

# languages ICT



## What are DVDs for MFL teaching and learning?

Teachers using video or DVD in the classroom report that pupils retain more language, understand new concepts more rapidly and improve their confidence in listening, as they are hearing and seeing authentic language simultaneously. The advent of film and animation in digital versatile disc (DVD) format provides an attractive, relatively cheap and extremely flexible resource for teachers. Benefits offered include language choices, sub-titles, quick navigation, high-quality scene pausing and a variety of extras. The visual nature of film and animation appeals to a wide range of learning styles and cannot fail to enrich a teacher's portfolio of classroom resources.



### The benefits of DVD over VHS video

There are huge advantages in using films in DVD format over VHS. DVD films can be bought in Europe and are compatible with DVD players in the UK, unlike VHS films from France, for example, which only play in black and white. With online ordering, we now have access to films from Europe and beyond as soon as they are available in their country of production.



A DVD usually gives you a choice as to what language you listen in and, if you choose to use subtitles, which language you read in (or any combination of the two!) Subtitles in the target language can be an excellent way to reinforce the connection between sound and the written form of the language, enable access to complex language, improve confidence in listening and increase vocabulary. Check the information on a DVD case to find out what sub-titles are available on a particular disc.

You will also find familiar films in English with options for subtitles or audio in another language. Where pupils are learning a language with pictograms, such as Chinese or Japanese, listening in English and seeing the written language can be particularly beneficial. There are also films with subtitles for the hearing impaired offering audio and subtitles in the same language.

Fast-forwarding a DVD is very quick and easy. You can select a chapter from the index, so there is no losing your place or time-consuming tape spooling as on a VHS tape. It is therefore easy to play a number of scenes from a film to pupils in succession, to illustrate a character or give a flavour of the story as a whole. Furthermore, the image on screen when fast-forwarding and rewinding is clearer than on VHS, so key moments can be found more easily.

If you pause a scene on DVD, the quality of the paused image is also very high. This allows the teacher to set descriptive tasks or ask pupils to imagine what a character is thinking or saying at a decisive moment in the film. Depending on the DVD player you are using and the individual disc, you may also be able to zoom and pan around a scene using the remote control. This is an excellent opportunity for description and speculation.

Along with the film itself, you may well find useful 'extras'. These could include interviews with the directors, scenes from the 'Making of...' or interactive games. These can be particularly fun if they accompany a foreign language version of a well-known cartoon and can work well as whole class activities.

### Authentic films versus animation

Thoughtful use of authentic film can enable pupils to make connections with people and their cultures throughout the world. They can hear real language being used in a meaningful context and be exposed to the register and tone of a foreign language. Where they are watching a film in its original language, they can also benefit from watching lip movement. Foreign language films also offer pupils a huge range of images of the foreign country. They can see the landscape, the people, their houses, cities, rural areas, customs, history and so on. Language and country specific stereotypes can start to be addressed more fully with the use of such authentic images, which rarely come across in textbooks or media images of the foreign countries.

Extracting scenes from feature films enables the teacher to focus on specific characters or place and use the clip as a stimulus for speaking and writing activities. For example, you can ask pupils to watch a particular scene without sound and speculate in the target language as to what is going on. You could also ask them to create and perform a role-play to reproduce a silent scene. Alternatively, you could play a clip and hide the screen, so that only the sound can be heard. Pupils can then mime to reconstruct what is happening.

Choosing films to use with pupils does need to be done carefully, however. You may find that your chosen film features nudity, sex scenes, drug taking and swearing, so you will need to decide what you are able to show to pupils.

The world of animated films is a rich and powerful one. Although, as linguists, we may prefer to use authentic clips in our classrooms, we know that pupils love animation and are very familiar with the all the latest releases. Where else can sharks speak? (Finding Nemo), dogs have a cup of tea and toast? (Wallace and Grommit) and a man lift two enormous trains? (The Incredibles). Disney and Pixar in particular have released a number of entertaining animated films on DVD, in a wide range of foreign and community languages.

#### **Animated clips are particularly useful in the following ways:**

Familiarity - pupils already know the characters and situations being described in the scenes, so they can cope better with listening in a foreign language.

Humour – the strong caricature and exaggeration appeals to pupils and can convey complex dialogues in a comprehensible way.

Creativity – the quirky characters and imaginative story lines can lead to creative activities after watching the film or clip.

Dubbing – there is no off-putting lip synchronization.

Complexity – a wide variety of complex emotions and ideas can be conveyed in a more immediate way than authentic film is able to do.

#### **Sourcing DVD materials**

There are many online suppliers or lenders of DVDs. Your local library may even have a section of world cinema DVD. Do check with your school that you are licensed to show a particular DVD in a classroom context, however. Online sources of foreign language DVDs include:

FNAC : [www.fnac.com/](http://www.fnac.com/)

Amazon, France : [www.amazon.fr](http://www.amazon.fr)

HMV: [www.hmv.co.uk/hmvweb/home.do](http://www.hmv.co.uk/hmvweb/home.do)

Lovefilm.com: [www.lovefilm.com/](http://www.lovefilm.com/)

EBay: [www.ebay.co.uk/](http://www.ebay.co.uk/)

MovieMail: [www.moviemail-online.co.uk](http://www.moviemail-online.co.uk)

At present video is still the preferred medium for the main producers of MFL Schools programmes, such as Channel Four and the BBC. There are some DVD or CD-based resources appearing, however, which combine video footage with interactive activities. Examples include Movie Talk (Eurotalk) and Extra! (Channel 4/Nelson Thornes). There are, however, a multitude of television programmes available in foreign languages, which can be ordered online. For example, popular series such as Friends, ER, 24, Dawson's Creek and Sex and the City. By buying one DVD with a number of episodes, you can use clips across topic areas and schemes of work.

*To read about tried and tested ideas for using DVDs, try searching the Useful ICT ideas, effective language lessons database on the Languages ICT website.*

*Note: Information in this booklet has been collated by a number of practising teachers and advisers and is accurate to the best of our knowledge at the time of writing. CILT and ALL do not take any responsibility for inaccuracies contained within. The inclusion of any software products and/or companies within Languages ICT guidance does not imply endorsement by CILT or ALL in any way.*