ACTIVITY 1

Sound-Only Mystery

A2 to C1 · alone or in pairs · 10 minutes · any clip with clear sounds

1. Close your eyes or turn away from the screen. Write every sound you hear in the left column.
2. In the middle column, write what each sound tells you. Use **must**, **might**, **could** or **can't**.
3. Now watch the clip. Tick every guess that was right.

I can hear …	So it must / might / can't be …	✓
sizzling, a knife on a board	*They must be cooking. It might be breakfast.*	✓
		☐
		☐
		☐
		☐
		☐
		☐
		☐
		☐

must — I'm almost sure. *It must be a kitchen.*

might / could — It's possible. *It could be a party.*

can't — It's impossible. *It can't be night: I hear birds.*

SOUND WORDS

sizzling · chopping · footsteps · a door slamming · laughter · traffic · birds · rain · clapping · a phone ringing · typing · whispering · a dog barking · an engine starting · glass breaking · a crowd cheering

OUR BEST GUESS

Where are they?

Who is there?

What is happening?

AFTER WATCHING

What really happened?

How close were we?

◯ Spot on ◯ Close ◯ Way off

ACTIVITY 2

Pause and Predict

A1 to C1 · alone or in pairs · 8 to 15 minutes · any clip that tells a story

1. Each time the video stops, write what happens next and tick how sure you are.
2. Watch the next part. Score your prediction: right is 2 points, close is 1. In pairs, the higher score wins.

1 PAUSE	I THINK ... ◯ I'm sure ◯ Probably ◯ Just a guess	WHAT HAPPENED ◯ Right · 2 ◯ Close · 1 ◯ Wrong · 0
2 PAUSE	I THINK ... ◯ I'm sure ◯ Probably ◯ Just a guess	WHAT HAPPENED ◯ Right · 2 ◯ Close · 1 ◯ Wrong · 0
3 PAUSE	I THINK ... ◯ I'm sure ◯ Probably ◯ Just a guess	WHAT HAPPENED ◯ Right · 2 ◯ Close · 1 ◯ Wrong · 0
4 PAUSE	I THINK ... ◯ I'm sure ◯ Probably ◯ Just a guess	WHAT HAPPENED ◯ Right · 2 ◯ Close · 1 ◯ Wrong · 0
5 PAUSE	I THINK ... ◯ I'm sure ◯ Probably ◯ Just a guess	WHAT HAPPENED ◯ Right · 2 ◯ Close · 1 ◯ Wrong · 0

WORDS FOR PREDICTIONS

will	my opinion, or a decision now *He'll be angry.*
going to	I can see it coming *She's going to open the door.*
might / could	it's possible *It might be locked.*
If ..., ...	one thing leads to another *If he opens it, he'll see the dog.*

MY POINTS

THE ENDING I WOULD WRITE

ACTIVITY 3

Silent Film Narration

B1 to C1 · pairs or small groups · 10 to 15 minutes · the sound off

1. Watch with the sound off. Say what is happening right now, like a sports commentator. Swap commentator every 10 seconds.
2. Use the starters below. Every sentence needs an **-ing** verb: *He's running. She's looking at her phone.*
3. Comedy dub: pick three moments, write what the two people are saying, then perform it over the silent clip.

COMMENTATOR STARTERS

And now he's ...	Look, she's about to ...	He's just picked up ...	Oh no, they're ...
Meanwhile, ...	Here comes ...	Is she really going to ...?	And ... he's done it!

Describe the people

SIZE AND AGE

tall · short · young · elderly · middle-aged

LOOK

curly-haired · bearded · smart · scruffy · nervous

CLOTHES

in a blue jacket · in a suit · with a backpack · in an apron · with glasses

the tall bearded man in a blue jacket · the young woman with a backpack

Comedy dub

SCENE 1	SCENE 2	SCENE 3
A:	A:	A:
B:	B:	B:

-ing verbs we used: _____ The funniest line: _____

ACTIVITY 4

Three-Word Summary

A2 to C1 · alone, then the class · 10 minutes · a 2 to 3 minute clip

1. Watch the clip. Sum it up in exactly three words. Then say why you chose each word.
2. Grow it: three sentences, then exactly 30 words. Every word must earn its place.
3. Put the class's three-word summaries on the board and vote. Tally the votes below.

STEP 1 · THREE WORDS

I chose _____ because _____

I chose _____ because _____

I chose _____ because _____

STEP 2 · THREE SENTENCES

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

STEP 3 · EXACTLY 30 WORDS, ONE WORD IN EACH BOX

1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30

MAKE YOUR WORDS WORK

Nouns and verbs carry more than adjectives.

Swap a general word for a sharp one: ~~good~~ **useful**, ~~bad~~ **dangerous**, ~~big~~ **huge**.

Drop the obvious: ~~The video is about~~ ...

CLASS VOTE · SUMMARY AND TALLY

ACTIVITY 5

The Expert Panel

B1 to C1 · groups of 4 to 8 · 15 to 20 minutes · a clip on a topic people disagree on

1. Cut out the cards. Each student takes one role and keeps it face down until the video ends.
2. Take two minutes alone: write one point from the video that your character would use.
3. Hold the panel. Speak only as your character, and ask the panel your character's question.

YOUR ROLE
The Parent
YOU CARE ABOUT
your children's safety, health and time
START WITH
As a parent, the first thing I think about is ...
ASK THE PANEL
Who checks that this is safe for kids?
FROM THE VIDEO, MY POINT IS

YOUR ROLE
The Business Owner
YOU CARE ABOUT
customers, costs and jobs
START WITH
From a business point of view, ...
ASK THE PANEL
Who is going to pay for this?
FROM THE VIDEO, MY POINT IS

YOUR ROLE
The Scientist
YOU CARE ABOUT
evidence, data and what we really know
START WITH
The research actually shows that ...
ASK THE PANEL
Where does that number come from?
FROM THE VIDEO, MY POINT IS

YOUR ROLE
The Teenager
YOU CARE ABOUT
freedom, friends and being heard
START WITH
Honestly, adults don't get that ...
ASK THE PANEL
Did anybody ask young people?
FROM THE VIDEO, MY POINT IS

YOUR ROLE
The Retiree
YOU CARE ABOUT
how things used to be, and your community
START WITH
When I was your age, ...
ASK THE PANEL
What do we lose if this changes?
FROM THE VIDEO, MY POINT IS

YOUR ROLE
The Teacher
YOU CARE ABOUT
learning, fairness and every student
START WITH
In my classroom, I see that ...
ASK THE PANEL
Is this fair for everyone?
FROM THE VIDEO, MY POINT IS

YOUR ROLE
The Skeptic
YOU CARE ABOUT
hidden costs and who really profits
START WITH
That sounds great, but ...
ASK THE PANEL
Who makes money from this?
FROM THE VIDEO, MY POINT IS

YOUR ROLE
The Environmentalist
YOU CARE ABOUT
the planet, waste and the future
START WITH
Let's not forget the cost to the planet: ...
ASK THE PANEL
What happens to all of this in 50 years?
FROM THE VIDEO, MY POINT IS

GIVE YOUR VIEW
From my perspective, ...
The way I see it, ...

AGREE
That's exactly my point.
I couldn't agree more.

DISAGREE POLITELY
I see your point, but ...
I'm not so sure about that.

JUMP IN
Can I just add something?
Sorry to interrupt, but ...

Free for classroom use. Share the link, not the file: **esllaboratory.com**

ACTIVITY 6

The Eyewitness Interview

B1 to C1 · two groups · 15 minutes · a clip with clear events

1. Group A watches the clip and uses the witness card. Group B turns away from the screen and uses the detective card and the timeline.
2. Group B interviews Group A and writes the story on the timeline. Witnesses answer only what they are asked.
3. Everybody watches the clip. Group B checks the timeline: what did you get right?

GROUP A

The witness

While you watch, notice:

- [ ] Who is in it? What do they look like?
- [ ] Where and when does it happen?
- [ ] What happens first?
- [ ] What happens next?
- [ ] How does it end?
- [ ] One small detail: a color, a sign, an object

MY NOTES

GROUP B

The detective

Questions to ask (past simple and past continuous):

- Who was in it?
- What was … wearing?
- Where did it take place?
- What happened first?
- What was … doing when …?
- Why did … do that?
- How did it end?
- How did … feel?

QUESTIONS WE STILL HAVE

Our reconstruction

First,	Then	After that,	In the end,

FACTS WE GOT RIGHT

FACTS WE MISSED

ONE THING THE WITNESSES GOT WRONG

ACTIVITY 7

Speed Notes Challenge

B1 to C1 · alone, then pairs · 10 minutes · a 2 to 3 minute talk or report

1. Watch once. Take notes: key words, numbers and symbols only. No full sentences.
2. You have two minutes to compare notes with your partner. Add anything you missed in a different color.
3. The class builds a master list of key points on the board. Tick each one you caught and count your score.

NOTE-TAKING SYMBOLS

→	leads to, causes	=	is, means	≠	is not, is different from	↑	more, rising
↓	less, falling	+	and, also	!	important	?	not sure, check later
e.g.	for example	b/c	because	w/	with	vs	compared with

Main ideas	Details, numbers, names

SCORE

Points on the class list ☐

Points I caught ☐

WITHOUT WATCHING AGAIN: THE SPEAKER'S MAIN MESSAGE IN ONE SENTENCE

TEACHER PAGE

Which Activity Fits This Clip?

for the teacher · all levels · two minutes before class

Found a clip? Find its row and pick any activity with a dot. Every sheet in this pack works with any clip in that row.

Clip type	1 Sound-Only Mystery	2 Pause and Predict	3 Silent Film Narration	4 Three-Word Summary	5 The Expert Panel	6 The Eyewitness Interview	7 Speed Notes Challenge
Wordless comedy or animation Mr Bean, Simon's Cat		●	●			●	
Cooking or crafts with no talking Peaceful Cuisine	●		●				
Nature documentary BBC Earth	●			●		●	
Short film or an ad that tells a story Any 1 to 3 minute story		●	●			●	
Sports highlights A goal, a race, a final point	●	●	●			●	
How-to tutorial Recipes, repairs, makeovers		●	●				●
Short talk or explainer TED-Ed				●	●		●
News report A story with a clear event				●	●	●	●

Four checks before class

1 to 5 minutes
Longer clips lose the room. Cut a long video with the start and end time you play.

Clear pictures
Students should follow the story with the sound off.

Clear sound
No music over the speech. Accents your students are ready for.

Watch it all first
Every second of it, before class. Comments and autoplay too.

TEACHING ONLINE?

Share your screen with the computer sound turned on, and check it in the first minute. For Sound-Only Mystery, ask students to close their eyes or turn away from the screen.

WATCHING A WHOLE SERIES?

For long-form watching at home, the free Series Viewing Pack has an episode worksheet and a phrase notebook. Find it on the esl.laboratory blog, in the post on the best Netflix series to learn English.