

languages ICT



What is web page creation in MFL?

Web pages are attractive, familiar and versatile. All users of the World Wide Web access web pages and take advantage of their many facilities. Links transport users to other sites, or allow downloads, and useful web pages can be saved intact and stored on a hard drive for use later. Web pages can include text, image, sound and video, are viewable online and offline, and can link to other sources of information, on an intranet or the Internet. Simple web pages are quite easy to construct, with specialist software or in Word. For pupils they present many opportunities for imaginative work.

The World Wide Web is an invaluable resource for those learning modern foreign languages. A seemingly endless supply of relevant, up-to-date target language is available on any topic at the click of a mouse. Moreover, web pages can be accessed from any computer with an Internet connection, thereby creating a seamless connection between directed work in school and independent follow-up work at home or after classes. Hyperlinks allow users to conduct independent research or access useful sites, where, for example, they can complete web-based interactive exercises. Web pages can contain text, image, sound and even video. They offer a multi-sensory learning experience and allow pupils to develop different learning styles. These very features which make the Web such an important resource can be utilised to great effect by teachers and pupils alike in the creation of their own web pages.

Pupils creating web pages

There are many ways in which pupils can successfully build web pages to demonstrate language in use. They can have a sense of audience and follow the conventions of the web to practise a different writing style, such as succinct sentences, use of sub-titles and layering of information across a series of linked pages. Web page creation does not mean complex web site creation, however. Pages can be single, or simply a small set of linked pages to illustrate a theme. They do not have to be put online, although in some cases it may be possible to place created web pages in a class or departmental section of the school's web site.

Resources need not be a problem. Internet research is often very fruitful, but don't forget clip art, digital photos and scanned images, such as old photographs. Including images, sound recordings, video clips and/or links broadens the appeal of the finished product and engages pupils in a diverse, multi-skilled approach to developing their language competence. Voice recordings can be made using a microphone and Windows Sound Recorder, which is standard on Windows machines. More adventurous recording can be done with a minidisk recorder or simply a cassette recorder, although in this case recording quality may suffer. The school technician will advise on the relatively easy process of moving sound files from extraneous hardware to a computer.

Many topic areas of current schemes of work can be explored on web pages. Exploring the topic of "Family", a pupil might use some digital photographs of family members, and, using just one page, match a very short written commentary to each photograph. For near-beginners, simple phrases to state the name, age and birthday of each person could suffice. More advanced students could explore the same theme, but include a past tense commentary describing the key points in the life of each family member. Finally, students competent at sound editing could link text or images to sound recordings of their own voices giving information on each image.

A group can work on creating a set of linked pages, which give depth to the study, developing the theme in more detail at each link level. A study of a city or local community lends itself to this approach.

Sharing information with partner schools abroad is very appealing. A class can create a set of web pages about themselves to place on the school web site or a CD to be sent to the partner school where the pages may be viewed offline. If file sizes remain modest, a single web page could be sent by individual pupils to e-pals in partner schools.

Finally, sequenced web pages can be used for imaginative story-telling, maybe adapting an old story to a new, modern setting or creating a new story altogether.



Teacher use

Teachers too can make good use of web pages created in a word processor. The main advantage is that any documents created can be placed online (password-protected, if desired) and remain accessible for pupils outside of school.

Teachers can use web page links to guide pupils to worksheets, support documents, presentations used for whole class teaching, and useful web sites. Additionally, links can take pupils to any interactive exercises created with authoring software and stored on the school network or hosted on the Internet.

Web pages are relatively easy to create. The school may own proprietary software but a common word processor such as Word can be used to make web pages. If pupils can insert images into a word-processed page, or link to another document, a web site, or a sound file, then interesting and varied web pages are within their scope, quickly and easily. See Key Tips below and consult a technician if necessary.

Bear in mind that web pages created by pupils do not have to go on the Internet. They may be placed on the school intranet or run offline in a browser during language lessons, from the network. The finished product does not have to be for publication, which means that pupils can maintain the focus of their efforts on language production.

Key tips: Web pages created in Word

Complex web pages made with Word may not always run well on a browser but if the following tips are followed, it should be possible for pupils and teachers to create interesting, useful and usable web pages.

- Keep web pages simple
- Text, images, hyperlinks, bold/italic formats and bulleted lists should work well.
- Create a new web (html) page before starting rather than converting existing word-processed documents to html. Follow these steps:
 - File > New > Web Page. When the page opens, go to File > Save As and then ensure that the Save As Type is "web page".
 - Save a template or a set of templates of pages which have worked well.

To read about tried and tested ideas for using web page creation, 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.