

## Spoken English homework

*Do your students like being online? Do they like doing homework? Do you find it difficult to set speaking practice homework? If your answers are 'yes', 'no' and 'yes', why not ask them to go online to do speaking homework? There are fantastic, free Web 2.0 tools out there that can make homework communicative, real-life and fun for your learners. And extremely useful for their English, of course. Here are some ideas.*

### VoiceThread

[www.voicethread.com](http://www.voicethread.com)

Your learners (or you) post a photo on VoiceThread and they record themselves describing or reacting to it. These may be about the coursebook unit, or about their own interests. They can also annotate the images while they record themselves. Then the beauty of it is that other people can add their comments, too. Comments can be written, audio-recorded or even video-recorded.

### Voxopop

[www.voxopop.com](http://www.voxopop.com)

Learners join or start a discussion group using their own voice (and a microphone). You could set the topic or they could. Perhaps they could discuss a topic that is about to come up in the coursebook, or give their reactions to something they have read there. I asked a group of people in different countries exactly what they were doing at 12.00 GMT on a certain date - it gave me some great genuine examples of the past progressive! Head over to Voxopop to listen to some other examples and join if you want to participate.

### TokBox

[www.tokbox.com](http://www.tokbox.com)

With TokBox, learners who have a webcam can send each other video messages, and you can even set up a video conference so several learners can speak to each other at the same time. You could invite a guest along to the conference and get your learners to ask them questions. Or learners could work in pairs: they show something in the room they are in that has special significance to them and describe why it is important.

With all these activities, it's best to show your learners an example first before getting them to create their own. Of course, there can be dangers in all online activities, but why avoid them when they are such a valuable resource and learners are probably using similar tools anyway in their private lives? We just need to make them aware of privacy and security issues. If you have some learners without computer or internet access at home you may need to provide a paper-based alternative or see if they can work with someone who does have access.