MORE MOVIES, PLEASE!

Using Movies in ELT

Teacher’s Notes

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Use these notes to adapt the seminar ideas to your own English class. The central question is how a chosen scene and a manageable task can serve a learning objective. The general examples are planning models. The original demonstration scene at the end includes a script, questions and a checked answer key.

Learning through a visible situation

A clip can make a place, action or relationship visible while learners hear language. Select the information that matters for the lesson. A student may understand a situation from pictures while still needing help with a phrase. Check both where relevant. Present possible benefits without promising that every video will improve learning.

Selection checklist

Preview the segment for interest, clarity of story, understandable language, sound quality and suitability for the group. Check whether background knowledge or fast dialogue will overwhelm the task. Choose content that supports respect, cooperation and responsibility. Decide how much context to provide before viewing.

Clip record

For each classroom resource, record the title, source, selected start and end times, level, objective, essential vocabulary, questions, checked answers and subtitle plan. Use materials you are permitted to show or share. Keep commercial film or coursebook resources separate from public seminar downloads unless you have permission to distribute them.

Tasks for first and second viewing

For the first viewing, use a main-idea question such as identifying the central problem. For a second viewing, use a few focused details in scene order. Useful formats from the original exercise sheet include multiple choice, word gaps and true or false with correction. Verify every film-specific item after viewing the actual segment.

Language focus

Match expressions with their functions, identify selected words in context or compare a sentence with the action it describes. If the objective concerns tense use, choose a clip with clear examples and ask learners to notice those examples. Avoid turning every scene into an exhaustive grammar exercise.

Subtitles and learner support

Decide when subtitles help the objective. For example, replay with English subtitles to inspect an expression after a first viewing for meaning. Give fewer questions, offer choices or allow short written answers where helpful. Learners who need access support may require captions or a script from the beginning.

Evaluation

Use the final task to check the objective. Keep a brief record of successful answers and recurring difficulties. Enjoyment is useful feedback, but a positive reaction alone does not show that learners understood the target language. Revise the task, support or segment based on the evidence.

Twelve techniques from the original collection

1 Sound only

Hide the image and play a brief audio segment. Learners infer the setting or feeling from sounds. Show the full scene to check.

2 Freeze frame

Pause at a useful image. Ask about visible actions, objects or setting details. Separate observations from inferences.

3 Silent viewing

Mute a short scene. Learners infer what happens or choose a possible meaning. Restore sound to check.

4 Watchers and listeners

Give groups access to picture or sound separately. Compare observations in writing or pairs, then show the complete scene.

5 Fast overview

If useful, show a very brief silent overview at a faster speed. Return to normal playback for the learning task.

6 Partial viewing

Show a cropped still, invite a prediction and reveal the full image. Prepare the still in advance rather than covering the display.

7 Role-play

Use a short model as the starting point for an optional enactment. Give a clear situation and manageable language.

8 Thinking and feeling

Ask what a character may be feeling and which action or line supports the answer. Discuss a constructive choice in the situation.

9 Prediction

Pause before an important event. Learners record a prediction and check it against the next segment.

10 Telling the story

Use a short sequence for a written or oral retelling. Match the length and support to learners’ level.

11 Tell who

Give or write clues about a character from the scene. Learners identify the character and justify the choice.

12 Behaviour study

Observe a greeting, request or response in its setting. Compare possible interpretations without generalising from one character to a whole culture.

Adaptable demonstration lesson

Suggested level: A2 to B1. Suggested duration: 20 minutes. Use a previewed short scene about helping someone. Choose a segment with audible expressions that match the objective. Write the actual expressions and answers before teaching.

Objective

Learners identify the main problem and match four expressions from the scene to their meanings or functions.

Before viewing 3 minutes

Introduce the setting. Prepare up to three essential words. Read the question: What problem needs solving? Give two or three suitable options if needed.

First viewing and check 4 minutes

Play the segment once. Learners record the main problem. Check answers with one visible or audible clue.

Second viewing 5 minutes

Replay for expressions of help and thanks. Learners tick the expressions they hear. Use only expressions confirmed in the actual clip.

Language task 5 minutes

Match the four selected expressions to their meanings or functions. Use a freeze frame or replay where it helps clarify the situation.

Exit check 3 minutes

Give a new short written situation. Learners choose an appropriate expression and explain the choice briefly. Compare the response with the objective.

Homework options

Choose one: write a brief scene summary, correct an inaccurate summary, order supplied events or use two expressions in a new written situation. Provide enough information to complete the task without requiring home access to the film.

A Small Act of Help

An original scene for the demonstration lesson

This is a ready-to-record classroom scene, not a supplied movie clip. Use two adults, a few books and a bag. Record a single continuous shot of about 45 to 60 seconds. Keep speech clear and allow time for the actions. For silent viewing, the fallen book and the helping action must be visible. A live performance can model the sequence when recording is unavailable, but does not demonstrate video replay.

Setting and action

Outside a library, Maya carries several books. One book falls. Leo notices, stops and picks it up. He carries some books while Maya opens the library door. They enter together.

Dialogue

Maya: Oh! I dropped a book.

Leo: Can I help you?

Maya: Yes, please. Could you pick up that book?

Leo: Of course. Here you are.

Maya: Thank you for your help.

Leo: You’re welcome. Shall I carry some of the books?

Maya: That would be kind of you. They are for the library.

Leo: I’ll carry these three.

Maya: Great. I’ll open the door.

Leo: Let’s take them inside together.

Objective and preparation

Learners identify the problem and match four expressions with their functions. Prepare carry, drop and library only if needed. Play or perform the scene once for the main situation, then replay for the target language. Pause immediately after the book falls for a prediction; continue to check it.

Demonstration questions and answers

First viewing

What problem needs solving? A Maya cannot find the library. B Maya drops a book while carrying several books. C Leo loses his bag.

Answer: B. Maya says she dropped a book, and the action shows it.

Second viewing

Who picks up the fallen book? Answer: Leo.

Where are the books going? Answer: To the library.

How many books does Leo offer to carry? Answer: Three.

Who opens the door? Answer: Maya.

Language matching

Match each expression to its function: A offering help; B making a request; C thanking; D responding to thanks.

1 Can I help you? → A

2 Could you pick up that book? → B

3 Thank you for your help. → C

4 You’re welcome. → D

After viewing

Order the events: A Leo picks up a book. B Maya opens the door. C Maya drops a book. D They take the books inside. Answer: C, A, B, D.

Exit check

A classmate is carrying a heavy box. Write an expression to offer help. Suggested answer: Can I help you? Accept another appropriate offer. A classmate helps you carry it. What can you say? Suggested answer: Thank you for your help.

Use with another movie

The answers above apply only to this original script. For a chosen movie, adapt the questions and confirm every answer against the actual scene. The scene script may be used and recorded as part of this seminar’s classroom activities.