

Background information

Viewing for pleasure

In addition to the video material for Lesson C of each unit – aimed at developing students' speaking skills – the **Cambridge English Empower** Class DVD contains a series of humorous short films based around Johnny Diamond ('JD'), a private detective. These films are intended to engage your students in viewing for pleasure. There are three films for A2 Elementary. There are two versions of each film:

- the complete film (10-12 minutes)
- the same film divided into three parts, as an alternative viewing option

A photocopyable worksheet for each episode is available from cambridge.org/empower and cambridgelms.org/empower – for use in class or by students at home.

Emotional engagement

Language learning often requires perseverance, dedication, and hard work. Nevertheless, students who succeed in their learning frequently refer to the learning process itself as an experience that gives them pleasure. Their pleasure can come from various sources, but it often goes beyond the satisfaction that students derive from achieving good grades or passing tests; in conversation, students frequently mention the enjoyment they get from being able to communicate successfully in the new language, from creative writing, or from being able to read a book or understand a movie. The latest findings in neurobiology stress that this kind of emotional engagement is often connected to making progress, and to a perception of – metaphorically speaking – movement. In the words of a neuroscientist:

'Success is progress towards a goal, and nothing succeeds like success. This could be one of the most important aspects of intrinsic motivation. Achievement itself is rewarding, and that may simply be because it is recognized as movement.' (Zull, 2002: 62)¹

The importance of narratives

Cambridge English Empower, with its unique approach to Learning Oriented Assessment, offers students frequent opportunities to see the progress they are making in their learning. However, despite concrete evidence of progress, the pleasure that can be gained from reading a fascinating novel or watching a good film can often remain inaccessible during the first few years of learning a new language. It is this additional sense of achievement that your students can get from watching the 'Video Extra' detective stories. Again, in the words of the neuroscientist James Zull:

'My argument is that we get enjoyment and satisfaction through anticipation of movement and imagined movement. We see this in progress towards a goal, such as when we solve a puzzle, derive an equation, or construct a work of art or a piece of furniture. And we see it in stories that lead our mind towards a goal. In fact, this is probably the most important thing that keeps us reading a good book or watching a movie. We want something to happen, or we are curious about what will happen – anticipated movement!' (Zull, 2002: 62)¹

Comprehensible input

While the video scripts for the C lessons are closely tied to the target language of each unit, the scripts for the 'Video Extra' detective stories have been written with the overall language development of A2 students in mind. They expose learners to natural speech, rather than sharply focusing on specific language points. This type of viewing for pleasure can play an important role in supporting language development, as it helps to consolidate the students' repertoire. It is often stressed that the more exposure to language students can experience – in a variety of contexts – the better their understanding of lexis, language chunks, and structures. The presentation of language in the amusing context of the detective stories makes it easier for students to decode the new lexis. Yet there is more to it than that. Just as extensive reading via simplified readers can have a positive effect on students' production of language, films that they find emotionally engaging can benefit all their language skills – not just their listening comprehension. Another important benefit is that if the protagonists of the films come across as charming or memorable, the language they use often becomes memorable too – for example in the form of key lexical chunks and phrases that are frequently used in conversation.

How to use the 'Video Extra' detective stories

We recommend using the detective stories as suggested below, but these are merely suggestions.

- One way of using these films is to play an episode to the students without any preparation and see how they get on. You can then elicit from the students what they have understood, write their ideas on the board and list the things they haven't understood, before playing the video a second time (and maybe a third, if necessary).
- If you would like to work on the videos in a more structured way, we would recommend doing some preparation before you play the video for the first time. You could, for example, write four to six content words from the video on the board (including maybe two or three that you think are important for the comprehension of the story and might not be known to your students). Ask students to read them and then call out other words that come to mind. Write all their words on the board. Then ask the students, working in pairs or small groups, to come up with a story using some or all of the words on the board. Finally, play the video to them so they can compare their ideas with the story in the film.
- Another way of leading the students into the story would be to use a few stills/images from the video (using screenshots taken on your computer). Give students a bit of time, then ask them questions about the stills, e.g. *Who are the people in the photo? Where are they? What are they about to do?* etc.
- If you decide to use the photocopiable worksheet that is provided, your students can do the following tasks for each of the three parts of the video:
 - Before you watch – a set of pre-viewing tasks based on a still from the video
 - After you watch – a set of comprehension tasks after they have watched the episode
 - Discussion – follow-up questions aimed at stimulating conversations about the video in class

Story outlines

The Case of the Forgetful Spy

Use this episode after Unit 3:

- Private detective Johnny Diamond's first case is about a woman who can't remember her name. In fact she can't remember anything about her past. The only thing she can remember is a man's face – with a beard, a black moustache, and scary eyes. And she thinks she's a spy. She can also remember ... a red door. When JD sets out with her to find the door, he doesn't know yet that their search will lead them to a theatre, where he will find the man with the beard, the black moustache and the scary eyes!

The Case of the Marathon Man

Use this episode after Unit 6:

- A woman called Laura comes to see JD because a very valuable vase is missing from her house. It's a vase her aunt gave her, and it's worth £50,000. She says she knows that her ex-boyfriend took it. He still has a key to the house, and he knows that Laura goes to visit her aunt every Sunday morning. The previous Sunday she had visited her aunt, and when she got home, the vase was gone. Laura is angry and goes to see her ex-boyfriend. She tells him that she knows he's got the vase and wants him to give it back to her. However, she gets a big surprise – he tells her that last Sunday morning he ran a marathon, and he shows her photos proving that he took part in it. So does he have an alibi? It seems so, but when JD looks at the photos he notices something unusual ...

The Case of the Stolen Jokes

Use this episode after Unit 12:

- JD is delighted to have been consulted by Bernie Jones, a famous comedian who has a rather unusual request. Bernie suspects that another comedian is regularly stealing his jokes. When JD asks him why he thinks this, he tells him that he normally writes one or two new jokes every Thursday afternoon, and then uses them in his show on Saturday night. But recently the comedian who has a show the night before Bernie has been using exactly the jokes that Bernie has written for himself. JD decides to hide in Bernie's house on a Thursday to catch the thief red-handed ...

Unit 3 'The Case of the Forgetful Spy'

PART 1

- b** 1 late, 2 woman, 3 in danger, 4 scary eyes, 5 red

PART 2

- b** 1 police station, 2 theatre, 3 bag, 4 hasn't, 5 the bag

PART 3

- b** 1 Derek, 2 Jenny, 3 hypnotist, 4 isn't, 5 Derek

Unit 6 'The Case of the Marathon Man'

PART 1

- a** 1 Johnny Diamond, 2 a client

- b** 1 late, 2 knows, 3 £50,000, 4 house, 5 morning

PART 2

- b** 1 ran, 2 9.00, 3 10.00, 4 four, 5 squash, 6 surprised

PART 3

- b** 1 Guy started the race. 2 Guy took off his number and called a taxi. 3 Guy got back into the taxi and went to the finish line. 4 The taxi took Guy to Laura's house. 5 Guy opened the door with the key, got the vase and got back into the taxi. 6 The taxi took Guy to his house and he left the vase there. 7 Guy put his number back on and joined in the race.

- c** 1 Because he wasn't sweating in the photo

Unit 12 'The Case of the Stolen Jokes'

PART 1

- b** 1 Sunday, 2 weeks, 3 before, 4 two, 5 in a notebook, 6 on his own

PART 2

- b** 1 Johnny checks the house for bugs. 2 Bernie tells Johnny about his routine. 3 Johnny returns to the house on Friday afternoon. 4 Johnny tries to tell Bernie a joke. 5 Bernie goes for a walk. 6 Johnny reads Bernie's jokes.

PART 3

- b** 1 His dog steals them. 2 He's a friend. 3 He's surprised and makes a joke.

Unit 3 'The Case of the Forgetful Spy'

PART 1

a Before you watch – Look at the photo. Point to the people and say their names.

This is Johnny Diamond. He's a private detective.

This is Lucy. She's Johnny's assistant.



b After you watch – Underline the correct answer.

- 1 Johnny is *late/early* for work.
- 2 There's a *woman/man* in his office.
- 3 The woman thinks she's *safe/in danger*.
- 4 The man has a *scary mouth/scary* eyes.
- 5 The woman remembers a *red/blue* door.

c What do you think?

Is the woman a spy?

PART 3

a Before you watch – Look at the photo and answer the questions.

- 1 Where are the man and the woman?
- 2 Is the woman scared?



PART 2

a Before you watch – Look at the photo and answer the questions.

- 1 Who do you think this man is?
- 2 Where is he?



b After you watch – Underline the correct answer.

- 1 They see the man outside the *police station/train station*.
- 2 The man goes into a *shop/theatre*.
- 3 The woman sees her *hat/bag*.
- 4 Johnny *has/hasn't* got a gun.
- 5 The man puts down *his hands/the bag*.

c What do you think?

- 1 Is Johnny in danger?
- 2 Who is the man?

b After you watch – Underline the correct answer.

- 1 The man's name is *Mike/Derek*.
- 2 The woman's name is *Jenny/Penny*.
- 3 He's a *hypnotist/magician*.
- 4 Jenny *is/isn't* a spy.
- 5 Johnny hypnotises *Derek/Jenny*.

c Discussion – In pairs or small groups, talk about these questions.

- 1 Do you know anyone who has been hypnotised? Who? When? Why?
- 2 Would you go on stage to be hypnotised? Why / Why not?

Unit 6 'The Case of the Marathon Man'

PART 1

a Before you watch – Look at the photo. Point to the people and say their names.

- 1 This is _____. He's a private detective.
- 2 This woman is Laura. She's _____.



b After you watch – Underline the correct answer.

- 1 Johnny is late/early for work.
- 2 Laura knows/doesn't know who stole her vase.
- 3 The vase is worth £15,000/£50,000.
- 4 Laura's boyfriend still has the key to her house/flat.
- 5 Laura visits her aunt every Sunday evening/morning.

c What do you think?

Did the ex-boyfriend steal the vase?

PART 2

a Before you watch – Look at the photo and answer the questions.

- 1 Who do you think the man is?
- 2 Where are Laura and the man? What are they talking about?



b After you watch – Underline the correct answer.

- 1 Guy says that last Sunday he watched/ran a marathon.
- 2 He started the race at 9.00/10.00.
- 3 Laura usually leaves her house to visit her aunt at 9.00/10.00.
- 4 Guy took three/four hours to finish the race.
- 5 Johnny goes to find Guy playing squash/tennis.
- 6 Guy is angry/surprised when Johnny takes photos of him.

c What do you think?

- 1 Is Guy telling the truth?
- 2 Why did Johnny take more photos of Guy when he's playing squash?

PART 3

a Before you watch – Look at the photo and answer the questions.

- 1 How is Guy dressed?
- 2 What is he getting into?



b After you watch – Put the events in the correct order.

- Guy opened the door with the key, got the vase and got back into the taxi.
- Guy took off his number and called a taxi.
- 1 Guy started the race.
- Guy put his number back on and joined in the race.
- The taxi took Guy to his house and he left the vase there.
- Guy got back into the taxi and went to the finish line.
- The taxi took Guy to Laura's house.

c Discussion – In pairs or small groups, talk about these questions.

- 1 How did Johnny know that Guy didn't really run the marathon?
- 2 The vase is very valuable to Laura – and not only because it is worth £50,000. What is the most valuable thing that you have? Why?

Unit 12 'The Case of the Stolen Jokes'

PART 1

a Before you watch – Look at the photo and answer the questions.

- 1 What do you think this man's job is?
- 2 Why do you think he needs a private detective?



b After you watch – Underline the correct answer.

- 1 Bernie Jones does a comedy show every *Saturday/Sunday* evening.
- 2 Bernie's had a problem for two *weeks/months*.
- 3 Sid French does a show the day *before/after* Bernie.
- 4 Bernie writes his new jokes *two/three* days before his show.
- 5 Bernie writes his jokes *in a notebook/on a computer*.
- 6 Bernie writes jokes *on his own/with a friend*.

c What do you think?

Is Sid really stealing Bernie's jokes?

PART 3

a Before you watch – Look at the photo and answer the questions.

- 1 Who is the man with the dog?
- 2 What's he doing?



PART 2

a Before you watch – Look at the photo and answer the questions.

- 1 Where are Johnny and Bernie?
- 2 What's Johnny doing? Why?



b After you watch – Put the events in the correct order.

- Bernie goes for a walk.
- Johnny returns to the house on Friday afternoon.
- 1 Johnny checks the house for bugs.
- Johnny tries to tell Bernie a joke.
- Johnny reads Bernie's jokes.
- Bernie tells Johnny about his routine.

c What do you think?

How does Sid steal Bernie's jokes?

b After you watch – Answer the questions.

- 1 How does Sid get Bernie's jokes?
- 2 Why is Bernie disappointed by Sid?
- 3 How does Bernie react when he gets Johnny's bill?

c Discussion – In pairs or small groups, talk about these questions.

- 1 What makes a good joke-teller? Are you good? Why / Why not?
- 2 What's the funniest joke you know?