

The benefits

Projects involve students working together to produce something in English. They can require students to research and present information, create something or design something. Students might do two or all of these things. For example, students imagine they are influential bloggers who have decided to promote a product or brand. They choose the product/brand, research it, create a digital marketing campaign and present it to the group.

Projects in the English language classroom provide several benefits:

1 Authentic use of language

Students work on an authentic task which requires them to use English authentically. Projects also often develop all four skills: reading, writing, listening and speaking.

2 Development of personal skills

Projects require learners to collaborate, enabling them to develop skills such as the ability to cooperate, solve problems and communicate.

3 Development of autonomy

As project work involves students making decisions about how to achieve their learning objective, they are able to develop learner autonomy with support and guidance from their teacher.

4 Development of thinking skills

Students can develop information literacy and media literacy when doing research online, determining what information is useful, biased, misinformed, etc. They can also develop critical thinking skills when analysing that information, evaluating it and deciding how to use it.

5 Development of creativity

Many projects require learners to be creative in some way. Creativity, along with collaboration, communication and critical thinking skills are considered to be key skills for 21st century learning.

6 Increased motivation

Project work can provide a break from lessons which have a very specific language or skills focus. In addition to that, all of the other benefits mentioned here can make project work motivating for students.

It is important to note that while project work provides many development opportunities, students are likely to need support in exploiting those opportunities, such as advice from their teacher on how to work independently or feedback on their communication skills.

How to extend Gold Experience projects

At the end of each unit in Gold Experience 2nd edition, there is a Switch on lesson which provides video input and listening tasks followed by a project task. The listening tasks and project can be completed in one lesson, or students can work on them over a longer period of time, e.g. one lesson a week over a month plus homework. By extending the project, students can more fully benefit from it.

Below is the project task from Unit 3.

5 Work in groups to research and design a new app that can be used by young people in your town or area. Follow these steps.

- 1 Research apps for young people that already exist. Answer these questions.
 - What services do the apps provide?
 - How are they helpful for young people?
 - Why do you think young people might like/dislike these apps?
- 2 Plan your app. Is it a completely new idea or similar to an existing app?
- 3 What will your app look like? Design a logo and write a short description of it.
- 4 Present your app to the class.
- 5 Vote for the best app as a class.

To expand the project over a longer period of time, you could do the following:

Week 1

In class

Students watch the video and complete the listening tasks. Students are put into groups and set the homework task (see below).

Homework

Each student researches apps that young people use and take notes.

Week 2

In class

Students share their research with their group and compare common features.

Homework

Students go away and think of ideas for an app that can be used by young people.

Week 3

In class

Students share their app ideas in their groups and choose the best idea. They plan their presentation.

Groups work together to prepare their presentation.

Week 4

In class

Groups present their app idea to the class. Other groups ask questions and students then vote on the best idea and discuss why.