

ETpedia™

Teenagers

500 ideas for teaching
English to teenagers

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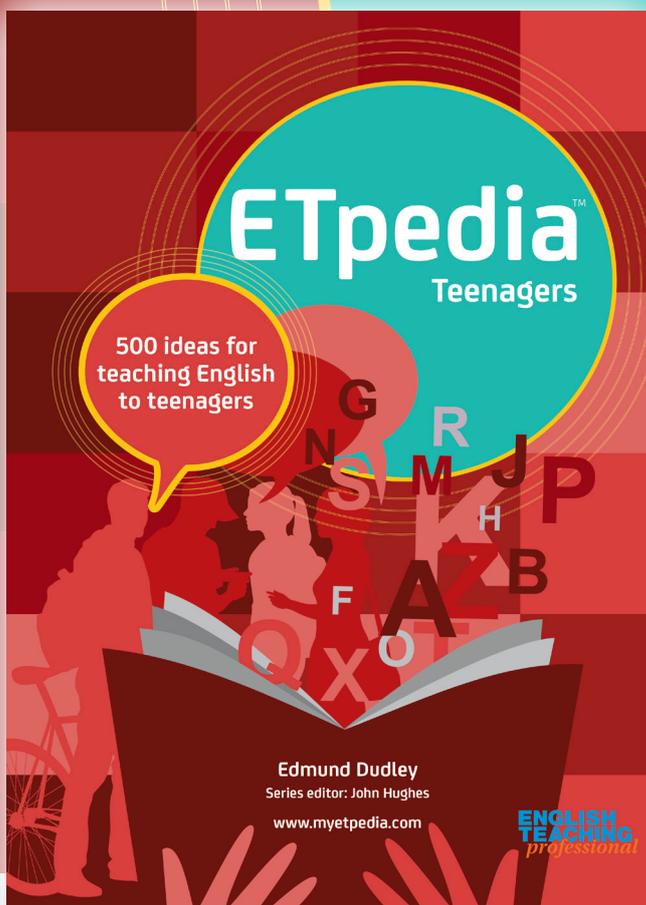
www.pavpub.com/etpedia-teenagers/

Email: info@etprofessional.com

Tel: +44 (0)1273 434943

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Whether you're a new or experienced English language teacher, teenage students can pose unique challenges. They can also be one of the most rewarding groups to teach.

ETpedia Teenagers is packed with practical activities and insights to help you to understand and motivate students in this age group. Ideal for teachers of all experience levels, it contains 50 units of 10 points each, covering everything you need to know about teaching, managing and engaging teenage learners.

The seventh title in the best-selling *ETpedia* series draws upon author Edmund Dudley's own extensive experience teaching English to teenagers. You will also find quotes from other experienced English language teachers, sharing their views, ideas and experiences of teenage classes.

Content includes:

- Preparation and planning for different types of teenage classes
- Understanding what motivates teenagers and what they value in their teachers
- Dealing with behaviour problems and things to avoid when teaching teenagers
- Classroom techniques to help you get the most out of your teenage classes
- Helping teenagers develop language awareness and improve their skills
- Additional topics and activities that really work with this age group.

Also includes: appendix with additional photocopiable materials.

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10 ways to use online videos with teenagers

Short videos on YouTube and other video-sharing platforms can be the basis for a variety of interesting language-learning activities. Many teenagers spend hours of their free time watching online videos, and so students are usually receptive to ideas that incorporate video, especially if we use short clips.

Remember to choose a video that fits your language-learning agenda, rather than just showing a video for the sake of it, or because it is funny. It also makes sense to use videos sparingly: a short two-minute video can provide enough input for an entire lesson.

Bookmark videos that you think could be developed into a classroom activity, and think carefully about what you want the students to do before showing the video in class. Students can also be encouraged to develop their own activities based on videos that they have found themselves. Always make sure that the videos chosen are appropriate for class, both in terms of language and content.

1. Unpack body language, gestures and facial expressions

Find a short video featuring several people engaged in a conversation. Use the video to practise speculative language. Play the video with the sound off and ask students the following questions: *Who are the people? What are they talking about?* Let students come up with their answers in pairs. Then display a list of emotions on the board (for example, *excited, depressed, nervous, angry, jealous*, etc.) and ask students to guess which adjective applies to which person in the clip. Discuss their ideas. Then play the clip and allow students to re-assess their predictions. Finally, discuss the content of the clip from a language perspective.

2. Create a voice-over

As an alternative to the activity above, play students the short clip with the sound off and ask them to provide the language. Play the clip several times, pausing where necessary. Put the students into small groups, making sure the number of students in each group is the same as the number of people in the clip. They write down their script. Check all the work for accuracy. Then play the clip again (still with the sound off), getting groups of students to take turns to perform their dubbed version of the conversation. When everyone has finished, vote for which version was the best. Then play the original clip with the sound up. Students try to notice as many similarities and differences between their own version and the original version as they can.

3. Cover the screen

An interesting way to get students describing people is to cover the screen before playing a short video of a dialogue. Play the video the first time and ask students simply to notice the voices and any background noises. Ask them where they think the conversation takes place and who they think the people are. Then ask them to give a full description of the speakers (age, appearance, clothes, etc.) based on the content of the clip and the sound of their voices. Compare students' guesses before revealing the screen and playing the video again. Finally, students decide whose predictions were the most accurate.

4. Discuss videos made by other teenagers

Find two short videos (in L1 or in English) made by different teenage YouTubers from the students' own country. This type of talking-head video is particularly popular among teenage students. Choose videos connected to the topic you want to discuss (for example, clothes, gaming, school life, etc.). Before class, watch the videos and (if they are in L1) translate six or seven sentences from each video into English and write them on separate sticky notes. In class, get the students into pairs and give each student a sticky-note quotation. Ask students to predict the content of the video based on the quotation. Play the videos and ask students to identify the part of the clip that matches their quotation. They can do this by writing down the corresponding phrase in L1 that appears in the video, or, if it is in English, to put their hand up when they hear their quotation. Then ask students which video they think has the most views, and why. Finally, ask them to decide how useful and entertaining each video was, on a scale of 1 to 5.

5. Scramble the sequence

Find a short video with a clear sequence of events, but no dialogue. It could be a commercial, for example. Before class, write a step-by-step summary of what happens in the clip. Keep the sentences simple, and do not go into too much detail. Jumble the summary sentences before making copies. In class, divide the class into two groups, A and B. Ask the students in group A to turn their backs. Play the clip to group B only. Then give a worksheet to each student in group A, and ask them to pair up with a student in group B. In pairs, Student B describes what they saw, while Student A listens and numbers the sentences on the worksheet according to what they think is the correct order. Student A can ask questions. Student B is not allowed to look at the worksheet. Finally, play the clip again so that all the students can see it. Check the answers and discuss the clip.

6. Analyse 'fails'

Search for a selection of innocuous 'fail' videos (very short, amusing videos that show people and animals tripping, losing their balance, knocking things over, etc.). Search YouTube for 'funny fails' or something similar. Pause each video before the incident occurs, and ask the students to describe the setting in detail. Then ask them to describe what the person is attempting to do, and to predict what they think is *going to* happen next. ('Fail' videos are ideal for this 'seeing the future in the present' function of *going to*.) Play the rest of the clip and check predictions. Finally, ask students what advice they would give the people in the video, using *Next time ...*

7. Do a circle discussion

With older teenage groups, ask one student to bring in an interesting or thought-provoking short clip, possibly on a controversial topic. Watch the video together and ask students to think of one question that occurs to them as a result of having seen the video. Write all the questions on the board and get students to vote on which question they would like to discuss. After the vote, give each student some time to think and take some notes. Finally, have a circle discussion, allowing each student to express their ideas and opinions. Arrange chairs in a circle. Use a ball to encourage students to wait their turn. The ball is passed from person to person, and students have to wait until they have the ball before they can speak.

8. Share a 'How to ...' video

Find an online video that you once watched to get real-life information. Your chosen video might explain how to make a certain dish, how to fix a household appliance, or how to solve a tech problem. Then find two further video tutorials to use as distractors. Prepare convincing reasons why you might have needed all three videos. In class, play the students all three 'How to ...' video tutorials, and encourage them to ask you questions. The students' task is to decide which video you actually needed.

9. Decide on a dessert

Give students the task of deciding what dessert to serve at an imaginary class party. Put them in groups and allow them to brainstorm their ideas. Find three short online videos demonstrating dessert recipes, and play them to the students. They can only see each video once, so get them to make a note of the ingredients needed for each one. After they have seen all three clips, ask each group to discuss the three recipes, ranking them in order of how tasty they look, how much they're likely to cost and how easy they are to prepare. Ask each group to summarise their opinions briefly. Finally, take a vote to decide on the best dessert for the occasion.

10. Get students to 'sell' their requested videos

Teenagers often arrive in class with a request to show the whole group an amusing or interesting online video. If you wish, find time once a week at the end of the lesson to watch one of the videos and discuss it. Ask students if they have seen any memorable videos online recently. Get each student to say why they think their chosen video is worth watching. Ask questions about the content. Listen to different suggestions from several students and then take a vote. Watch the winning video together and then discuss it.

"I get my students to choose their favourite video material. It's a great way for them to practise vocabulary and share ideas about their interests."

Gábor Tarnai, Hungary

10 ideas for making student videos

Teenagers are generally happy to get their phones out to make videos, and – unlike many adults – are usually not self-conscious or embarrassed about seeing themselves on video. Using mobile phones to make student videos therefore makes a lot of sense.

One of the key advantages of getting students to make videos in the language classroom is that it gives them control. Let students delete and re-shoot their videos if they are not satisfied with the outcome. This approach can prove to be very effective, and students often strive to improve the quality of their finished product through multiple takes. Note that it is traditionally quite hard to motivate students to do their work again in order to make it better. Not so when using videos: teenage students tend naturally to set high standards for themselves when they know they are being filmed.

1. Film vox pop surveys

Ask each student in the class to come up with a survey question in connection with a topic you are covering. If the topic is food, for example, one survey question might be *What do you usually have for breakfast?* Get each student to ask everyone else in the class their survey question, and to film each short response. The collected data can be used as the starting point for a classroom project (see Unit 48).

2. Make a no-comment video

As an out-of-class task, ask each student to make a short (10–20 seconds) video of someone engaged in an everyday activity. For example, it might be a classmate looking at their phone, a family member doing the washing-up, or a street cleaner sweeping up rubbish. (If students are going to film strangers, make sure they ask for permission first.) The video should have no commentary. In class, play one of the videos and ask students to create an internal monologue of what the person in the video is thinking. Give them time to write down their ideas. Play the video again, this time with commentary added by the students.

3. Interview a character from the book

As a revision activity, get students into groups of three and ask them to plan and record a short video interview with one of the people or characters featured in the coursebook. All three students plan the questions and answers; then one student shoots the video, while the other two play the parts of the interviewer and interviewee.

4. Practise roleplays

Get students into groups of three to practise roleplays from the book. Ask one student to be the camera operator and director; the other two students take part in the roleplay. As well as filming, the job of the camera operator is to give feedback and make suggestions for improving the quality of the roleplay. Encourage them to shoot several takes.

5. Film mini-dramas and re-enactments

Bring coursebook texts to life by inviting students to film re-enactments of the events described in texts. This kind of activity is unlikely to appeal to all teenage students, but there are some who will enjoy it. Offer this activity as an optional out-of-class task for students to carry out with their friends in pairs or small groups. The following lesson, play the videos to the rest of the group for comments and feedback.

6. Choose an image to discuss

Present students with a selection of online images to browse out of class. The images might be linked by topic, or they might all be by the same artist or photographer. Tell each student to decide which image that they feel is the most interesting and to think about why. Ask them to plan what they would like to say about the chosen image. Get students working in pairs. Ask them to film each other talking about the image they have chosen. This can be done either in class or between lessons. Get students to upload their videos to your class site, together with the corresponding image. In the following lesson, watch the videos together and discuss them.

7. Introduce a video

Get students to make a video about a video. Before sharing an online video that they would like the whole class to watch (see Unit 44.10), ask students to make a video of themselves talking about the video. Give them some time to prepare, perhaps asking them to make the video outside class, with the help of a friend or classmate.

8. Make a *How to ...* video

As a follow-up to working with online *How to ...* videos (see Unit 44.8), invite students to film and upload their own *How to ...* video. The topic of the video is up to students: it can be something connected to the topic being covered in the syllabus, or students can be free to choose.

9. Make a review video

Ask students to film themselves giving their opinion of something they have recently tried out or seen. It might be a new video game, a new pizza restaurant or a recent football match. Students can film the videos at home, or get a friend to help them. When they are ready, get students to share their video with others in the group via your online group page.

10. Respond to a video

Get students to make a video about another student video. As a follow-up to one of the activities above, ask individual students to film and upload their comments and feed back to their classmates.