

## Choosing Materials in your TBLT Class

Material is anything which is used to form the basis of a language learning activity or task: a newspaper article, a photograph, a video, a song, a poem, an animation – anything you can imagine!

Materials can come from different resources:

1. Learners: personal photographs, favourite objects, food, posters, an article that spark their interest.
2. Television: advertisement spots, characters from series, short films, news, etc.
3. Local place: interviews with local people, Town Hall, Police stations, Municipality Hall, neighbourhood, etc.
4. Information Technology: online games, online photos, leaflets, movies, etc.

The materials can include:

1. Pictures: magazine advertisements, posters, a photograph of a scene, of a trip, etc.
2. Objects: real objects like fruits, vegetables, toys
3. Games: Cards, board games, outdoor games.
4. Texts: Leaflets, catalogues, articles, lyrics of songs, poems, local stories
5. Songs and sounds: movies, singers, local legends

In order to choose your material, you should think carefully about the purpose of using each piece of material:

1. What will the learners do during the learning session?
2. Will the newspaper article serve as a model or example of something?
3. Will you use the material for vocabulary expansion – or to focus on language form?
4. Will the newspaper article be used for starting a discussion or for learning how an article is structured?
5. Will a picture be used to provoke a reaction, to start a discussion during the pre-task?
6. Will a picture be used to inspire the learners for creative writing during the task?
7. Is it better to use an article or a picture for creating interest in the topic?

All these are questions you should be thinking in order to match the material with the correct moment to be used during your tasks and classes. Also remember, that the material has to calculate the learners age and interests, needs and language level.

On the other hand, you may be in a situation where you and the participants are the only “material” available. What you can do is look within and around you, draw on the experiences/feelings/observations of the participants. Once your task has been decided upon, the materials can be created from what is available: people, countries, buildings, news, etc. It is possible to create meaningful activities and tasks using only the context and people as resources, giving them the chance to express themselves, speak and write about themselves or listen to others and exchange ideas.