

TED to fight tedious classes. TED-based activities for practical English classes – a report

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In 2024, Małgorzata Karczewska, PhD, Assistant Professor at the University of Zielona Góra, Poland, published an e-book titled *TED to fight tedious classes. TED-based activities for practical English classes*. The e-book is based on the author's experience as a practical English teacher working with English Philology students. During her classes, Dr. Karczewska uses TED-based content mainly for listening classes, but in the e-book, exercises aiming at developing speaking and writing skills, as well as practicing grammar and expanding vocabulary resources are offered. The idea to use TED content stemmed from the will to make classes more intriguing for rather advanced speakers of English. The TED website offers free access to both talks and lessons on various topics of different duration, which allows teachers to adjust the teaching material to the needs of a given group of learners. In addition, subtitles in English and many other languages are available, which facilitates learning, especially self-study. In the e-book, only TED lessons, and not TED talks, are used as a base for exercises.

The e-book is divided into four main parts, namely: Language and communication, The animal world, Medical issues and Psychology and well-being, and the acronym created, LAMP, is a metaphor of what TED-based classes can be: a source of light in the study of English. Each chapter contains five units based on TED lessons related to its topic and follows a similar pattern, which gives the impression of a clear structure and consistency. All chapters begin with a warm-up activity in which the topic of a given chapter is introduced with an invitation to a short discussion among students (in pairs) who can exchange their initial ideas about the topic combined with personal experiences, if applicable. In this part of the lesson, specialized terminology may also be introduced, if necessary, to enable full understanding of a given lesson. The following part contains a listening exercise in which students are expected to listen to the recording (usually twice) and answer questions related to the content of the recording. The order of questions follows the order of appearance of given information in the recording to facilitate the task. The following task contains questions for further discussion related to the topic, some students' experience or search for information online may be required. After this speaking practice, students are expected to focus on selected vocabulary items used in the recording: sentences or phrases are quoted with certain vocabulary items in bold: the idea is to understand their meaning in context. In this vocabulary practice part, there also exercises in which students may be asked to focus on idioms or proverbs related to the topic, or may be asked to look for specific vocabulary, e.g. names of males and females of animals species. Some units end with additional exercises on grammar, writing or speaking. All the tasks are thematically related to the topic of the lesson. As one can observe, TED content can be used for practicing listening, but it can be also useful for speaking and writing as well as grammar-oriented exercises. In all cases, students expand their vocabulary resources.

The use of TED content gives an opportunity to listen to a variety of English accents in authentic materials and is a chance to expand one's knowledge about the world. In this way, students realize that being able to speak and understand English gives them access to knowledge available online. As I stated in the preface to my e-book, students learn English indirectly while exploring a world of ideas, and their expanding knowledge and skills are a by-product of listening to the recordings. Although some recordings require more advanced knowledge, TED lessons can be used for students with at least B1 level of

competence with appropriate assistance of the teacher. Another advantage of TED-based classes is the fact that students who wish to revise the material or those who were absent have free access to the materials at home.

I do hope that my e-book can be a valuable tool in teaching and learning English in an attractive way. Those of you who would like to receive a free copy of my e-book are asked to contact me at M.Karczewska@in.uz.zgora.pl. I wish you fruitful work with TED content.