

Eyes Open

Digital Projects Teacher's notes

Introduction

The Digital Projects are related specifically to topics from units in the course. They are suggested as supplementary material, to extend and enhance the core course content. Making use of project work can foster the learner's natural curiosity and promote a love of learning. The Digital Projects are designed to provide students with an opportunity to engage in online research, to encourage teamwork and peer support, to raise students' awareness of different cultures, and to promote the idea of learning as discovery.

Aims

- Encourage students to explore and develop topics from the course
- Provide students with the opportunity to work on language fluency and accuracy
- Practice researching for information online
- Develop teamwork skills by working together to complete a project
- Use digital technology to produce a piece of work which can be shared online
- Develop presentation skills

Secondary Digital Teacher Training Course

For more general support and guidance on using digital projects in class, please go to the **Secondary Digital Teacher Training Course**, which is accessible via the Cambridge LMS.

The digital projects are intended as a connection between the core course content and the Digital Teacher Training Course. The course focuses on the use of technology to support project work. We recommend that you try out the ideas presented in the course, this will provide preparation for using these projects with a class.

How to Access the Secondary Digital Teacher Training Course

The Secondary Digital Teacher Training Course is free for all teachers who use the Cambridge LMS. To access the course, go to your 'My Teaching' page and click the button to add a course or product. Choose the teacher training course and then create a class. You have to create a class to access the course. The course has ten units, each unit supports digital projects with practical guidance, often with lesson plans.

The Digital Projects

Projects are ideally done in pairs or groups, but they can also be done individually. For **mixed ability** classes, we recommend pairs or small, mixed groups, to allow weaker students more opportunity to contribute.

Each of the projects follows the same structure. First, as preparation, we suggest you read through the plan and create a version of the presentation yourself to show to students as an example. Accessing the relevant unit of the Secondary Digital Teacher Training Course will provide support as you do this. The students will be guided by the model you provide and the research questions.

Time

Depending on time available, the projects can be done as classwork or homework. An individual project can be separated into short chunks to avoid taking up a full lesson. The following plan is intended as a guide:

- **Lesson 1** – introduce the project and set up groups (20 mins)
- **Homework** – students do the research
- **Lesson 2** – share research findings and plan presentation (30 – 45 mins)
- **Lesson 3** – create presentation (30 mins – 1 hour)
- **Lesson 4** – doing or showing the presentations (30 mins)

Procedure

The project plans offer a simple procedure for you to follow. These are suggestions only and can, of course, be adapted as necessary to fit your context.

The research questions

In each project plan we have suggested some research questions. These are designed to guide the students towards producing language which they have learned previously in the course. These questions are only a guide and can be used exactly as they are or adapted to suit your context.

For **weaker students**, or at lower levels, you may need to translate the research questions initially, but it is important that students are encouraged to use English as much as possible during group/pair work and, of course, in their final presentations.

To challenge **stronger students**, we suggest that they add any further information or questions they think are of interest. Alternatively, for greater challenge, you may decide to ask students to write their own research questions, perhaps initially in their first language, before helping them to translate their questions to English.

Online research

If you set the online research for homework, you will obviously have little control over which websites students use. However, if they are researching at school, students can be observed and guided to use particular sites. If you have an IT suite at school there may be filters or controls in place which restrict access to certain websites. If not, it is possible to add these controls.

Please remember that research is still valid if the students use sites written in their first language, as the outcome of the project will be in English. Google search and Wikipedia are common research resources, but students over 13 years may also use social media, for example Twitter or Facebook. Indeed, they may even have social media contacts in the countries relevant to their research project. This is all a valid part of modern, online research.

Before students begin their research, discuss with them possible websites that will be useful, so all the groups have a list to start from. In terms of the information they find, encourage them to make research notes in English. It's important to encourage them to write the projects in their own words. If the text is above their level, or contains strange grammatical forms, then it may have been copied by the students, or translated using an online tool.

Presentation

The digital projects require the students to create a presentation in a digital format which can be shared online. The different forms of presentation are described in detail in the Secondary Digital Teacher Training Course. These include:

Picture collages	Audio recordings
Audio slideshows	Videos

The students' work can be uploaded to the Blog on the Cambridge LMS. Alternatively, if the work has been done individually, it could be uploaded to their Portfolio, also on the Cambridge LMS.

The examples given all have a digital outcome, in the form of a presentation or video of some kind. However, this is not absolutely necessary and they could be presented in a more traditional context (such as class posters, leaflets, etc.), if preferred. It is also possible to produce digital work offline using familiar software, such as Microsoft Word or PowerPoint.

Planning the presentation

It is important to give students enough time to prepare their presentations. Each group should prepare a summary of what they intend to do, and state who is going to do it. A simple storyboard can support students in planning slides or sequences of images.

For audio recording tasks, **weaker classes** could write a script first. **Stronger classes** may only need to make notes, and could be asked to memorise their lines before recording them. Remember that rehearsing lines before recording is an excellent learning task.

Visual forms of presentation will often require images. Photographs can be found very easily on the Internet, but copying or downloading other people's photographs without permission may break copyright laws and could be illegal. However, there are a number of sites that provide images that can be used non-commercially without permission under a 'Creative Commons' licence. For example: [Flickr \(www.flickr.com\)](http://www.flickr.com).

Alternatively, students may be motivated by the idea of taking and using their own photographs or creating their own images.

Creating the presentation

To create their final presentations, whether it is a picture collage, an audio recording or another option, there are various possibilities depending on your context. For example:

- Use an IT suite / computer room
- Use a class set of tablet computers if your school has them
- Use the students' own mobile devices, tablet computers or mobile phones
- Allow the students to create the work at home, using their own technology

The Secondary Digital Teacher Training Course contains more information about the possibilities of different contexts. What you can do will depend on what you have available.

Follow up

After the completion of each project, the students' work could be shared online or in the classroom with the whole class. A major benefit of producing digital work is the fact that it can be archived easily. If it is uploaded online, it will not get lost or damaged and can be viewed again and again, from outside or inside the school. This is possible to do by uploading the completed work to the Cambridge LMS (CLMS). However, please exercise caution. It is important to respect students' privacy, and the sharing of photographs or videos of students on the Internet should only be done with the consent of both students and parents.

The Cambridge LMS

Using the LMS blog

Uploading the digital project work to the **Blog** on the CLMS is the ideal outcome. This archives the work to be viewed by the whole class and also by parents.

Digital files can easily be uploaded to the blog in the CLMS and shared with other class members. This will allow the work to be archived permanently, and there is also a facility for students (and the teacher) to review and comment on each other's work. The work can then be seen in or out of the classroom.

Many students are active users of social media. Using a blog with the class could be motivating for them, helping them feel that their school life is up to date. Often, shy students who may not speak out in the classroom share their opinions more readily in an online environment.

When it comes to what the students write about each other's projects, it is important to give controlled instructions and establish guidelines for use. A class contract, agreed to by all and posted on the blog is a good way of doing this. It is important that the students

know what kinds of comments are acceptable and what aren't. Unfair criticism and negative comments should not be allowed.

The students' interaction and behaviour within the blog environment should also be graded or marked. Rewarding students for sharing their work and feeding back on other students' work is important. They need to be motivated and feel that it is an important part of the learning process.

Evaluation and the LMS gradebook

The Cambridge LMS has a **Gradebook** in which teachers can add their own assessment items and categories. It is easy to add something for the digital projects and include assessment of this work as part of the students' overall grade. Teachers can set up a 'custom category' for work done on the LMS. Then a 'custom gradebook item' can be added for Digital Projects, Blogging or whatever else you would like the students to be graded on.