

Using ads in the classroom

FLA and Cooperating teacher competition 2020-2021

Language assistant name: Natalia Burgues Durán

Language teacher name: Audrey Kenny

Name of your school: Our Lady's Bower Secondary School

Language: Spanish

Title of the ad: "La llama que llama."

Theme of the ad: This is an old TV ad for a telephone company in Argentina called Telecom. The campaign comprised about 20 short videos featuring a family of llamas who used their new phone line for bizarre calls, taking advantage of the new low-cost plans. This video explores the stereotype of the Argentinian heavy reliance on psychoanalysis and self-help resources (in this case, helplines), while also showcasing the popular South American camelid, bred for wool by Andean peoples.

Year group(s) you can use it with: 2nd year (12 – 13 years old)

HOW THIS ADD WAS USED IN CLASS

Introduction

This class was prepared as a general review for content that the students had been studying in previous lessons, as the video features contextualized examples of:

- Seasons of the year (*invierno*→ winter)
- Question words (*por qué, porque*→ why, because)
- Vocabulary related to making a phone call (how to answer, phone plans→ *planes*, to call→ *llamar*, long distance→ *larga distancia* and how to say phone numbers in Spanish)
- Expressions with the verb *tener* in Spanish, whose equivalents in English is 'to be' (to be cold→ *tener frío*)
- Adjectives used to describe people and feelings (*feo*→ ugly, *lindo*→ pretty)
- Grammar:
 - Gender and number agreement between nouns and adjectives in Spanish
 - Regular verbs ending in -ar and their conjugation in present simple tense

The class had to be adapted to be taught online when schools were closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since the worksheet attached to this file could not be handed out in person, the questions were published on the chat and instead of working in pairs or small groups for the second activity, the students were invited to open their microphones on Teams and participate spontaneously, following basic turn-taking etiquette and without raising their hands or waiting for their turn.

Although this review came as closure for a lesson specific to making phone calls in Spanish, all the contents listed above had been part of previous lessons from the classroom text *Aprendemos 1*. Therefore, students were encouraged to rely on their notes and to use as much Spanish as possible during the activities. The video was also presented with subtitles in English to help them pick up the vocabulary which they needed to focus on.

Teaching and Learning

April 2021

The class.

1st stage: brainstorm and quick research to introduce the topic.

We started with a brainstorm as icebreaker, in which the students were invited to research about llamas, why they are appreciated, where they are popular cattle, etc. This activity served to introduce cultural items, like the llamas themselves, and the traditional use of hand-spun wool by Andean cultures (more specifically, the Andean *poncho*, and weaved fabrics).

2nd stage: presentation of the video.

With this background, I explained the origin of the video we were about to watch. The add is one of over 20 videos created by Agulla & Baccetti, and launched in Argentina between 1997 and 2002 to promote the new phone plans offered by Telecom Argentina. The campaign was awarded for its creativity and effectivity, based, mainly, on its funny notes.

3rd stage: the video, and related activities.

As usual with listening activities, I invited the students to watch the video with subtitles three times: the first, to get a general idea of its contents; the second -after sharing the questions they would need to answer-, to identify the parts containing the answers they needed. Since this activity was carried on online, the students were working unsupervised. Hence, they were given the freedom to pause the video during the third view, to write down their answers. They were allowed 10 minutes for this last view, and to answer the questions.

4th stage: sharing answers.

We corrected the questions in the first part of the worksheet.

5th stage: group discussion.

The group was invited to discuss the issues in Part 2 of the worksheet, combining efforts to come up with answers (in Spanish). I directed the discussion, giving clues, or re-enacting certain fragments of the video (if in the classroom, these fragments could be played from the original, but being online, my approach worked, in addition, to encourage the discussion by introducing humour). Once they had reached the expected conclusions, I popped the bonus question, which served to review how to say phone numbers in Spanish. If taught in the classroom, the idea behind this last activity was to give a small prize to the student who answered correctly, by way to acknowledge their effort. In this case, it was a crocheted bookmark, shaped like a llama. Unfortunately, the online prize was just a verbal praise.

How it turned out/possible things to improve:

It was a surprise to hear, in my very last class with these students, that this had been one of the lessons they had enjoyed the most. The biggest obstacle I noticed during online lessons was the difficulty to engage the students in open participation. Technical issues, some isolated disciplinary ones, and the general disappointment introduced by the cancellation of final exams in Junior Cycle added to the overall difficulties of teaching young teenagers through distance learning platforms.

The element of humour that is central in this add (and in all of the “La llama” series, in fact), was essential to the success of this lesson.

However, this review highlighted the importance of constantly going back to what has been studied before in Foreign Languages courses; that is, putting in practice that which has been learnt. Despite the questions being rather basic ones, the students struggled by moments to remember certain contents that had been part of not very distant lessons; it even took them a few minutes to locate their own notes.

Teaching and Learning

April 2021

Tips for teachers and FLA who want to use it:

I would suggest taking the last few minutes of the class prior this one to explain that there will be a special activity on the next class, and to detail the contents they should review in preparation for it. Mentioning that this will be a “fun” class, with cultural elements and multimedia should set positive expectations, and predispose the students to enjoy the review.

Link to the ad: <https://youtu.be/Wo19D2WqO1U>