



Animated GIF stories in EFL classes

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HUPE conference, 2020

What is a GIF and how to pronounce it?

- a GIF (pronounced “gif” or “jiff”) is an image file with a special feature - it can be used to create animated images
- GIFs aren't really videos
- they don't have sound
- pictures load sequentially (like a flipbook)

How is it done?

Methodology

Like a regular writing exercise – prewriting activities + writing exercise

Revising and editing – with your help

Good for monitoring – requires patience; done step by step

What do your students need?

A piece of paper
Felt-tip pens or markers
Smartphones/tablets
GIF maker app



GIF instructions

Take a photo of every step of it

Open the GIF maker app, choose Images → GIF

Pick the images; reorder them if necessary; add text, decorations, filters

Create the GIF

Examples

1 Ask your students to make a GIF of particular words, e.g. MOUSE; CROCODILE; MONKEY. They should write the first letter on a piece of paper (M) and take a photo of it. Then they add the second letter and take the photo (O). They continue with the third letter—taking a photo—fourth letter—taking a photo—fifth letter—taking a photo. The last photo needs to be the photo of the whole word—MOUSE. They use GIF maker to create and edit the GIF. Give different students different words and let them share. They will practice spelling by making their own GIFs and remember more words by seeing their friends' GIFs.

2 Ask your students to record a short video of some movement. Then they use GIF maker to create a GIF of the video. They add a sentence about what they are doing (I'm raising my eyebrows; I'm winking; I'm touching my nose). A good idea is to check their sentences before they incorporate them into their GIFs. You may even assign a specific activity to each of them. When the GIF is done, they share it with you and the others. This is a good online TPR activity :-)

3 Ask your students to create GIF messages about the topic you have covered. Its complexity and length depends on their proficiency level, but the process is the same: They write word for word on a piece of paper, taking a photo after every word they have written. They make sure to hold the camera in the approximately same position every time they take a photo. When they have finished creating their message, they use GIF editor to create and edit their GIF. Make sure to do the writing in the class and to help students revise and edit their work before they start putting it on paper and photographing it.

GIF maker app enables you to share your GIF via Viber, WhatsApp, or mail. Let your students share them with each other.

Have fun!