

Introducing a New Lesson Theme for CLIL

CLIL Matters
Materials 2021



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Attracting and keeping students' attention is a vital element of every lesson, including **CLIL** lessons. According to studies¹, there are several features of the lesson material that help students to be attentive.

Students find it easier to be attentive when the lesson material:

has some personal meaning

connects to students' interests

stimulates students' imagination

contains elements of surprise

provokes wonder

So, try to stimulate your students' imagination and interest right from the start of the lesson when you reveal the **New Lesson Theme**.

1. A lesson theme with a difference.

Subject	Lesson theme	Lesson theme with a difference
Geography	Deserts	Are all deserts hot and sandy?
Biology	Heredity	Whose eyes have you got?
Physics	Electricity	How can you see electrical current?
History	The Battle of Trafalgar	Why is 111 Nelson's number?

1. Try to stimulate your students' interest by offering them a lesson theme with a difference, as the examples in the table.

¹ Judy Willis, (2005) Attention: To Have and to Hold. Add the Science of Learning to the Art of Teaching to Enrich Classroom Instruction, *Voices from the Middle*: Journal of the National Council of English Teachers <http://www.radteach.com/page1/page8/page9/page9.html>



2. Unusual or surprising facts related to the lesson theme.

Did you know your skin is the largest organ in your body?

Did you know noise can be white, pink, red, purple or grey?

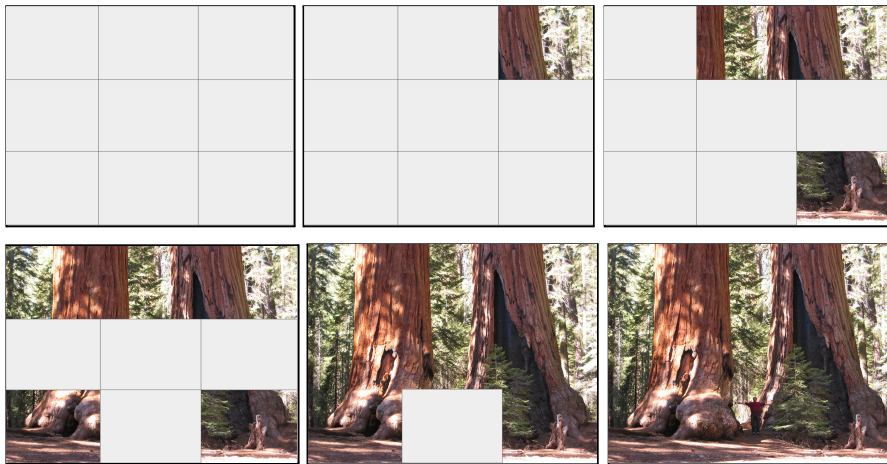
2. Start your lesson with a *Did you know...?* fact that is related to your lesson theme, as the two examples here. If you want a bit of suspense and thinking, start with a *Do you know...?* question, such as *Do you know what the largest organ in your body is?* or *Do you know what colour noise can be?*

3. A debate topic or quote.

It should be people's individual choice to vaccinate their children or not.

3. Start a lesson with a statement that can stir a debate. The example here can be an introduction to the lesson on the human immune system or the history of vaccinations.

4. Uncovering a photo related to the lesson theme.



<https://tinyurl.com/uzpu684c>

4. Select a photo showing some unusual content related to your lesson theme and cover it with boxes. At the beginning of the lesson uncover the photo piece by piece, leaving the most exciting element to the very end. This one shows giant sequoias and can be an introduction to a lesson on trees, forests or the USA.

5. Unusual object related to the lesson theme.



1.



2.

<https://tinyurl.com/Chineseseisemoscope>
<https://tinyurl.com/olddivingsuit>

5. Show an unusual object related to your lesson theme or a photo of it. For example, Photo 1 can introduce the lesson on earthquakes or inventions as it shows the ancient seismoscope invented in China in AD 132. Photo 2 can be an introduction to the physical properties of water or the human respiratory system as it shows the oldest surviving diving suit called the Old Gentleman from the early 18th c.

Final note: Once you introduce the lesson theme, invite your students to answer the question or questions or describe a picture and then hypothesise on the lesson content. You do not need to confirm their suggestions though. You can refer to the picture during the lesson or at the end of it.

To learn more strategies for starting a lesson [read this article](#) on the Teaching Channel.



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www.linkedin.com/in/olazaparucha/



info@clilmatters.com



Illustrations and design: Marta Zaparucha
<https://www.behance.net/martazaparucha>
marta.zaparucha@gmail.com

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