characters with the things they bought at the supermarket.

- Where characters are particularly expressive, stop the video and ask students how they are feeling.

- Stop the video at certain parts. Hold a cut-out speech bubble next to the character and ask students to predict what they will say. This sounds difficult, but could be simple words/ phrases like 'hello', 'let's go!', 'see you soon'

After

- Get a personal response from the students. Ask them to vote for their favourite part of the story and character and say why it's their favourite (they might like to draw their favourite scene and they could then describe it to the rest of the group).
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- Play 'guess the character'. Describe a character from the cartoon for students to guess. They can then take turns to do the same.

- Review the story using screenshots, encouraging students to remember the story and asking them questions as you go.

- Review the target vocabulary using flashcards, mime, games like those mentioned above.

- Give students true and false information (this could be spoken/written/pictures) and students have to identify which information is false.

- Select a significant scene from the cartoon. Reveal the picture gradually. Students guess what is in the part they can't see.

- Pick out useful phrases and focus on pronunciation/intonation. First check that students understand the meaning, then play the word/phrase you want the students to repeat. Gradually turn down the volume until they are saying it alone.

- Students act out a scene from the cartoon. Keep this short and simple (no more than a few lines). You could use props to make it more interesting.

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