



Vox Pop

Learn to express your opinions in English

It is not easy to say what you think. Expressing opinions is not just a question of having something to say; it requires the ability to communicate effectively. We need to know when it is appropriate to be blunt and when it would be better to take an indirect approach. Vox Pop multimedia program is aimed at students of English who need to improve their skills in expressing both oral and written opinions. The program is based on forty-eight authentic video interviews recorded on the streets of Cambridge in England. The people who feature in this program are all ordinary people who were stopped



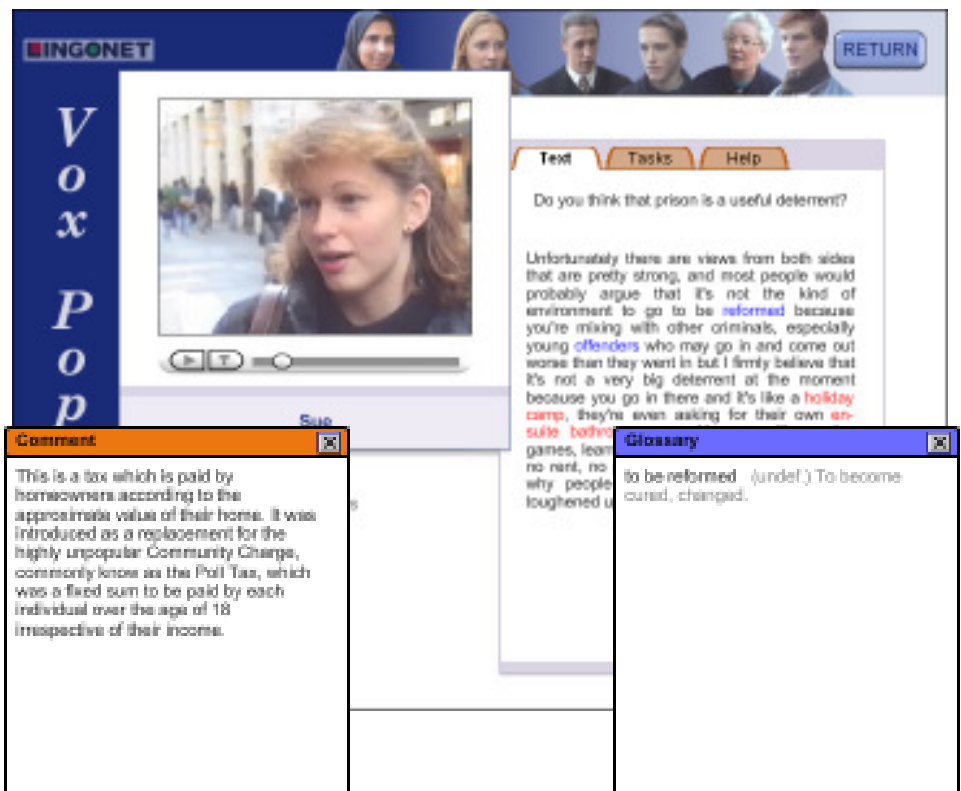
Available as CD-ROM or Network version for your Intranet (Internet Server) or LMS.

at random on the street and asked a question on a topic of current interest. Hence the name of the program: Vox Pop means "the voice of the people" in Latin. The responses people give are in no way rehearsed or pre-planned and their authenticity makes them a valuable teaching resource. The program is built around task-based activities in which learners use language to achieve real outcomes like reporting people's opinions on widely-discussed issues. This is supplemented with a closer look at some of the particular features of authentic everyday language.

Level: lower intermediate to advanced. Over 30 minutes of authentic video and audio material. Many hours of student activities.
Minimum machine specifications: Intel® Pentium® II 450MHz or faster processor (or equivalent), 128 MB of RAM, Windows 98 or newer. Soundcard. - Apple Macintosh PowerPC® G3 500MHz or faster processor, Intel Core™ Duo 1.83GHz or faster processor, 128 MB of RAM, Mac OS X v.10.1.x, 10.2.x, 10.3.x, or 10.4.x (Power PC) Mac OS X v.10.4.x (Intel) - Linux 512MB of RAM, 128MB of Graphics Memory, Soundcard.

The video interviews are accessed very easily. To hear the question, you click the question mark. To play the interview itself you click the play button. If you click the S button, you hear a paraphrase of the answer delivered clearly in a standard English accent.

Support is provided at a variety of levels; Vox Pop includes complete transcripts of all the audio material, an on-line glossary, and TOD (Teacher-On-Demand) who pops up when necessary to offer advice, explanations, and further information.



The screenshot displays the Vox Pop interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'RETURN' and a row of small portraits. Below that, a video player shows a woman speaking. To the right of the video, a question is posed: "Do you think that prison is a useful deterrent?". Below the question, a transcript of the woman's answer is visible, with some words highlighted in red. In the foreground, two pop-up windows are shown: a 'Comment' window with text about a tax, and a 'Glossary' window with the definition of 'to be reformed'.

One of the main problem areas for many students is listening. They can usually cope with the carefully scripted and acted tapes that come with most coursebooks these days, but as soon as they are faced with real people, they often fall to pieces. Vox Pop was designed with exactly this problem in mind; students are exposed to a wide range of British accents and idiomatic language which they will find both interesting and linguistically challenging. To help them, we have provided both the transcripts of the interviews and new versions re-recorded in the studio in clear standard English. Experience shows that this format is beneficial in preparing students for real-world communication.

The topics covered are:

- Guns and the law
- No more roads?
- Sex and violence
- Homelessness
- Corporal punishment
- Power of the press
- Equality of women
- Animal exports
- The monarchy
- Prisons
- Politicians
- Europe

Many ready-made exercises are included ranging from simple language auditing tasks that check understanding of new language to open, group-oriented tasks involving student presentations.

The types of exercises are as follows:

Gapfill: type in the missing word or words using the Listen and Spell buttons for help if necessary

Bubbles: drag speech bubbles to the correct slots

Jigsaws: arrange pieces (e.g. sentence beginnings and endings) to 'see the bigger picture'

Ranking: arrange the blocks in order according to given criteria

True-False: decide if the statements presented are true or false

Reporting: write your own report based on what you saw in the video clips using the expressions given as a hint

Say it their way: practise pronunciation by comparing your pronunciation with the native speaker model

Clicking the **Teachers' Zone** label in the main menu gives access to the teacher's material, users' results and names, and the program settings. The teacher's material includes transcripts of all audio material, task sheets for reporting tasks, and keys to all exercises. All the teacher's material can be printed out.

