Tools for the ESOL Classroom

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**The Wonderful World of the Internet for ESOL Instruction**



**Institute for the Professional Development of Adult Educators**

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# Introduction

The world has changed because of the Internet and technology devices in the classroom, and so have adult education ESOL programs. Integrating technology tools and Internet sites can reshape your curriculum and reinforce concepts necessary for your students’ success.

When using technology in the classroom, consider that this is the generation of “digital natives,” students who have grown up with the Internet and who are familiar with technology for entertainment. It is important that we guide students to use high-quality instructional tools and Internet sites for learning or practicing English skills. In locating such resources, you will want to consider?

* How does this tool/site engage users?
* Does this tool/site provide targeted support in a necessary skill?
* Does this tool/site address listening, reading, reasoning, creating, or writing in English?
* What degree of language proficiency does this tool/site support?
* Is there a way to assess skills mastery?

## Getting Started

Programs are always looking for free, quality resources and something that is new. Let’s spend a few moments accessing a few sites that can be integrated into our ESOL classrooms. Make sure to visit the toolkit often as additional materials and sites are added.

## Current Events to Drive Instruction

There are numerous websites that use current events to guide ESOL instruction. It is important that we provide an educational environment where students learn academic and workplace skills, as well as more about the world around them.

Take a few moments to look at the following two websites that use current events. As you review each site, ask yourself:

* Would this site be engaging to my students?
* Is the site easy to navigate?
* Does this site address listening, reading, reasoning, creating, or writing in English?
* What degree of language proficiency does this site support?
* What types of lessons could I teach through the use of this site?

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Site** | **Overview** | **URL** |
| **VOA Learning English: We are American English** | Website with articles, audios, videos, everyday grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation guides, and even materials on the U. S. Constitution. This site provides lots of materials using current articles as the basis for integrating learning. | <http://learningenglish.voanews.com/> |
| **Breaking News English** | Lessons for seven different levels are provided in such areas as reading and listening. These lessons are based on news stories. | <http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/index.html> |

## Having Fun Learning English

Learning English as a second language is not always easy, but it should be fun. Take a few moments to look at the following websites to see how you could integrate the academic areas of ESOL into fun activities. As you review each site, ask yourself:

* Would this site be engaging to my students?
* Is the site easy to navigate?
* Does this site address listening, reading, reasoning, creating, or writing in English?
* What degree of language proficiency does this site support?
* What types of skills could I teach through the use of this site?

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Site** | **Overview** | **URL** |
| **5 Minute English** | This website has been designed to give short and easy explanations and exercises in such areas as intonation, grammar, reading, vocabulary, idioms, listening lessons for the ESL classrooms | <http://www.5minuteenglish.com/> |
| **English-Zone** | This site provides lots of activities/quizzes for students | [<http://www.english-zone.com/>l](http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com/index.html) |
| **Road to Grammar** | This website provides practice on grammar skills including games, practice, and units of study on business English, holidays, shopping, health | <http://www.roadtogrammar.com/> |

## It’s a Visual World!

Many of our students gain their English skills through media, such as watching television or listening to music. Why not take advantage of how students access information by connecting media to learning?

Take a few moments to look at the following websites that use different types of media. As you review each site, ask yourself:

* Would this site be engaging to my students?
* Is the site easy to navigate?
* Does this site address listening, reading, reasoning, creating, or writing in English?
* What degree of language proficiency does this site support?
* What types of lessons could I teach through the use of this site?

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Site** | **Overview** | **URL** |
| **Connect with English. Annenberg Learner** | Connect with English is a story to help students learn English. This soap opera tells the story of Rebecca Casey, a young woman who lives in Boston. She works in a factory and takes care of her father and brother, but she has big dreams. Have students follow the story to see whether or not Rebecca’s dreams come true. | <http://www.learner.org/series/cwe/> |
| **English for All** | Funded by the United States Department of Education, English For All is a free web-based multimedia system for adults learning English as a second language. Adult learners may use this online or CD-based program in conjunction with a class or independently. | <http://www.myefa.org/login.cfm> |
| **REEPworld** | A free English practice website for adult English language learners and teachers. Site is divided into Work, Family, and Health. Real people tell simple stories which are broken into sentences. There are also vocabulary and comprehension questions. | <http://www.reepworld.org/studentsite/index.html> |

## YouTube Videos

Students often want additional practice based on real-world situations. There are numerous video sites on YouTube that can assist our ESOL students in acquiring more effective language skills. Remember, YouTube can be used for more than just posting funny videos. Watch a few sample videos and see what you think.

As you watched sample videos, ask yourself:

* Would this video be engaging to my students?
* Does this video address listening, reading, reasoning, creating, or writing in English?
* What degree of language proficiency does this video support?
* What types of lessons could I teach through the use of this video?

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| **Site** | **Overview** | **URL** |
| **Listen and Read Along** | This site is exactly what it sounds like. Listen to stories and read along with them by following the highlighted word. Hear pronunciation and intonation while better understanding sentence structure. | <https://www.youtube.com/user/ListenAndReadAlong/> |
| **English in a Minute** | With this Voice of America channel, you can hear news and feature stories in American English, but spoken 33% slower than normal to make it easier to follow along. Students will get a grasp on a wide range of vocabulary subjects, idioms, etc. in real-world contexts. | <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCKyTokYo0nK2OA-az-sDijA> |
| **Interesting Things English** | This site focuses on sounds, word, and phrases. | <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCFesTs7AUEE9foP9JGn3dgQ> |

## Find Your Own Favorite!

There are so many different sites that provide excellent resources for the ESOL classroom. Spend a few moments searching through the following two sites that provide a myriad of resources and urls and find your” favorite” of the day.

* Why did I select this site?
* Does this site address listening, reading, reasoning, creating, or writing in English?
* What degree of language proficiency does this site support?
* What types of lessons could I teach through the use of this site?

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Site** | **Overview** | **URL** |
| **OER Commons** | A collection of free, open educational resources that teachers can use to search for lesson ideas, resources, and materials. | [www.oercommons.org](http://www.oercommons.org) |
| **Learning Resources** | Shared information from ESL educators plus over 70 online learning resources. | <http://thespanishplace.net/esl-learning-resources/> |