

Bulgarian English Teachers' Association

E-Newsletter

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Editors' Corner

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the January-February issue of the BETA-IATEFL E-Newsletter! In this issue a number of articles aim to share EFL teachers' learning experiences and the practical ideas

that they gleaned from attending professional development events.

First out is Milka Hadjikotaeva's winning entry from the BETA Competition for the prize of Lilia Savova. Milka's article *Short Talks in Class* describes how Lilia Savova's plenary speech at the BETA-IATEFL 2015 Conference inspired her to apply the 80/20 principle to the design of a procedure that aims to improve students' oral presentation skills. The issue also features Bill Templer's contribution, *Facing a Fierce Winter Wilderness: Two Classic American Tales by Jack London and Charlie Chaplin*, which provides a wide range of ideas into ways of using a short story and a classic film not only as a means for developing students' linguistic skills but also for promoting their "visual and sound literacy" and sensitizing them to a range of philosophical questions in a student-centred way. Next, Miglena Petrova reports on a successful school project within the Erasmus + programme. She shares a number of useful teaching ideas discovered on different teacher training courses in the UK which Miglena and her colleagues attended as part of the project. Still on the topic of learning from professional development events, you can read Lyuboslava Miteva's reflections on the BETA-IATEFL 2015 Conference. As we are looking forward to the next BETA major event of the year, Tanya Bikova brings us her interview with Sandie Mourão, a plenary speaker at the BETA-IATEFL 2016 Conference and Pre-Conference Event in Plovdiv.

As a continuing special feature, this issue also contains the poem *A-B-C*, written by Elitsa Vassileva, an EFL student from Varna.

We hope you enjoy reading this issue. As always, your feedback and contributions are most welcome.

Sylvia Velikova

Issue Editor



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Short Talks in Class

*Winning entry from the BETA Competition for
the [prize of LILIA SAVOVA](#)*

Milka Hadjikotaeva

As a member of the Bulgarian English Teachers' Association, I have viewed the annual conferences as a means of developing myself professionally thanks to the opportunity of becoming part of the innovative spirit and the ELT techniques and ideas shared there. The 2015 BETA conference proved to be another invaluable source of both information and inspiration to me. I was delighted to attend Keith Kelly's CLIL meeting for English Language Teachers (Oldies and Newbies), Anne

Wiseman's "Classrooms and Contexts" session, Syana Harizanova and Svetlana Tashevskva's "Moving from School to University – Bridging the Gap" talk and Nikolina Tsvetkova's "Building Digital Bridges" session. However, the plenary lecture on "Variation in Educational Design: Using Universal Principles in Design" delivered by Lilia Savova inspired me to start searching for an efficient way of using students' individual efforts to contribute to a whole, which may result in better learning outcomes.

In her plenary lecture Lilia Savova talked about 80/20 principle of design. Later on, I found out that "a minority of causes, inputs, or effort usually leads to a majority

of the results, outputs, or rewards” (Koch, 1998, p. 4). Following the same line of reasoning, I tried to apply the 80/20 principle and incorporate it in an activity assigned to my group of intermediate students learning English as a foreign language at New Bulgarian University.

To start with, I introduced my students to the website www.newsinlevels.com (World News for Students of English) and we discussed some of the news posted there. As a result of the reading comprehension exercise, level 3 proved to be suitable for the group and my students enjoyed reading and talking about the celebrities and events presented there. They got familiar with the way new vocabulary items were defined there and started looking up unfamiliar vocabulary items in various monolingual dictionaries available online. In order to be able to develop another skill besides reading, students were asked to write down one-sentence summaries of the news read, including key information.

Additionally, based on their work in class, students were asked to browse the webpage, select, read and prepare to talk briefly about a piece of news in front of the whole group. Each speaker was allowed to show the webpage to the rest of the group while talking about the news selected in advance and was expected to explain the unfamiliar vocabulary items to the group. The rest of the students were asked to write down one-sentence summaries of the news, reporting who did what, how, where and when. Each student presented a piece of news once a week for three weeks in a row and wrote down numerous one-sentence summaries of the other speakers’ news. At first, some of the students were embarrassed to talk to their peers. Gradually, however, they felt more and more confident and they started overcoming their anxiety.

Finally, when my students felt at ease with the first stage of the activity, they were introduced to the second stage. Each student was asked to talk about a piece of news of his/her own choice without showing the webpage to the group. The speakers were supposed to write down key words on the whiteboard and give their explanations in English. Due to the experience my students had gained throughout the first stage of the activity, they felt confident enough both to talk about their pieces of news and to explain new vocabulary items to the group. As a result, my students started participating more actively in discussions, since they had to write a one-sentence summary of each of the news listened to without actually having access to the webpage.

In my opinion, this activity utilizes and exemplifies the potential of the 80/20 principle of design. Once a week each student makes an effort to browse a news webpage, select a piece of news, read it carefully, look up the unfamiliar vocabulary items and prepare to talk in front of a group of students. Moreover, the individual effort is multiplied a dozen times – each week a group of 12 students share their newly acquired knowledge with their peers. Furthermore, because students play the parts of both speakers and writers, they are supposed to master all four skills, namely, reading, writing, listening and speaking first on their own and later on together with their peers. As a result, everyone is required to use both old and new information in context a number of times, which provides a meaningful input and an opportunity to witness the outcome, i.e. a piece of news each student has prepared to talk about is carefully listened to by a whole group of students and the information shared is used to formulate a one-sentence summary.

To wrap up, I assigned the activity to my students in the beginning of October. By the end of November the twelve students who participated in each of my classes

had already gained enough confidence to speak in front of their peers, to write key information on the whiteboard and explain the meaning of unfamiliar vocabulary items in context. I think that the two stages of this activity may be used as the initial steps in preparing university students to deliver academic presentations in English as a foreign language since the whole process of preparing an academic presentation exemplifies the 80/20 principle, i.e. preparing to talk on a particular topic furnishes the speaker with a whole set of life skills to be used in a variety of situations.

References

Koch, Richard. (1998). *The 80/20 Principle: The Secret to Achieving More with Less*. New York: Doubleday.



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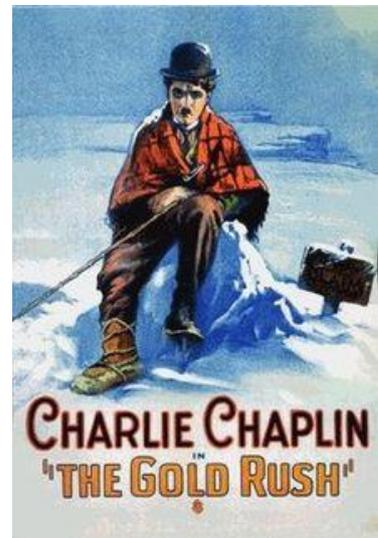
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Facing a Fierce Winter Wilderness: Two Classic American Tales by Jack London and Charlie Chaplin

Bill Templer



London, ["To Build a Fire"](#)



<https://goo.gl/hZYfEi>

He was a newcomer in the land, a chechaquo, and this was his first winter. The trouble with him was that he was without imagination. He was quick and alert in the things of life, but only in the things, and not in the significances. Fifty degrees below zero meant eighty-odd degrees of frost. Such fact impressed him as being cold and uncomfortable, and that was all. It did not lead him to meditate upon his frailty as a creature of temperature, and upon man's frailty in general, able only to live within certain narrow limits of heat and cold; and from there on it did not lead him to the conjectural field of immortality and man's place in the universe. – J. London, "To Build a Fire"

Introduction: How cold!? How much snow!?

The human struggle with the fierce power of Nature – extreme murderous cold, heavy crippling snow, floods, nothing to eat – is a central “[existential](#)”¹ theme in these two tales presented here for the EFL classroom. Both are set in an extraordinary period and event in North American history, the Klondike Gold Rush of 1898, about which students will be excited to learn more. Both are “winter tales” – well in keeping with the alarming, [record-breaking weather](#) of January 2016, in part directly experienced across much of the northern hemisphere, with severe drought / famine / cold in the [planet’s south](#). A month that also saw the tragic death from exhaustion of the British explorer [Henry Worsley](#) in Antarctica.

For starters, ask students what they remember of the winter snows of 2016, they can search for [images of heavy snowfall](#) online, and bring in their own photos. What is the coldest you and they have ever experienced, how were they dressed? What is hypothermia? Have they or friends/relatives ever experienced frostbite?

[Jack London](#)’s story “To Build a Fire” (1908) is perhaps his single most famous tale, based on his own experience 1897-98 as a prospector in the Canadian Yukon. Chaplin’s *The Gold Rush* (1925) is often considered the “[quintessential Chaplin/Little Tramp film](#),” and Chaplin himself said he wished to be remembered most by this movie: show students a brief [trailer](#). Teachers will find it intriguing to work with a silent film with but a few words on screen (known as “intertitles” or “title cards”). Its [145 intertitles](#) are all in simple English. Silent films offer an intriguing, under-researched medium for EFL instruction, schooling *visual literacy* as well, analyzing cinematography techniques. Many such films are available on youtube. Experiment

¹ Numerous hyperlinks are included here, just click on the text title or words highlighted.

with this great silent movie (and others), present your classroom findings, do a workshop on silent movies (see Kreft & Lohe, 2016). One option is to show the Chaplin film after working with London's story: students can be asked what the characters are saying (or thinking) in a given scene, inventing dialogue.

Both tales center on a "lone prospector" facing the fierce, unrelenting elements. In London's tale, the prospector, unnamed, trekking across a snowbound Yukon wilderness over a single dark Arctic day, is [alone except for his dog](#) (←watch this brief video). Initially confident that he can make it back to his camp and friends by early evening, he is caught up in an extreme cold spell, -75° Fahrenheit [!] (= 59.3° Celsius), and ultimately freezes to death from [hypothermia](#) in later afternoon. His dog survives. In Chaplin's silent comedy, a "Lone Prospector," likewise unnamed, faces near catastrophe and imminent certain death at many points – a canvas of many hilarious scenes in deep snow and blizzard – but manages to stay alive, and in the process falls in love with a [dance hall charmer](#) in the wild Yukon gold rush city featured in the film, culminating in a "rags to riches" ending. Its initial title card provides a succinct introduction:

During the Great Gold Rush of Alaska, men in thousands came from all parts of the world. Many were ignorant of the hardships before them, the intense cold, the lack of food – and a journey through regions of snow and ice was a problem that awaited them.

It can apply to both very "working-class" (cf. below) stories. The two "prospectors" are unaware what looms ahead. One tale is tragedy, the other comedy.

The two tales spin around the core motive driving the Great Gold Rush of '98, hunger for gold and instant wealth – in a sense human greed – and the strange "lottery" of gold prospecting in the wilderness, where some have "luck" (perhaps 4 in 1,000) and many others fail, a number meeting their death. They also explore human emotions:

friendship, bullying, starvation, fear, love, loneliness, and much more, even *murder* included. A zest for “adventure” is also an underlying theme. Chaplin’s zany film ends happily, the Lone Prospector and his lucky new buddy Big Jim return from Alaska to the U.S. mainland as millionaires. London’s tale, which takes up deep inside the protagonist’s consciousness, ends with the man’s death.

We face in these tales, vicariously in our imagination as readers and viewers, perplexities and predicaments we would never encounter in our own parochial lives. This shapes an exercise of our social imagination, moral awareness, our capacity for “[empathy with Imagined Others](#),” expanding our own experience. In this vein, I also suggest in closing below that teachers use these tales to explore discussion questions with learners that are more “philosophical,” along lines developed by the [Center for Philosophy for Children](#) at the University of Washington and the broader pedagogical movement of [philosophy for children](#). These narratives raise questions like: Why must we die? What is the power of Nature untamed, “man’s frailty in general ... and place in the universe,” as London phrases it? London’s fiction, like British Antarctic explorer [Henry Worsley](#)’s recent death (see below), raises the question: “Just how far should a person push the limits of human endurance?” And the stories reverberate as “frontier” tales with a core American myth – the “land of the free and home of the brave” (final line in the [national anthem](#)): What does it mean to be “free”? What is bravery, mythical “American individualism”? The tales can also be compared with Mark Twain’s “[The Californian’s Tale](#),” set in the California Gold Rush of the 1850s/60s and later. Teachers can profit from Alan Maley’s discussion of using literature in EFL in our “[age of distraction](#)”, and from Gee’s (2013; 2016) analysis of the crisis we are all in.

Materials

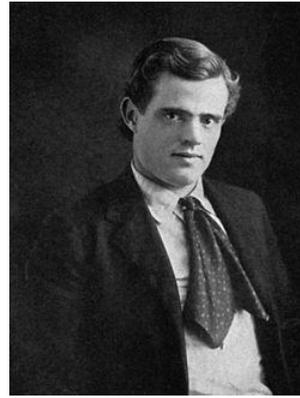
London's tale is available in a simplified graded version in VOA Special English (1,300 words in length), suitable even for elementary level (A2) learners, and accompanied by an MP3 reading so students can listen to the tale. The 1908 original is also online (7,170 words), with its much more literary vocabulary, and teachers can, even with elementary learners, present sections of the original for contrast in difficulty and style. Learners at mid-intermediate level (upper B1-B2) can also read the original in full, and can listen to a reading of the original available online. All levels of learners can watch the classic film version of the original narrated by Orson Welles, in itself a superb 50-minute film, available on youtube. So, various exercises in listening and reading, lexis, syntax can be developed. For intermediate students, this is an [excellent analytical discussion](#) of the tale. The paper also compares the difficulty of the two versions of London's tale using the Flesch readability scale and lextutor.ca for lexical levels of the vocabulary. The entire 95-minute Chaplin film is available on youtube, in a restored version of the 1925 original. Excerpts from the film can be used, and learners on their own can watch the full film, even at home. There are many memorable scenes. There are also ingenious sequences, Chaplinesque "special effects," a cinematic sleight of hand, techniques he as director/actor kept secret.

In the paper's final section, further links are provided, including on "snow talk," the psychology of reading literature, and much more, closing with an introduction to a unique Bulgarian (ad)venture [Cycle4Recycle](#) that started from far northern Alaska in June 2015. I also mention the Canadian writer Robert Service (1874-1958), the famous poet of the Gold Rush of '98. For students who do not know much of Chaplin's work, the film can spur interest in other Chaplin films (on youtube) and also in Chaplin's life (some links are provided). Reading London's tale can kindle student

interest in other works by London, a major American writer (see below).



Prospectors ascending [Chilkoot Pass](#) 1898



[Jack London \(1876-1916\), 1903](#)

Klondike Gold Rush

The unit can be opened with students at A2/lower B1 level and above by reading the Simple English Wikipedia text "[Klondike Gold Rush](#)." For learners at lower B2 level and above, [this article](#) is a good overview. Here a [video](#). They can read this as a homework assignment for historical background. The above photo is a classic: what can students see? The Chaplin film also begins with precisely this Chilkoot scene, and the title card reads: "The Chilkoot Pass. A test of man's endurance. At this point many turned back discouraged, whilst others went bravely on."



Gold rush 1898 [map](#)

Reading London's "To Build a Fire"

All students should work first with the [simplified version](#). A brief summary the teacher can read to students or simplify for B-1 level:

"To Build a Fire," is the tragic tale of a gold prospector who decides to travel alone through the hostile environment of the Yukon and falls victim to the power of Nature and very extreme cold. During his 9-hour trek, "it happens": the man gets his feet wet as he breaks through the thinner ice. Because it is -75° Fahrenheit (-59° Celsius), the man tries to light a fire to keep his wet feet and legs from freezing. But he doesn't succeed in the end, his hands freeze. Desperate, he builds a 3rd fire, while his arms burn. Finally, the man waits to die; his dog smells death and runs off to camp.

A good synopsis on video by Amy Kass is [here](#) (min. 1:59-5:35) for listening. Perhaps listen first to the MP3 link with the easier version, then read the text together in class. Project the 1898 [map](#). Students can also watch this [video reading](#) of the simplified story with text visible. Ask students in groups to summarize the story (1,300 words). Here a student-crafted video summary, [acted out](#). Maybe divide up the story: one group reports on the first 200 words, then another group gives a synopsis of what happens next. At this point, all students could read the first sections of the [original tale](#), comparing sentences with the simpler version. What do they notice? Students at lower B1 level will find some words they do not know. Here the simpler graded version, its beginning (168 words):

The man walked down the trail on a cold, gray day. Pure white snow and ice covered the Earth for as far as he could see. This was his first winter in Alaska. He was wearing heavy clothes and fur boots. But he still felt cold and uncomfortable. The man was on his way to a camp near Henderson Creek. His friends were already there. He expected to reach Henderson Creek by six o'clock that evening. It would be dark by then. His friends would have a fire and hot food ready for him. A dog walked behind the man. It was a big gray

animal, half dog and half wolf. The dog did not like the extreme cold. It knew the weather was too cold to travel. The man continued to walk down the trail. He came to a frozen stream called Indian Creek. He began to walk on the snow-covered ice. It was a trail that would lead him straight to Henderson Creek and his friends.

Contrast this with the original, its beginning (also 168 words):

DAY HAD BROKEN cold and gray, exceedingly cold and gray, when the man turned aside from the main Yukon trail and climbed the high earth-bank, where a dim and little-travelled trail led eastward through the fat spruce timberland. It was a steep bank, and he paused for breath at the top, excusing the act to himself by looking at his watch. It was nine o'clock. There was no sun nor hint of sun, though there was not a cloud in the sky. It was a clear day, and yet there seemed an intangible pall over the face of things, a subtle gloom that made the day dark, and that was due to the absence of sun. This fact did not worry the man. He was used to the lack of sun. It had been days since he had seen the sun, and he knew that a few more days must pass before that cheerful orb, due south, would just peep above the sky-line and dip immediately from view.

The highly literary tale is 5.5 times longer than the simpler version, so much has been eliminated in the graded version. What does the VOA version eliminate that students think is important? Teachers can decide what sections of the two versions to compare. Notice the Arctic winter sun in the original tale: it does not rise above the horizon. This is not mentioned in the VOA version.

Students who are proficient enough to read the original should also listen to the [audiobook reading](#). Here an overview of the [tale](#), with much information.

Below are two charts showing the [Flesch-Kincaid readability level](#) of the two texts, and the difference (via lextutor) in vocabulary levels.

Simplified version

Number of words: 1,319
 Number of sentences : 140
 Average no. of words per sentence : 942

Approximate U.S. grade level

Flesch-Kincaid level: 2.96
 (ca. 3rd grade, primary school)
 Flesch Reading Ease: 90.61

Original story

Number of words : 7,171
 Number of sentences : 418
 Average no. of words per sentence: 17.16

Flesch-Kincaid Grade level: 6.87 (ca. 7th grade)

Flesch Reading Ease : 76.39

What do you notice about readability difference (for native speakers) as quantified here, such as sentence length?

lextor.ca analysis of vocabulary level

Simplified version

Freq. Level	Families (%)	Types (%)	Tokens (%)	Cumul. token %
K-1 Words :	281 (84.64)	339 (84.54)	1223 (<u>92.58</u>)	92.58
K-2 Words :	42 (12.65)	43 (10.72)	65 (<u>4.92</u>)	97.50
K-3 Words :	5 (1.51)	5 (1.25)	7 (<u>0.53</u>)	98.03
K-4 Words :	2 (0.60)	3 (0.75)	7 (<u>0.53</u>)	98.56
K-5 Words :	2 (0.60)	2 (0.50)	6 (<u>0.45</u>)	99.01

Original version

Freq. Level	Families (%)	Types (%)	Tokens (%)	Cumul. token %
K-1 Words :	533 (48.81)	781 (53.24)	6055 (<u>84.21</u>)	84.21
K-2 Words :	227 (20.79)	282 (19.22)	481 (<u>6.69</u>)	90.90
K-3 Words :	101 (9.25)	113 (7.70)	173 (<u>2.41</u>)	93.31
K-4 Words :	79 (7.23)	83 (5.66)	124 (<u>1.72</u>)	95.03
K-5 Words :	38 (3.48)	41 (2.79)	94 (<u>1.31</u>)	96.34
K-6 Words :	32 (2.93)	38 (2.59)	56 (<u>0.78</u>)	97.12
K-7 Words :	21 (1.92)	23 (1.57)	30 (<u>0.42</u>)	97.54
K-8 Words :	22 (2.01)	23 (1.57)	36 (<u>0.50</u>)	98.04
K-9 Words :	11 (1.01)	13 (0.89)	16 (<u>0.22</u>)	98.26
K-10 Words :	7 (0.64)	9 (0.61)	37 (<u>0.51</u>)	98.77
K-11 Words :	11 (1.01)	13 (0.89)	17 (<u>0.24</u>)	99.01
K-12 Words :	3 (0.27)	3 (0.20)	3 (<u>0.04</u>)	99.05
K-13 Words :	3 (0.27)	3 (0.20)	5 (<u>0.07</u>)	99.12
K-14 Words :	2 (0.18)	3 (0.20)	6 (<u>0.08</u>)	99.20
K-18 Words :	1 (0.09)	1 (0.07)	1 (<u>0.01</u>)	99.21

How many lexemes above K-2 level (2,000 word level) does the simplified version have? Compare this with the original. Teachers should understand the distinction between word family, type and token. Strikingly, the original has 31 different words at a lexical level of 10,000 word vocabulary level and above. Teachers can copy the stories and insert in the lexutor.ca window to see what lexemes are K-10 or K-11, for example. Learn to work with these tools for *all* the texts you teach.

Film version of London's story

All students can then watch parts of the 50-minute [film version](#) (1969) of the story, narrated by Orson Welles, based closely on the original text. It is a memorable film visually, and virtually all its narration is from London's tale. Students can watch the entire film on their own and decide which scenes they like most and want to discuss. Teachers can work in numerous creative ways with this film, here in [excerpts](#). With advanced students, I might show this film *before* reading the tale.

Discussion questions

Here [one study unit](#) with suggestions for analysis. Drawing in part from it:

- Characterize the man, based on the description of his attitudes/manner/deeds.
- What supplies were needed? Here the [Klondikers Supply List](#), required by the Canadian government of every potential prospector, one year's supply.
- Why isn't he named? „Every American“? Married? How old? From where?
- Compare the man and the dog. What is their relationship and how does it change? The dog is governed by instinct. Does the man want to kill his dog?
- The turning point of the tale is “Then it happened.” What is „it“? In the original there is a second time: “it happened. It was his own fault”
- He tries three times to make a fire, why? Why is “build” used with ‘fire’?

- The narrator says: “The trouble with him was that he was without imagination. He was quick and alert in the things of life, but only in the things, and not in the significances.” What does this mean?
- Is he responsible for what happens to him? Or is he just an “unlucky” victim of circumstance? A “quirk of fate”? “[Shit happens.](#)” Or even “[Murphy’s law](#)”?
- The old-timer warns him. What advice? Why doesn’t the man take it?
- Is “fire” here symbolic? The tale ends with “stars” in the frozen cosmos above. Symbolic? At noon he casts “no shadow.” Why? Is that also symbolic?
- As a city-dweller (like most of us), what did *you* learn from his tragic experience? Today, smart phone in hand, could he survive? By helicopter?
- Is the man in your eyes as an admirable hero—independent, resourceful, rugged, the “American pioneer”? Or do you regard him as reckless, rash, thinking he alone can conquer the wilderness—overconfident, foolish?
- Can you imagine a different ending to the story? Discuss in small groups.
- Does this tale illustrate “American freedom and individuality”? Listen to this wide-ranging 43-minute video [discussion](#) of the tale, in a series on [literature as an approach to U.S. civic education](#). Teachers can explore that youtube site and Amy Kass’s book, [What So Proudly We Hail](#) (and the project’s [website](#)).
- What are the limits to our efforts to tame and “master” Nature? Examples?
- Ask students if they have ever had a dangerous experience, their stories.
- Have they ever gotten lost in the wild, camped out, gone backpacking?
- What does the story teach us about death “with dignity”? He dies alone.

Here another [introduction](#) to the story, and here a video analysis [highlighting the environment](#) as a focus. Teachers can search online for further study guides to this tale. Students can be encouraged to formulate *discussion questions of their own*.

Watching and Discussing *The Gold Rush*

Teachers should watch the 95-minute [dramatic comedy](#) in its entirety and decide how it can be best integrated in their specific classes. One option is to show the whole film after working with London's story, since there is no spoken dialogue just brief intertitles. The plot is [summarized here](#). Here numerous [images](#). Here a brief 1942 [trailer](#) as *introduction*. Learners can be asked what they see, what the people are thinking, saying, why so funny. The silent film relies in part on a special kind of "visual literacy": reading people's faces, lips, interaction, dress. Chaplin's humor is his gestures, facial expressions, body language ("comical kinesics"). The film also schools "sound literacy," as we listen to the background piano accompaniment. Learners can discuss that, identify tunes. This music was added to the 1925 version when it was restored in 2003, but silent films normally had a live piano accompaniment in the theater. The version on youtube also has a Portuguese title translation. Here the list of [145 intertitles](#), handout for students.

The film's first 30 minutes

I describe here in some detail the first main part of the film, and underline how scenes unfold. This will give readers some ideas about what scenes can be focused on and how rich the film is with silent action (often comic situations) that can be described by students as they view. I also provide a number of the intertitles, so you can see how simple the language presented on the screen is. The second major half of the film and its conclusion are described more briefly.

Scenes 1-2 show a [huge procession of prospectors](#) climbing north up the Chilkoot Pass. Students can describe what they see. Scene 3 is titled "Top of the Pass": what

are prospectors carrying as survival gear? Imagine how they feel. Does this mass column of humanity on foot remind you of [refugees](#) fleeing now to Europe?

An intertitle tells us “Three days from anywhere. A Lone Prospector” and we see Chaplin for the first time. Does he have proper clothing for extreme winter, what supplies? Why does he look so funny (cane, derby hat, shabby suit, distinctive funny walk, tiny mustache)? Is he aware of the dangers facing him, totally alone? Does he see the [huge bear](#) behind him? How fast is he walking on a [narrow path](#)? Students can discuss what they see: his body language, facial expressions.

An intertitle “Another lone prospector”: we see Big Jim McKay (played by actor Mack Swain, who often starred in Chaplin’s films) at the edge of a cliff, hammering a signpost into the ground as he “stakes his claim.” Meanwhile, we see Chaplin sliding down a mountainside; he gets up ([watch the sequence](#)), unharmed. The next intertitle: “Big Jim’s Lucky Strike.” “Lucky strike” was a term from the California 1850-60s for a prospector finding gold (maybe four in 1,000 succeeded), and in the 1870s was applied to chewing tobacco, as a brand name. By 1900 it was a famous cigarette brand. We see Big Jim in the snow fingering a large [nugget of gold](#), and the intertitle: “I’ve found it! I’ve found it! A Mountain of Gold!” Students (through empathy) can describe his gestures, thoughts, feelings.

Scene 8 is Chaplin again, lost but with a comical “map.” Describe the map. He is somehow totally foolish but confident, a dangerous mixture in the Arctic wasteland. He comes to a signpost: “Here lies Jim Sourdough. At this spot got lost in the snow. Friday 1898.” “Sourdough” was the slang term for a veteran prospector. Many prospectors in California and later Alaska used a [sourdough technique](#) to make bread, and experienced old-timers came to be called “sourdoughs.” Some students can try

to bake this bread. This sign is the first direct reference to death in this film. What is Chaplin's reaction? What is the humor?

The next intertitle: "Then came a storm." Chaplin battles the blinding blizzard. He comes to "A Lone Cabin." "And a lone man." Inside sits Black Larsen, an outlaw on the run. How do we learn he is wanted by the police? (No intertitle tells us)

The film then shifts to Big Jim struggling with the gigantic storm, it blows away his tent. Chaplin enters Larsen's cabin. What transpires, a comic scene? Students can also describe the interior of this primitive cabin, a single room with three doors.

The storm continues and blows Big Jim through Larsen's cabin and out the back door. Students can describe the silent action. Larsen: "Get out, the pair of you." He takes his shotgun and fires: "There's another bullet left, so beat it!" Big Jim then attacks Black Larsen and a struggle ensues, quite funny. Big Jim prevails. We see the incredible blizzard, raging on for days. "And three men were hungry." How do they solve the problem? Big Jim: "We must get food. One of us must brave that storm." So he decides they will "cut cards" to decide who goes for food. Larsen pulls the low card and leaves, the wind blows Chaplin out the door (min. 15:11).

At 15:29: "The Hand of the Law." Two policemen are searching for Black Larsen in the blizzard. He chances upon on their tent (min. 16:23), pulls out a pistol, a gun battle ensues and Larsen kills the two men. At min. 17:01 there is "Thanksgiving dinner," one of the craziest famous scenes in the film, the American holiday with *nothing* to eat. What does Chaplin cook (a leather shoe), truly hilarious! Meanwhile: "Indifferent to his comrades plight, Black Larsen stumbles on the claim of Big Jim McKay." Larsen now knows where Jim's gold is to steal it.

Back in the cabin, Big Jim is shouting “Food! Food!” and becomes delirious with hunger. In his delirium, he imagines that Chaplin is a huge chicken (min 21:21) and thinks to kill him for dinner, a very famous extended comic scene. The next morning, at 27:32, they say goodbye: “Then came the parting of the ways. One to his secret mine. The other to his fate.” Chaplin wanders off alone. Does he know where he’s headed? Big Jim returns to his gold stake. Surprised, he finds Larsen (28:36) climbing out of his mine. A struggle ensues and Larsen clobbers McKay on the head, he collapses in the snow. An intertitle (29:12): “The North. A law unto itself.” What does “law” mean in this context? We see Black Larsen on a disintegrating cliff, an avalanche carries the outlaw down to his death. Meanwhile, Big Jim regains consciousness and wanders off, staggering, confused, alone.

The film’s second main section

Intertitle (min. 30:08): “One of the many cities in the Far North, built overnight during the great gold rush.” Perhaps it is the city of Dawson, perhaps some other smaller town. We never learn its name. The movie continues in this locale: the Monte Carlo Dance Hall where the miners congregate, where “Georgia” works and there are many beautiful (perhaps “loose”) entertainer women. Much of the further action occurs inside this crowded dance hall, many drinking and dancing.

Chaplin wanders into the town and dance hall, and a whole separate story unfolds. His bullying adversary there is Jack Dawson, a tall handsome man popular with all the girls. Jack is in large part the total opposite of the tiny “tramp” Chaplin, there are many “encounters” between the two. Jack wants Georgia for his own, a central film subplot. But Chaplin falls in love with Georgia as well. Initially she and her other bargirl friends find him laughable, and Georgia openly flirts with him to make Jack jealous. At min. 35:52, Georgia confesses: “I guess I’m bored.” She wants to “meet someone worthwhile.” There are many hilarious situations, “silent dialogues”

students can discuss and even act out, try to do some lip reading as well. In one notable 3-min. scene (*watch it*→), [Georgia asks Chaplin to dance](#) and his pants keep falling down, so he ties a large dog on a leash to himself as a temporary belt (min. 40), a classic comic conclusion as the dog tries to chase a cat.

One of the most famous scenes is Chaplin's daydream of the New Year's Eve dinner he has prepared for [Georgia](#) and her friends at his small cabin near the dance hall: in his imagined dream he performs the [Oceana Roll table dance](#), using two rolls (1:01:30). But the dinner never happens. The girls forget. We see the [festivities](#) of the New Year's celebration (1:03:17) at the packed dance hall. Perhaps it is New Year's Eve 1898 or 1899. Much else occurs as the plot unfolds.

Big Jim also arrives in town and discovers the Lone Prospector in the dance hall.



[Georgia and the Lone Prospector](#)



[Black Larsen, Chaplin and Big Jim in Larsen's cabin](#)

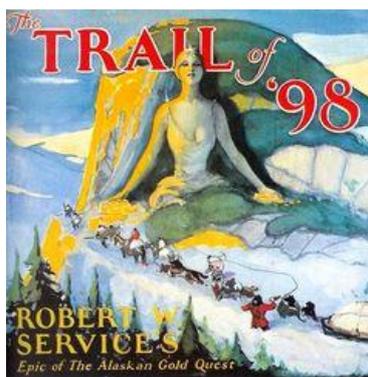
Jim tells the gold office officials that he has discovered a gold mountain but due to a blow on the head, he can't remember where. Big Jim realizes he needs his small friend to help relocate the cabin, so he can officially claim his stake. He promises to share the gold with him. Jim and Chaplin then go off and Chaplin guides Jim to the cabin (min. 1:16:20). Yet "Man proposes, a storm disposes" (min. 1:18:31), a play on an English [proverb](#): another super-blizzard traps them inside the cabin, they fall asleep, and the cabin is *blown away* by the wind. The intertitle reads (1:19:14): "And as our

slumbering heroes slept throughout the storm – fate guided them to a spot where all was calm.” What is “fate”? Do students believe in it? The cabin is sliding slowly over the edge of a cliff (min. 1:19:28), the men [trapped inside](#). They [struggle to get out](#), in vain, a very humorous scene. Finally Jim succeeds in climbing out, grasps a rope holding the cabin, and saves Chaplin at the last second (min. 1:26:47) as the cabin [plunges over the cliff](#). Then the peak moment (1:27:10) comes: nearby Jim discovers his claim, “Look, we’re rich! We’re millionaires!” They celebrate and in the final scene board a ship leaving Alaska as [“lucky strike” millionaires](#). Unknown to the two “gentlemen,” also on board is Georgia: in a very humorous scene, she “discovers” her admirer, unaware of his good fortune. Chaplin is in love with her, and she apparently with him; totally unexpectedly, [they are reunited](#). A happy ending, concluded with a kiss, as a journalist sent to photograph the “millionaire” tells the kissing couple: “Oh, you’ve spoilt the picture” ([Watch the final sequence](#)). The film offers much adventure/pathos for discussion and a million laughs. Students can dramatize.

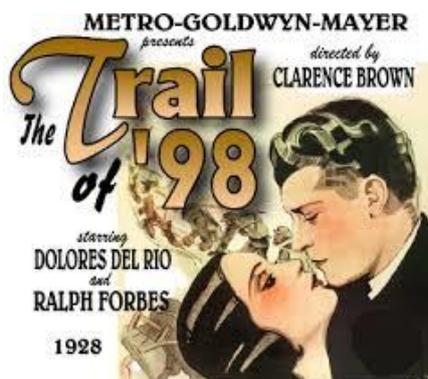
Creative Follow-ups: A Bricolage of Options

Students (and teachers) could explore more of Jack London even in simple graded readers, such as his two classic dog novels [Call of the Wild](#) (1903), and [White Fang](#) (1906), both set in the Klondike Gold Rush and available as very easy graded readers (600-word vocabulary), and the original also online with most of London’s other works [here](#), at online-literature.com (excellent site for fiction!). London was also politically engaged as a writer, listen to this [interview](#) with Jonah Raskin. Students can watch and compare other classic Chaplin films on youtube, such as [The Tramp](#) (1915), [The Cure](#) (1916), [The Vagabond](#) (1916) or [The Immigrant](#) (1917), and explore his [biography](#). [New evidence](#) suggests Chaplin was from a Romany (Roma) traveller family, born in a “Gypsy” [caravan](#) at a large Romany campsite outside Birmingham in 1889 (no birth certificate). Chaplin’s son Michael, a novelist, is doing a film [The Caravan’s Trail](#) on his father’s Roma lineage. Here a very informative [interview with](#)

[Michael](#). Somewhat like London, Chaplin was very leftwing [politically](#), and after many years in Hollywood, was banned from the U.S. in 1952 by the FBI for his alleged ‘pro-communist’ views (he returned in 1972 for an [Academy Honorary Award](#)). [Georgia Hale](#) (1905-1985), who plays Georgia in this film, was very close to Chaplin; her revealing book is [Charlie Chaplin: Intimate Close-Ups](#). Another fascinating source is [Chaplin Unknown](#), and a biography, [The Gentleman Tramp](#). Here a detailed [documentary](#) on “The Gold Rush” (a must-see, Georgia Hale also interviewed, 1980). They could learn more about the Klondike Gold Rush, like about [Dawson City](#), and Jack London’s reconstructed [Klondike cabin](#) in Oakland/CA. Students could explore the poetry of [Robert Service](#), the Canadian writer, who wrote poems about the Klondike Gold Rush, such as [The Spell of the Yukon](#) collection (1907) and [Ballads of a Cheechako](#) (1909). Service’s [The Trail of '98](#) is a classic Gold Rush novel, made into a major 1928 [silent film](#) (on DVD, here [images](#)).



<https://goo.gl/XM4UXy>



[The trail of '98](#)



[Dolores del Rio](#)

Graded Great Stories

There are [57 American stories](#) in VOA Simple English, each around 1,300 words in length, available online and most with MP3, including several tales by London. You can also find the originals of all these stories [online as well](#). Combine the two.

Winter talk

Sticking with VOA, teachers could also teach the vocabulary of talking about winter weather and snow, as exemplified in "[Blizzard of Winter Words](#)" and "[Are You a Snowbird or Snow Bunny](#)," short lexical lessons from VOA LearningEnglish.

Exploring philosophical questions in a personal way with young learners

As mentioned in the introduction, teachers can seek to develop more questions about these texts (and others) that challenge learners' imaginations and wondering about the "big questions." How do youngsters see death, for example, a topic central here in both tales? What is "friendship," "courage"? Do we have "free will"? Is society "fair"? Is it "fair" that Jim and his prospector friend become millionaires while most, the 99%, will leave the Klondike empty-handed? Is there a topical subtheme here about extreme economic inequality? As Gee (2013: 4) reminds us: "The wealthiest nation on earth, the United States, has the widest gap between rich and poor of any industrialized nation" (see also Gee, 2016). All in the dance hall are probably poor working-class men and female "entertainers": in what sense is it a class-conscious film? Many of Chaplin's films were about the poor, his "signature" character a "little tramp." How would students themselves react in the situations they see in the film: extreme hunger and cold, men far from home and family? The [Center for Philosophy for Children](#) (CPC, U Washington) has much relevant material for teachers, as does the [PC4 Cooperative](#) and Prof. Tom Wartenberg's "[big questions for little kids](#)." Watch this video on [Philosophical Children](#), listen to this [interview](#) with Jana Mohr Lone (CPC, UW), and this brief TEDx talk on "[Philosophy for Children](#)" by Jana's colleague Dr. Sara Goering (CPC). Relevant is Sara's important co-edited book [Philosophy in Schools](#) (2013), many valuable chapters. Here brief [lesson plan discussion questions](#) for children's picturebooks from the CPC. A broad-ranging CPC

syllabus for the graduate course [Philosophy 595: Philosophical Inquiry in Schools](#) is online, [assigned readings](#) downloadable. This UW [forum](#) “Moral imagination: A discussion of literature and moral awareness” is a discussion of how literature shapes our sensibilities, “reeducating the heart,” with Sara Goering and prominent African-American writer [Charles R. Johnson](#). Here his unique introduction to philosophy [through stories](#).

In Bulgaria, philosophy is taught from [grade 9 in high schools](#), such as logic, but perhaps not from these creative, student-centered perspectives. One question is how much EFL teachers cooperate with teachers of philosophy in the Bulgarian high schools. Imagine philosophical experimentation along these lines from grade 2 or 3. Or *with your own children*, as in Jana Mohr Lone’s [The Philosophical Child](#).

Onfiction.ca

Another dimension I think important is to get teachers more into what psychologists are researching empirically in regard to the impact of stories on the imagination, what “stories do to your head.” This BBC forum [“The Pleasures and Pleasures of Storytelling”](#) (1 Feb. 2016) is a must listen, a very stimulating discussion. Especially interesting there is Raymond Mar’s (York U, Toronto) work on the impact of reading fiction on our *capacity for empathy*. The website for [psychology of literature](#) that Dr. Mar is connected with should also be explored by teachers. It is very relevant to core aspects of using literature in the EFL classroom, and how fiction fertilizes, forms and scaffolds the moral imagination of learners.

Climate change, environmental issues

Many think the harsh winter of January-[March](#) 2016 is part of global climate change caused by carbon emissions and other factors. So, a related broader more political

theme linked with “survival” is [climate change and global warming](#), for some students and teachers, germane to the need to move toward a post-carbon future for humankind’s survival on a planetary scale, [life beyond polluting fossil fuels](#). How seriously do we have to take Nature, preserving our planet, the issue of [environmental concerns](#) today? Such topics are highlighted critically in this book from [Rethinking Schools](#), and in Gee (2016). Some teachers and students will be interested in exploring that, very relevant to approaches within IATEFL Global Issues, [GISIG](#). The GISIG motto: **CARE GLOBAL TEACH LOCAL! *English for Change***. There are intriguing [eLesson Inspirations](#) and other resources on the site.

Arctic Explorers Here and Now



[Henry Worsley, 1960-2016](#)



[In Antarctica 2016](#)

The recent tragic death (24 January 2016) of veteran British explorer [Henry Worsley](#), an “adventurer and inspiration to many,” could also be broached as a related topic in our time. He died of exhaustion, peritonitis and organ failure on a [solo expedition](#) in Antarctica, 30 miles from his goal, messaging before collapse: “My summit is just out of reach.” As the *Guardian* article (hyperlinked above) closes: “Worsley’s last journey stands as a remarkable achievement of endurance and the human spirit, but it’s also a reminder of the more sobering realities that anyone who seeks the joy of adventure must face: not all wounds heal.” Two British [explorers](#) describe their harrowing rescue in the Bering Strait, stranded in the ice, 4 March 2016. One of the explorers said: “We kind of estimate there are three outcomes on this project: there’s success, there’s rescue, and there’s death. When success starts to fade away, you’re left with two, and that’s the reason why we pulled the pin early.” Students can discuss [what](#)

[happened](#) and why. The very experienced adventurers blame their dire ordeal on climate change in the Arctic.

Bulgarians Biking from Alaska to Argentina

Finally, speaking of the “joy of adventure,” students can read something in simpler VOA English about [adventurous young Bulgarians on bicycles](#) who started their bike trek from the Arctic Circle in [Deadhorse, Alaska](#) in June 2015. Yana Melamed and Vyacheslav Stoyanov (he originally from the Ukraine) are out on a great adventure of discovery, close to Nature, but also are on an educational mission [Cycle4Recycle](#): “to make people more aware of how to protect the environment and preserve natural resources.” They see themselves as explorers, and give talks (in English) in schools, community centers about protecting the natural environment and recycling (even their bikes are recycled) as they journey south, 60,000 km [!], to Tierra del Fuego in far southern Argentina. Assign and discuss the VOA article and ask students to explore and report on their Cycle4Recycle website. What is recycling, why is it so necessary? They are also interested in “recycling of thinking”: about consumerism, waste and much more. Using bicycles is also a metaphor of re-cycling. Students can also read and discuss the article [Команда: свободно](#). Enjoy a [video](#) with Yana and Slav about their project and *bold* journey. Inspired by their example, students in Bulgaria could put their heads together and develop some community-anchored, “[place-based](#)” local initiatives (Ormond, 2013) to clean up their own neighborhoods, for example, or refurbish abandoned [children’s playgrounds](#) left dilapidated/ransacked after 1990. Self-organized “youth brigades” to remove snow and ice from sidewalks after a heavy snowfall, a serious recurrent [problem for pedestrians](#) in all Bulgarian cities, are a good idea. All it takes are shovels, solidarity, and elbow grease. *Schools can encourage this.* In distant Gaza, recycling has literally become a [way of survival](#) for many harried Palestinians, including turning old clothes into dolls and toys for kids.

In closing, find time to read James Gee (2016), one of our great senior linguists, with “unconfident advice” for us all. As he says (p. 8): “The world is a mess. We need to at least put a finger in the collapsing dike until someone else can come up with a big idea to replace the whole thing.” Also ponder in depth Gee (2013).

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Miglena Petrova

Our school, Saint Kliment Ohridski Secondary School in Varna, has been a leading institution for 133 years of tradition and excellence. Last year, a group of eight motivated teachers took part in three different training courses in the UK as an ERASMUS+ funded mobility project realization. "Together for a successful European school" corresponds to the main aims of the development strategy of our school in the context of the European dimension of education and training.

The common aim of the project is to improve the quality of the educational services provided by the school, as well as to raise the motivation and achieve better efficiency of foreign language teaching. The specific aims of this project are to upgrade the language competence of the teachers and improve our skills for creating materials, adapting and applying innovative pedagogical methods. Enriching our experience in the field of modern theories and practices in language teaching gives us a great opportunity to share with colleagues what we have found useful in the training.

Creative Methodology course at Oxford House College, London

was a practical, hands-on experience that gave Albena Ilieva, Nadejhda Yantcheva and Vladimir Paunov, the three participants from our school, the confidence to re-evaluate what they had learnt while working with students of all ages for many years.



They found the following games really fascinating and we all have been using them in our teaching:

1. Spot the liar

A student reads a story silently and then retells it to the class changing three facts. The class then has 3 minutes to spot the lies by asking questions and judging by the facial expression of the tale-teller.

This game helps students develop communicative skills and practise grammar structures. It can be adapted to different levels and age groups. The teacher can take notes of possible mistakes and work on them with students.

2. Throw and say

A table or chart with things you have to say or do is used. A student tosses a coin/dice and then names 5 colours/country names with B/a thing you use on your holiday, etc.

In this easy game any vocabulary item or topic can be practised with students of various age groups. It is speedy, competitive and brings dynamics to the classroom. The best thing is that it can easily be adapted.

Methodology and Language for Primary Teachers at Pilgrims, Canterbury

was another practical training, focused on giving a variety of ideas and illustrating creative teaching methods at elementary and primary stages. Maria Dineva, Victoria Tsvetanova and Gylsum Eredjeb were the three teachers who attended the course.



There are a lot of variations of Group Bonding, motivation creating games and introduction to the different stages in the initial attempts of the children to use their creativity in the English language, as well as balancing the change of activities during

the lesson. The teacher has to be able to bring out the best of each pupil and the following activities were particularly appreciated by our colleagues:

1. Emotional easing (Group Bonding):

a) The kids form a circle and while holding hands, start greeting each other for the beginning of the day and the lesson, then they turn right and left and say to their classmate “Good morning, Maria!” ; “Good afternoon, Ani!”.

b) The teacher plays some music and starts showing different movements including hands, body, legs and head. He/she gives clear commands and everybody follows them. The kids are moving around, remembering the different commands and practising their understanding skills, which results in setting a positive and emotional beginning of the lesson.

2. Developing and improving the listening and understanding as well as socialising

The pupils sit on chairs opposite each other that form two circles – one inside the other. Everybody says 1-2 sentences about themselves. After the teacher’s command, the kids move one seat left/right and share what they have learned about the kid next to them.

This game practises personal and possessive pronouns as well as basic grammar structures.

3. Improving memory, observation skills and learning of new words:

The teacher arranges 6-8 objects on his/her desk that have been studied as new words. The kids come closer, take a look and then go back to their seats to write down in their notebooks what objects they have seen. Then, they come back to find out the missing object – practising memorization, concentration and vocabulary.

4. Practising the alphabet

a) Pupils draw and cut out of paper the initial letters of their names and then arrange them alphabetically. At the same time their attention is drawn to the direction and the way of writing.

This activity is particularly suitable for Bulgarian children because it makes the transition from the Bulgarian to the English alphabet easier by feeling and touching each letter.

b) The teacher writes the alphabet on the board and under each letter writes another smaller one in different colour. It shows the action that accompanies the pronunciation of each letter. For example “l” stands for left hand in the air, “j” for jump and so on.

A B C D E F G H I

l r j l l r j r r

This is how pupils memorise the letters in an easy and exciting way.

Life in Britain – Bringing Culture to the Classroom

at International House, London was an inspiring practical

training that focused on British culture in the context of language teaching. It was an excellent overall upgrading of the previous experience of Miglena Petrova and Valentina Petrova because cultural awareness is integrated at every level of teaching and learning for all age groups.



Nowadays, it is referred to as the fifth skill in language learning. Knowledge about British music, literature, history and the famous places in Britain can be implied through the use of carefully selected authentic materials for reading comprehension and context-based vocabulary, listening and video tasks, as well as topic games. It is also the best basis for project work that can include students' own research and individual or group performance. The following activities can be easily adapted to different teaching contexts.

a) Who were they?

Students work in groups of 3-5. Each team thinks of a famous person from the past and writes 1-2 sentences that give a clue to this person's identity. A representative reads it out. The other teams guess who the person was. Alternatively, students can work on a table with questions about famous people from history and fiction like:

“Who was the famous detective with a friend called Dr Watson?”, “Who tried to blow the Houses of the Parliament in London?”, “Who fell in love with a young man called Romeo in Verona and married him in secret?”. They write the names of the people and make guesses if they really existed. After they are ready (time limit can be set), the teacher checks the answers with the whole class and each team gets two points for a correct answer and one point for a correct guess. As a follow-up, students can continue with or write for homework similar questions about famous Bulgarians.

This is an amusing activity that is excellent for Past tenses grammar practice, vocabulary revision, brainstorming and enriching students’ general knowledge. It also develops writing and speaking skills in an interesting context. The questions can vary in the degree of difficulty and the tasks can be tailored to the specific students’ needs.

b) In the art gallery

Students look at a set number of paintings. The images can be printed on a worksheet or presented on IWB. They can be selected by the teacher or students can choose something on their own to share. This activity brings variety and positive emotion to the classroom. Each student chooses one painting and gives a description without saying which one it is. The students make guesses and ask extra questions to find out which painting is being described. These tasks can be achieved in a real art gallery outside the classroom or students can use computers or other devices to visit the websites of famous galleries. Present tenses, participle clauses, vocabulary knowledge and creative critical thinking are what a teacher can practise or build up with students of different levels (pre-intermediate and above). Looking at and sharing art this way, provides the opportunity for gaining a lot of extra knowledge in history, literature, music and arts, depending on the paintings chosen.

As a conclusion, we would like to emphasise that the Erasmus+ programme opportunities are what teachers can really benefit from because they encourage

individual professional development and influence the quality of education in their schools. All the courses that we attended were perfectly designed in terms of methodology and structure, motivating and inspiring. In short, they were absolutely a must-have experience.

Useful websites for teachers and students:

<https://rewordify.com>

<https://funenglishgames.com>

<https://ed.ted.com>

<https://tefltunes.com>

<https://www.englishcentral.com/videos#browse-app>

<https://www.busyteacher.com>

<http://www.theguardian.com/education/series/classroom-materials>

The National Gallery, London

www.nationalgallery.org.uk

The Victoria and Albert Museum, London

www.vam.ac.uk



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Report from BETA-IATEFL 2015 Conference

Lyuboslava Miteva

The purpose of this report is to provide feedback on the 24th BETA-IATEFL Annual International Conference (5th-7th June 2015 University of National and World Economy, Sofia, Bulgaria), as well as to describe several plenary meetings and workshops attended.

I have been teaching English as a foreign language and English for specific purposes since 2012 in Tsanko Tserkovski Vocational High School, Pavlikeni, Bulgaria. My primary aim as a teacher is to facilitate learning. To achieve it I see myself as a teacher who can create a supportive atmosphere and a learning environment in a motivating manner.

Three years ago, I started attending the annual conferences of the Bulgarian English Teachers' Association. They were of great importance to my professional development. Today, I continue to participate in these events and I am even more inspired by them.

During his plenary *Languages live! Developing coherent policy and practice to celebrate multilingualism for the benefit of all*, Professor Terry Lamb spoke about language diversity; the benefits of bilingualism – increased competitiveness and dialogue. In my classroom, I have students whose first language is Turkish. That is why

it was interesting to hear that multilingualism is normal; we must see it as a festival and allow children to use their mother tongue.

Presentation skills vs traditional homework, Dr Virginia Evans. Dr Evans is a highly respected author. All of the textbooks we use are written by Virginia Evans and I was thrilled to attend her plenary. I sustain my students' motivation by incorporating the teaching of new skills; and presentation skills, in particular. In addition, the development of presentation skills help students practice speaking through interaction with technology.

Skills for reading, Richard Cherry. There are various pre-reading tasks so as to generate interest among students. Mr Cherry demonstrated one of these approaches; first, he gave us only one sentence. We were supposed to make predictions about the text (from one extracted sentence related to a sailor); then he provided pictures (as part of an article). When the participants in the workshop read the article, they had to guess one missing word from each paragraph. It was a very useful approach for developing reading skills. It facilitates not only learning but also analytical thinking.

I also had the opportunity to attend other workshops: *Classrooms and contexts: how to make your mixed class a happy class*, Anne Wiseman. This session was very similar to that of Professor Terry Lamb. Anne Wiseman focused on accessing language diversity which is strength rather than weakness.

As a conclusion, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to BETA and RELO-Budapest for their support, and all the speakers for the exchange of good practices and teaching ideas which I apply in my professional practice.

Interview with

Sandie Mourão



Tanya Bikova is a teacher of English at the High School of Mathematics and Natural Sciences, Blagoevgrad. Since April 2014 she has been a co-opted

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Tanya Bikova conducted a short interview with Sandie Mourão, a plenary speaker at the forthcoming 25th BETA-IATEFL Conference and PCE in Plovdiv.

SANDIE MOURÃO is an independent scholar, teacher educator, author and a

NILE Training Consultant. She has a PhD in didactics and teacher education from the University of Aveiro and specialises in early



years language education and the use of picturebooks in all areas of language education. Sandie has authored a number

of language learning courses and resource books and is a regular contributor to edited volumes, journals and magazines related to ELT. She is also co-editor of the CLELEjournal an open access online journal, which supports the integration of children's literature and language learning <http://clelejournal.org/>. She keeps an award winning blog, Picturebooks in ELT, <http://picturebooksinelt.blogspot.com/>, which promotes the use of picturebooks with language learners of all age groups. See Sandie's website for more information <http://sandiemourao.eu>.

Tanya:

Dr Mourão, thank you for agreeing to this interview. Could you tell us what made you pursue a career in English language teaching in the first place?

Sandie Mourão:

I wanted to travel and see the world, and at the time it was really easy to get an ELT job in a language school if you had the CELTA and pretty much any degree. So, I began my ELT career upon finishing a degree in art and drama, taking CELTA and flying out to the first job I was offered in Portugal. I wasn't really serious about it until I realised that I would be staying in Portugal and making my living from teaching English. I'd been teaching for around five years and decided to do an MA so that I really could do the job properly. At least that's what I hoped!

Tanya:

You have experience of working with all age groups but how did you decide to focus on teaching young learners and especially pre-primary (ages 3 - 6 years)?

Sandie Mourão:

As an ELT teacher in language schools I taught the whole range. I loved teaching adult beginners, they are much like children. I actually began my career in the 80s teaching English to middle-aged men in the Portuguese mold industry, they were lovely and we had lots of fun! It wasn't until I had children of my own that I began to think seriously about working with younger children, and in particular pre-primary children. I took my experience as a mother into these classes, and then, when I did my MA I focused on this age group and have never looked back. It's a fascinating age.

Tanya:

You write that your passion is stories and picturebooks and you seem to be fascinated by them and their enormous potential in the classroom. So how did you get to love books so much?

Sandie Mourão:

I got to know picturebooks and illustrated books as a child, back in the 60s. This was an exciting time for illustrated children's literature, though I didn't know it then! I have always been very interested in the visual and once I had children of my own, and I read picturebooks to them, I realised how wonderful they could be for language learners and I began experimenting with picturebooks in the classroom. But it wasn't until I got involved in some very simple classroom research with picturebooks, and moved away from using them to "teach" language, and instead use them to "prompt response" that I began to understand just how amazing these books are.

Tanya:

What do you think is the role of new technologies in pre-primary and primary ELT?

Sandie Mourão:

Oh dear! There must be a role, but I'm not an expert in this at all and I feel that children, in particular small children, need to be given as much opportunity as possible to interact with the real world, with real objects and with a real communicative purpose. Technology can be part of this, but it can't dominate.

Tanya:

Working with small children is rewarding but also exhausting and now, as you say, you are involved more in teacher education and research. What is the source of

inspiration for the energy you need to go on?

Sandie Mourão:

Source of inspiration for energy? Humm... For me what's important about being energetic is believing in what you do, and wanting to make a difference. I do a lot of different things. As I am freelance I work as a consultant, as an author and also as a teacher educator. I'm lucky enough to be involved in research too, though rarely paid research! I get into the classroom as often as I can. I work in a school where I coordinate the English project, so I tell stories once a week there. Bliss! I try out a lot of my new picturebooks with these children, and hone my storytelling skills. I want to make a difference and ensure these children experience English through literature.

I also believe in sharing what works, so I like to talk to teachers and encourage them to experiment and try new things too. The Portuguese English teachers' association (APPI) is amazing and they have always welcomed me with open arms to speak at their conferences and provided opportunities to train Portuguese teachers of English. I think doing all these different things helps me to move beyond the mundane. That's energizing, knowing that there's always something different to do somewhere!

Tanya:

What project have you been working on lately and what are your future professional ambitions?

Sandie Mourão:

Recently I have been heavily involved in in-service training for primary English teachers in Portugal, where English recently became a curricular subject in grade 3 (age 10). I am also involved in researching English in pre-primary education in Portugal. That's very exciting as I am able to visit schools, observe and interview pre-

primary professionals and English teachers. I'm particularly interested in how professionals collaborate to enable an integrated approach to pre-primary language learning. I'm also very excited about play through English, and even though I've already done some research into this, I'd like to do more. Oh yes, and recently I set up an international research group for pre-primary language learning, that's exciting and growing rapidly. I'm so pleased. If anyone is interested, do get in touch.

Tanya:

Do you have hobbies outside of the ELT world? Could you tell us something about them?

Sandie Mourão:

Goodness, yes, though I'm so busy these hobbies get pushed aside. I love singing and try to go to choir practice as often as I can. I love animals and have four cats and three dogs at home. I walk my dogs twice a day in the countryside around my house and I love this. There's nothing better than a brisk walk in the early morning through vines and olive trees. I also go swimming twice a week. I swim around 40 lengths if I can. I love cooking and my pastry is famous! I used to do all sorts of wacky cooking. My husband and I love learning about food in different historical times, we would organise whole dinner parties with a Roman menu or a Medieval one. Did you know that Medieval apple pie had spinach and meat in it! I used to draw a lot, but sadly that's something I have pushed well away and I get out my sketch book just once a year to draw my Christmas cards. I love reading and snuggling on the sofa with a good book, preferably the first of a trilogy! Heaven!

We are really delighted to welcome you as a plenary speaker at the 25th BETA-IATEFL Annual International Conference in Plovdiv, 3-5 June, 2016. Is this going to be your first visit to Bulgaria and how do you feel about it?

Sandie Mourão:

I'm delighted to be attending. Keith Kelly has been trying to bring me over for several years. How lucky I am that he has finally pulled it off with the help of British Council, Bulgaria, Anglia School and NILE, UK. I'm so pleased that I can visit Anglia School and see for real a project I've heard so much about for many years. But I'm also really excited about meeting Bulgarian teachers, especially during the pre-conference day, which will be a little smaller and more personal. Actually, I'm excited about the main conference too, it's always such a pleasure to talk about picturebooks and I'm looking forward to seeing and hearing teachers' reactions to my plenary. It's my first visit to Bulgaria and I am taking a day to do a little sightseeing, to visit Plovdiv and the surrounding area. Lucky me! Can't wait to meet you all!

Poetry Corner

A- B- C

The world's best artist is **Anny**
and her pictures are really funny.
Bobby and **Charley** are very shy
but they dream of the endless sky.
Dana has got a new purple dress
that came by a courier to her address.
Yesterday **Erik** the window broke
with only one powerful stroke.
Every day new songs sings **Freddy**,
he is a famous singer already.
George and **Harry** are building a house
for their new little white mouse.
Ida is intelligent and so pretty,
she is the smartest girl in the city.
Julia is **Katherine's** best friend,
their friendship will never end.
Lilly and **Molly** are playing with dolls,
they haven't got any cars or balls.
Nigel and **Oliver** are watching "Star wars"
they are in the city cinema, of course!
The best swimmer in the team is **Peter**
he is the fastest at one kilometer.
Quique is a new student in his school
he is looking for the swimming pool.
Richard the 3rd is a great English king
about him forever the people will sing.
Susan and **Tommy** drew a white dove
and gave it to their mom with love.
Ursula is the worst witch in the ocean,
now she is making a poisonous potion.
Vanessa is happy because she took
from the library her favourite book.
Winnie the Pooh is a little sweet bear
but he doesn't want his honey to share.
Xenia and **Yana** spent the day walking,
while they were laughing and talking.
Zorro is a famous and brave stranger
he always helps people in danger.

Poem written by

Elitsa Vassileva, a 5th-grade student from Varna
Teacher: Svetlana Naydenova-Georgieva

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• SMALL SCALE, TEACHER-LED RESEARCH PROJECT



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29 March 2016
18.00GMT/19.00CET/20.00EET
Kieran Donaghy
[Link to the webinar](#)

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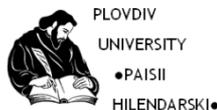
Join us on a collaborative project : a SEETA Booklet on how to become a successful blogger! See the project as it's happening and find out how you can contribute. [JOIN HERE](#) 😊

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On-going community forum
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Forthcoming Events in the World of ELT



ФИЛОЛОГИЧЕСКИ
ФАКУЛТЕТ

25th BETA-IATEFL Annual International Conference

Teaching and Learning English: from No Tech to High Tech. How to Motivate Learners?

4th-5th June 2016, Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski", Bulgaria

AND

Pre-Conference Event

CLIL with Young Learners

3rd June 2016, Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski", Bulgaria



DEAR COLLEAGUE,

The Bulgarian English Teachers' Association (BETA-IATEFL) and Plovdiv University "Paisii Hilendarski", are pleased to invite you to the 25th BETA-IATEFL Annual International Conference, which will take place from 3rd to 5th June 2016 in Plovdiv, European Capital of Culture 2019.

The conference aims to inspire and motivate teachers to share ideas about motivating their learners these days. We would like to offer you the opportunity to share your experience, expertise and insights into the fascinating world of language teaching and research. Areas of interest include, but are not limited to, *Teaching Young Learners and Teenagers; Teaching ESP; Teacher Education and Development; Bilingual Education; Literature, Media & Cultural Studies in ELT; Global Issues; Content and Language Integrated Learning; Blended Learning; Applied linguistics; Research; Testing, Evaluation and Assessment.*

As usual, internationally prominent professionals in the field of ELT are invited as keynote speakers and workshop leaders. A book exhibition of major ELT publishers and service providers will accompany the conference.

For registration forms, fees and accommodation check <http://www.beta-iatefl.org>. For further queries, contact beta.iatefl@gmail.com

We very much look forward to seeing you in Plovdiv.

Best wishes,

The Conference Organizing Team

50th Annual International IATEFL Conference and Exhibition

Birmingham, UK

13th-16th April 2016

Pre-Conference Events and Associates' Day

12th April 2015

Plenary Speakers



David Crystal



Silvana Richardson



Diane
Larsen-Freeman



Scott Thornbury



Jan Blake

For further information, visit:

<http://www.iatefl.org/annual-conference/birmingham-2016>



Keynote speakers



Aziz Abu Sarah



Dr. Andy Curtis



Dr. Jeanette Altarriba



Dr. Anne Curzan

For further information visit:

<http://www.tesol.org/convention2016>

THE FIPLV NORDIC-BALTIC REGION (NBR) CONFERENCE 2016

The Language Teacher and Teaching at Crossroads

9 June – 11 June 2016, Tallinn (Estonia)

Conference Venue: ORIGINAL SOKOS HOTEL VIRU

Find more information [here](#)

The [FIPLV](#) Nordic-Baltic Region is pleased to announce NBR 2016 conference hosted by Estonian Association of Foreign Language Teachers in Tallinn (Estonia).

The conference aims at providing a platform for the discussion of the changing roles of the teacher, dissemination of good practices of teaching in the 21st century with a special focus on research insights, innovative ideas and hands-on-activities.

Conference website: www.voorkeelteliit.eu Select English [Click](#)

Key speakers: Terry Lamb (UK), Franz Mittendorfer (Austria), Martin Ehala (Estonia), Mart Laanpere (Estonia)

The conference programme focuses on the following topics:

Language Policy and Language Education Policy; Learning and Teaching Less Widely Taught Languages; Traditional vs. Innovative Teaching Methods; The Teaching Profession and Teacher Networks: Today`s and Tomorrow`s Challenges; Emerging Technologies in a Digital Age; Quality in Language Teaching and Learning; Multilingualism and Employability

The languages of presentations, workshops and poster presentations are:

English, German, Finnish, Russian, French and Spanish

Writing for the BETA-IATEFL E-Newsletter

Have you ever wondered if you should write an article for the E-Newsletter of BETA-IATEFL?

- Please DO! Your contribution may act as a springboard for discussions, inspiration for colleagues or facilitate the work of fellow teachers!

What exactly do you have to do?

If you feel you have something you would like to share:

- Send us your article in MS Word format.
- Send us a photo of you (in jpeg format) and short biographical information (about 50 words) which will accompany your article.
- You will receive feedback from us within 10 days of your submission.
- Please, check the deadlines and the topics of the forthcoming issues. Note that the topics announced are just illustrative; if you would like to submit an article on a different topic, please do. It will be considered for publishing.
- We are looking forward to your contributions.

For further information contact: beta.iateflbg@gmail.com

Notes for Contributors

- Your article must have not been previously published and should not be under consideration for publication elsewhere.
- The length of your article may vary - short contributions of 300 – 800 words are as good as long ones.
- Electronic submission of your article is preferred to the following e-mail address: beta.iateflbg@gmail.com
- Text of the article: Calibri, 14 points, with 1.5 spacing.
- Headings and subheading: Calibri, 24 points, bold, centred; first letter capitalised.
- Author names and title as well as contact details should be submitted in a separate file accompanying the article.
- About 50 words of biographical data should be included.
- New paragraphs – to be indicated with one separate line.
- Referencing should follow the APA referencing style.
- References in the text should be ordered alphabetically and contain the name of the author and the year of publication, e.g. (Benson, 1993; Hudson, 2008).
- Quotations have to include the relevant page number(s), e.g. (Peters, 2006, p. 76).
- Tables, figures or diagrams should be numbered accordingly and included in the relevant part of the text. Each should have an explanatory caption.
- The editors will not return any material submitted, but they reserve the right to make editorial changes.

Established 1991 in Sofia, BETA seeks to build a network of ELT professionals on a national and regional (Southeast Europe) level and establish the association as a recognized mediator between educators and state bodies, public and other organizations.

BETA members are English teaching professionals from all educational sectors in Bulgaria – primary, secondary and tertiary, both state and private. BETA activities include organizing annual conferences, regional seminars and workshops; information dissemination; networking with other teachers' associations and NGOs in Bulgaria and abroad; exchange of representatives with teachers' associations from abroad.

We are on the web:

<http://www.beta-iatefl.org/>

Thank you for your support!

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