

## Multimedia Web Sites for Improving Listening Comprehension Skills

The Internet contains thousands of resources and is a rich banquet of information, but Web Sites will not teach on their own, nor do they give direction on how they can be used. Teachers must learn how to integrate the content to support their teaching and students' language learning.

The following is a short (but by no means exhaustive) list of multimedia (many, non-ESL) that I have found useful in supporting teaching and learning. Be sure to review any terms of use policies for the Web Sites.

Here are some general concepts when using the Internet for teaching:



- ✚ **Don't underestimate the complexity (and benefits) of the Internet:** The Internet is an extremely vast collection of information, but sifting through it effectively is a more challenging task than we lead students to believe. Just telling students to go to the Internet to search for something is like telling them to take a sip of water from a gushing fire hydrant (*Internet for English Teaching*, TESOL, p. 85). The options can overwhelm students (and teachers).
- ✚ **Identify specific objectives, procedures, and assessment techniques for using the Internet:** As with all good teaching, teachers need to develop a plan of action for using the Internet. Don't send your students off without learning goals in mind, training on how to use the sites, procedures on how to accomplish the tasks, and an explanation on how they will be evaluated for the activity.
- ✚ **Test the sites yourself first:** Most frustration on using technology doesn't come from the technology itself, but from inadequate training. Carefully go over the site yourself and give students any special instructions before they visit. Do students need to log in to use the site? How easy is the site to navigate? Are the instructions to use within the linguistic and technical level of your students? What are the terms of use for the site in terms of using them for educational and personal use?
- ✚ **Install needed player applications:** There are a number of media formats for playing audio and video on the Internet, including Windows Media™ (.wma), Realmedia™ (.rm), MP3, QuickTime™ (.mov), and Flash. Some of these formats are proprietary in nature and must be played with the company's respective player. One application, Sanako Media Assistant, is a full-featured multimedia player designed specifically for language learning and can handle all major media formats. It even has variable speed control for adjusting playback speed. Whatever the case, be sure to check with your computer lab administrator to find out what software is installed in your lab, thereby limiting which sites your students can use.
- ✚ **Determine the longevity of the site you want to use:** If you plan on making online content part of your continued curriculum, then checking with the owner to find out the future of the site can reassure you that your current efforts to integrate such content will have long-term applicability and results.
- ✚ **Note that integration takes time:** Be prepared to invest time in your lessons. It will be worth it.



*This presentation was sponsored by Sanako (www.sanako-us.com), a worldwide leader in language lab solutions. Visit their booth, 501/503, in the exhibition hall at TESOL 2006.*

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These sites represent a very small collection of multimedia resources on the Internet.

[ media format | online use and/or downloadable | level ]

## ESL Oriented

- *Breaking English* - (news and commentaries)  
<http://www.breakingnewsenglish.com>  
[ MP3 | download | intermediate to advanced ]
- *Encarta Dictionary* - (dictionary with audio)  
<http://encarta.msn.com/encnet/features/dictionary/dictionaryhome.aspx>  
[ MP3 | online | all levels ]
- *English Language Listening Lab Online* -  
<http://www.elllo.org>  
[ Flash, MP3 | online | beginning to advanced ]
- *English Listening Lounge* – (unscripted interviews)  
<http://www.englishlistening.com>  
[ Flash | online | beginning to advanced ]
- *ESL Gold* – (vocabulary lists with audio)  
<http://www.eslgold.com>  
[ MP3 | online | beginning to intermediate ]
- *ESL Podcast* –  
<http://www.eslpod.com>  
[ MP3 | download | intermediate to advanced ]
- *Eviews* – <http://www.eviews.net> (interviews)  
[ MP3 | download | intermediate to advanced ]
- *EZ Slang.com* – (daily conversation with idioms)  
<http://www.ezslang.com>  
[ Win | online | intermediate to advanced ]
- *Fonetiks* –  
<http://www.fonetiks.org>
- *Focus on English* – (conversational English)  
<http://www.focusenglish.com>  
[ Real | online | beginning to advanced ]
- *Learn a Song Podcast* – (folk songs)  
<http://www.manythings.org/songs>  
[ Flash | online | beginning to intermediate ]
- *Learning Resources* –(news stories)  
<http://literacynet.org/cnnsf/home.html>  
[ Real | online | intermediate to advanced ]
- *Randall's ESL Cyber Listening Lab* –  
<http://www.esl-lab.com>  
[Real / Win | online | all levels ]
- *Sounds of English* –  
<http://www.soundsofenglish.org>
- *Train Your Accent* – (accent reduction training)  
<http://www.trainyouraccent.com>  
[ Win | online | intermediate to advanced ]

## General Audience

- *BBC World Service* -  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/>  
[ Real | online | beginning to advanced ]
  - *Car Talk* – (informative and humorous car show)  
<http://www.cartalk.com>  
[ Real | online | intermediate to advanced ]
  - *Digital Story Telling* -  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/digitalstorytelling>  
[ Real | online | beginning to advanced ]
  - *History And Politics Out Loud* – (famous speeches)  
<http://www.hpol.org>  
[ Real | online | advanced ]
  - *Living on Earth* – (environmental issues)  
<http://www.loe.org/>  
[ Real / MP3 | download | advanced ]
  - *National Geographic* -  
<http://pulseplanet.nationalgeographic.com>  
[ Real / Win | online | beginning to advanced ]
  - *National Public Radio* – <http://npr.com>  
[ Real / Win | online | beginning to advanced ]
  - *Online NewsHour* -  
[http://www.pbs.org/newshour/newshour\\_index.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/newshour_index.html)  
[ Real / Win | online | beginning to advanced ]
  - *Radio Diaries* - <http://www.radiodiaries.org>  
[ Real / MP3 | download | advanced ]
  - *Skype* – Internet Telephone Service  
<http://www.skype.com>
  - *Sound Portraits* - <http://www.soundportraits.org>  
[ Real | online | beginning to advanced ]
  - *Voice of America* –  
<http://www.voanews.com/english/>  
[ Real | download | advanced ]
- ## Music and Songs
- *Bus songs.com* - <http://www.bussongs.com>  
[ midi | online | beginning to intermediate ]
  - *National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences Kids' Page* - <http://www.niehs.nih.gov/kids/music.htm>  
[ midi | online | beginning – intermediate ]
  - *Yahoo! Launch* - [www.launch.com](http://www.launch.com)  
[ Win | online | beginning to advanced ]
    - RealNetworks – <http://www.real.com>
    - Sanako – <http://www.sanako-us.com>
    - Microsoft – <http://www.microsoft.com>