



Firsthand and Flipgrid

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I hope you are well.

One of the tools I'm finding very useful for teaching on-line during Covid19 is Flipgrid.com. Flipgrid is a free service from Microsoft. It lets students record and view short videos.

If you are new to Flipgrid, you might want to watch a few tutorials on Youtube.com to see how it works. Here is one I like. (Note: some of the specific information is outdated. For example, it says teachers are limited to 3-minute videos. This is no longer true. You can adjust the times from 15 seconds to 10 minutes. Also, you are no longer limited to one grid.) Anyway, the tutorial' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-aZ523-HHBg>

Here's how I'm using it with *English Firsthand*. During or at the end of each unit, I have each student make a video. They then go back and watch other students' videos. I require them to watch and record comments on at least 3 other students' videos. I will suggest topics for each unit below, but usually they are either a variation on the *Real Stories* or the *Group Work* topic. I am using Flipgrid mainly for fluency work, so I use it toward the end of each unit, after they've already done accuracy-focused work like the conversation and the *Pair Work*.

I don't "correct" the videos. This is fluency work. And teachers don't need more stuff to do right now. I let the students' comments on each other's videos be the feedback.

Here are some tips:

Think of a "grid" as your course/group of students. Inside the grid, you can have several topics. I use a new topic for each unit.

- The teacher sets the task and records a sample.
- I sometimes show that sample in class. I don't usually show the other student videos in class. I make an exception if something feels like "project work." The *EFSuccess*, Unit 2 fashion show is an example.



- Students make the videos by clicking on the big green PLUS sign.
- I ask my students to write their names over their videos. Actually, the names appear in the middle. They need to drag them down to chest level or above their heads. They can also add emoji or other seals for decorations. If they are adding names and decorations, they must do so BEFORE they record the video. After they record the video, they can check it and redo if they aren't satisfied. Then they take a selfie and upload the video.
- To record a video, they need a Microsoft or a Google ID. If they don't have one, I ask them to open a gmail.com account (free). Note they don't need to actually use Gmail. They just need the address.
- I protect it with a password.
- You can set it up so you approve each video before it is posted. Because I use a password, I don't bother with this.
- I set it up so CC (Closed Captions/ subtitles) are visible. The subtitles don't handle foreign words (like student and place names) very well. I just tell students not to trust the subtitles to be correct.
- I have had very few technical problems. If a student can't record, I tell them to (1st) turn off, then restart their device. If that doesn't work, then (2nd) if they have the option of a different device (i.e., a smart phone instead of a laptop/slate computer), try that.

Here are my ideas for the first half of each book. (If we are still teaching on-line second semester, I'll make plans for the other half of the books.)

Firsthand ACCESS

Unit 1: (introductions) Introduce yourself. Tell us something about yourself that is different than other people. This will help us remember you.

Unit 2: (imperatives/command forms) What do you do to prepare for a test?

Unit 3: (Things at school, home or work) Are you neat or messy? Maybe use your smartphone to give us a tour of your room.

Unit 4: (routines) What is your routine. How has it changed before and after Covid19?

Unit 5: (Family) Show us the picture of your family (drawing from Pair Work or a photo). Say at least 3 sentences about each person.

Unit 6: (clothing) Fashion show. Wear some clothes you really like. Describe them as if you are a model in a fashion show.

Firsthand SUCCESS

Unit 1: (introductions) Introduce yourself. Tell us something about yourself that is different than other people. This will help us remember you.

Unit 2: (clothing and designs) Fashion show. Wear some clothes you really like. Describe them as if you are a model in a fashion show.

Unit 3: (health/happiness) What do you do to stay healthy? ...happy? OR What are you doing to deal with the stress of Covid19?

Unit 4: (directions, describing places) Describe your city, town or neighborhood) OR, use your smartphone. Film something interesting in your neighborhood. Describe it.

Unit 5: (describing objects) Show and tell. Show and describe an interesting give or something you have.

Unit 6: (future tenses) What are you going to do after Covid19 is over (real or a dream).

Firsthand 1

Unit 1: (introductions) Introduce yourself. Tell us something about yourself that is different than other people. This will help us remember you.

Unit 2: (describing people) Draw or show a picture of your family. Talk about all the people.

Unit 3: (routines) Talk about your daily routine. OR "Tell a lie" Talk about your daily routine but put in 2-3 things that are not true. Partners, in your comment, try to guess the lies. Later, make a comment on those comments, telling what the lies were.

Unit 4: (locations) Describe your room, your house or a favorite place. Maybe use your smart phone to show us.

Unit 5: (directions) Imagine you are a taxi driver. You are driving from your home to someplace like school, a store or someplace else. Describe what you are doing (I'm turning right at the corner.). Partners, try to shadow the speaker like in the Group Work.

Unit 6: (past) What is the most interesting trip you have ever taken. Talk about it.

Firsthand 2

Unit 1: (introductions) Introduce yourself. Tell us something about yourself that is different than other people. This will help us remember you.

Unit 2: (emotions) How do you deal with stress. OR choose an emotion (look at page 23). When do or did you feel that way?

Unit 3: (comparatives) A friend from another country is going to visit you. Where will you take them? Why? What is it like?

Unit 4: (superlatives) What is the most interesting concert/festival/event you have attended. What was it so good?

Unit 5: (reasons/excuses) Did you ever give an excuse in a difficult situation? Talk about it. OR What was your funniest excuse from the Group Work. Tell the story. Try to make it sound real.

Unit 6: (culture) Choose the most interesting question(s) from the Pair Work. Talk about it.

I hope this is useful.

Good luck. Stay well.