

Suggestions for Using Video in the Classroom by **Gabrielle Corley**

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Sometimes it seems the students go into ‘zone-out entertainment mode’ when viewing a video! There *are ways* to maximize comprehension and develop critical-thinking skills in your students, while viewing video. The goal is for kids to be engaged, active viewers. Students should understand the videos they watch and be able to formulate opinions about the content. It may take a bit of additional prep time, but these tips will help set the scene for a great learning experience.

Area 1: Using Videos In a Teacher-Led Lesson

Whether you choose to use a video in a whole class learning experience or select some videos for students working in small groups, here are some ideas to consider:

1. Choose wisely.

Make sure that the video resources you choose are relevant, specific to the topic you’re teaching and engaging. No one wants to sit through 20 minutes of a boring movie for one minute of crucial information. Use high-quality, high-interest video from a trusted source. Review vocabulary before viewing and set the stage by introduce the video by giving a brief summary of what they are about to view. Formulate an essential question that you want your students to focus on. Write it on the board. Have them write it in their journals or on their handout. For students to be successful, you’ve got to give them something to focus on.

2. Keep it brief.

There has been much research conducted that shows the average adult attention span lasts anywhere from 8 to 20 minutes. For kids and teens, it can be even shorter. So, it’s a good idea to keep educational videos brief, use clips you have chosen from a longer video, or break the viewing of a longer video up by showing it in shorter segments as you interact with students.

3. Create accountability.

Make it clear to your students that during the video, their role is not to sit back and be entertained. Set the expectation that while the video is rolling, they will have work to do.

4. The “Predict – Reflect – Question” protocol.

Before the video, students make two predictions based on the video title. After viewing the video, they report whether their predictions were correct or not. Then, they each compose three questions about the video. Students swap questions and grade one another’s responses. (Student Tool 75 is provided as an example.)

5. Pause and interact.

Keep students focused by pausing the video and asking purposeful questions. Make them fact-based questions aimed at comprehension and make sure your queries always point back to the essential question established in the preview.

6. Take time after the video to reflect.

A well-chosen video is a great resource for stimulating a structured discussion, and it can make more efficient use of classroom time. Divide students into two- or three-person groups to answer discussion questions or provide student with reflection worksheets to use in a small group or individually. (Student Tools 65, 66, 67, and 68 are provided as examples.)

7. Deeper Understanding.

Multiple viewings are key to comprehension, but students may balk at revisiting something they’ve already spent time on. One way to tackle this is to assign a project, ideally something creative, which requires multiple viewings in order to rehash the details. It could be something like students could create a poster or mini-book. Older students could use online tech tools to annotate or even remix the video by adding notes or creating a graphic organizer.

*Adapted from Common Sense Media <https://www.commonsense.org/education/teaching-strategies/thinking-critically-about-video>

Area 2: Using Videos for Student-Led Research and Projects

Providing videos that students can efficiently access and effectively use on their own is a primary focus of Educate.Today. Whether it’s for a longer-term independent research project, information to include in a more quickly produced essay or project, or as part of a differentiation project you have provided, here are some ideas to consider:

1. Know why you’re seeking a video.

Students could be using video for many purposes depending on what stage they find themselves in on their independent project. Are they just beginning the research process and looking for background or contextual information? Are they further into their research and looking for specific data or quotations to use to support points they want to make? Are they looking for visual excerpts they can incorporate into their final product? Have students keep the context of why they’re looking for a video in mind as they view it. Depending on where they are in their project and the type of information provided in the video, it may be that they’ll choose to return to the same video more than once to view it for different purposes each time.

2. Predict what you think you're going to learn.

Before they start viewing the video, encourage students to predict the type of information they think they'll learn based on its title and short description provided on the Educate.Today website. This will help establish a context for their viewing and give them a focus on the types of information to "listen for" as they view the video.

3. Be prepared to take notes.

Whether it's through a structured form you give them or a system of their own creation, encourage students to take notes on what they learn in the video. Notes should include:

- a. the title of the video
- b. information they find interesting, helpful, or thought provoking
- c. the name and qualifications of the source of the source in the video (if applicable)
- d. the time code in the video when the information appears (beginning and end times) so students can return to that part of the video again quickly and efficiently if they need to re-hear it or if they decide to use it for a quotation in their paper or excerpt in a video project.

4. Get the bibliographic information.

If a bibliography is part of the student project, students should note the bibliographic information for every video they watch in their research even if they don't end up using a specific quotation or excerpt from it in their final project. For some examples of bibliographic references for video check out the sites below:

<http://www.easybib.com/guides/citation-guides/mla-8/how-to-cite-a-film-or-video-in-mla-8/>

<https://www.citationmachine.net/resources/cite-youtube-video/>

<http://rasmussen.libanswers.com/faq/32516>

<https://libguides.dixie.edu/c.php?g=57887&p=371733>

5. Think about the visual impact as well as the informative impact.

Depending on the type of project a student is doing, they may choose to show an excerpt from a video. If so, have students consider its visual impact as well as its informative value. Lots of videos may provide the information they need, but are there some they find that create a better emotional response, provide some nice visual variety, help explain a concept better than they could in their own words, or just seem to flow better into their project? These considerations may become important as they return to videos they have seen before and begin to winnow down what to include in their final project.