

Reading comprehension on WhatsApp

Introduction

In this activity, you will find out how to create and deliver a reading comprehension activity to students using the WhatsApp application.

This involves preparing screen capture images of the tasks and the text. This is done because the images are easier for students to download than the documents, students don't require additional software, and students can easily store the images on their mobile phones or devices.

Tech tip

The activity uses two different technologies.

- A free screen capture tool from: <https://www.screencastify.com/>
- The mobile and desktop communication app WhatsApp from: <https://www.whatsapp.com/download>
- Reading texts for the activity can be found at: <https://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/skills/reading>

This activity has been designed to use on the WhatsApp messaging app. The activity can be used synchronously during a live teaching session.

WhatsApp is a very powerful free application that you can download onto your mobile device and/or laptop computer. The application supports a number of forms of synchronous and asynchronous communication, including text, and audio messages. You can also share documents, images, audio files and videos that you upload.

WhatsApp also enables communication between groups as well as individuals, and can even support synchronous voice and video calls.

WhatsApp is also very light on connectivity, so is very popular among mobile users in rural areas where access to connectivity is limited.

Webinar time reference: 07:36 – 09:02

Level: Any level depending on the text you choose. WhatsApp users should be 16 or older.

Time: 20 – 40 minutes, depending on the length of the text you choose.

Aim: To develop students' reading skills and comprehension.

Preparation:

- Find a text that is suitable for the level of your learners. You can find reading texts for all levels of teens at: <https://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/skills/reading>
- Create a screen capture image of the text using <https://www.screencastify.com/>
- Create your comprehension activities for the text using a document, and then make a screenshot of each one. Note: Each of the texts on <https://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/skills/reading> has suggestions for activities, but you will need to copy these into a Word document before creating an image of each one.
- You should also produce an answer sheet and make a screen capture image of it.

Procedure

- Ask your students to post a 'hands-up' emoji to show that they are ready to start the lesson.
- Send your students the captured image of their first reading task and check that they understand the task. Note: They can indicate they understand by using the raised hand emoji, or they can post a question if they don't understand.
- Post the captured image of the text and ask the students to read it and look for the answers.
- Ask the students not to post any answers until you give them a signal (You can use a 'thumbs up' emoji for this.)

- When you are ready, you can either elicit the answers from specific students or you can ask all students to post the answers at one time (If you ask for all students to post their answers, you'll know who got the answers right/wrong)
- Repeat this process with your other reading tasks.
- Once the students have answered all the questions, post your image of the answer sheet so that students can have a clear record of the answers.

Additional resources

Teaching on WhatsApp

- This guide provides instructions on how to design and deliver an interactive training course through the WhatsApp messaging platform. Drawing on the Grassroots' pilot teaching leadership and storytelling through WhatsApp, the document shares tips on pedagogy, participant engagement, and the technical aspects of launching a distance-learning course on WhatsApp.

<https://www.ictworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/01/Grassroot-Whatsapp-Guide.pdf>

LearnEnglish Teens

- Here you can find a large collection of reading texts that have been divided into levels. The site also has suggestions for activities for each of the texts.

<https://learnenglishteens.britishcouncil.org/skills/reading>

Using mobile messenger apps to teach English remotely

- Using a mobile messenger app such as WhatsApp is one way to support the remote learning of English and other subjects. This is especially useful when learners or teachers can only use the internet on their mobile phones or have limited data. There are a variety of ways that these apps can be used. You will need to think about the situation that most of your students are in and then design your approach and activities.

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/using-mobile-messenger-apps-teach-english-remotely>

Navigating language learning through WhatsApp during the lockdown

- Watch a recording of Abigail Ekangou Awanga's session about using WhatsApp for learning at the IATEFL British Council World Teachers' Day web conference 2020.

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/navigating-language-learning-through-whatsapp-during-lockdown>

Using WhatsApp for interactive tasks

- As teachers, we are constantly looking for opportunities to exploit the learning potential of the tools and resources that our learners are already using. WhatsApp, or other free messaging platforms, are now almost ubiquitous in many contexts. This interactive workshop reports on a project designed to increase EFL learners' exposure to English outside class through a programme of tasks on the social media platform 'WhatsApp'.

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/using-whatsapp-interactive-tasks>

Teaching pathways: Skills for remote teaching

- In this practical five-week course, you will develop the skills you need for remote teaching and reflect on how they relate to your learners' learning. You will learn about different approaches to remote teaching and consider what factors make the transition from the physical to online classroom successful.

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/teaching-pathways-skills-remote-teaching>

Remote teaching tips

- This publication offers a range of practical tips and advice for remote teaching in all contexts.

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/remote-teaching-tips>

Getting started with online teaching

- Many classes and school systems all over the world are taking steps to offer lessons online. However, stepping into the digital world overnight can be challenging for many teachers. This guide is useful for teachers and teacher educators who have little experience of online teaching and need some advice on where to start.

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/getting-started-online-teaching>

Lesson planning for teaching live online

- While there are many similarities between face-to-face lessons and virtual lessons, there are a lot of differences too. Take a look at these ideas for structuring live online lessons.

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/article/lesson-planning-teaching-live-online>