



Should we teach culture in our classrooms?
Whose culture?

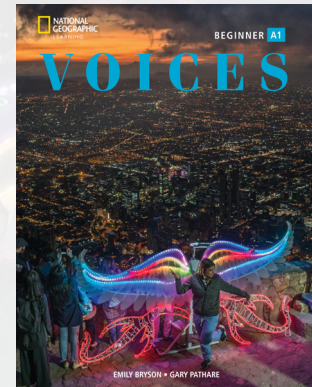
Voices a new series from National Geographic Learning


Develop your voice in English

TEACHING TIP

Building rapport when you meet someone for the first time is an important part of forming relationships. A student's first language identity, including their cultural background and the language itself, is a great tool that students can use in international situations to build relationships.

It is something that students should be encouraged to share and be proud of, both in and outside of the classroom. Encourage students to find things in common with other people and to celebrate and take interest in differences between themselves and others whenever the opportunity arises in class. (Upper Intermediate, Teacher's Book, Unit 2)





What's more important for learners of English – being understood or emulating a 'native English speaker'?


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At lower levels, students need plenty of practice to get their tongues round new words, so it is important to use audio and models to provide initial pronunciation practice. However, try to emphasise that students do not need to perfectly mimic the model they are provided with. Their main focus should be on intelligibility and if their accent differs from the model, that is not a problem.





Is every learner different?
Should we teach accordingly?

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When doing a reading lesson with a class of mixed ability students or a class with students with specific issues with reading (e.g. dyslexia), it's a good idea to play the audio recording of the text to help offer them further support.

Not only does this ensure that all students are “reading” at the same pace (and thus developing reading fluency), but it helps students with decoding of words and making the connection between spelling and pronunciation clearer. In *Voices*, all reading texts come with accompanying audio on the Classroom Presentation Tool and in the eBook for students studying at home to facilitate this.





Do you think it's important to provide role models
of global citizens to our students?

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With so much authentic global content found in *Voices* there are plenty of opportunities to use the visual or textual content as a springboard for student discussion and reflection.

It's the role of the teacher to recognise these opportunities and to develop activities which enable students to make connections - personal, local or global - and to reflect on how things are similar or different in their culture.

A good activity to facilitate this is The 3 Whys:

- Why is this topic important to me?
 - Why is it important to the people around me? (friends, family, community, country)
 - Why is it important to the world?
-
-





'It's not my job as an English teacher to teach interpersonal skills.' Do you agree? Why/Why not?

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It is beneficial to introduce phrases for asking people to repeat and explain when their accent is different from ours. It is a good idea to brainstorm aspects of the way your students speak English which other speakers may find hard. If your class share the same L1, this could focus on things like confused /b/ and /v/ sounds or flat intonation.

If you have a multilingual class, get students to share and compare things they find hard to understand when they each speak. Tell students that they should not worry about their accents, rather they should learn the tools they need to make sure they can manage situations in which they don't understand someone, or when someone doesn't understand them. (Elementary, Teacher's Book, Unit 12)





What are the benefits of using photos
in the classroom?

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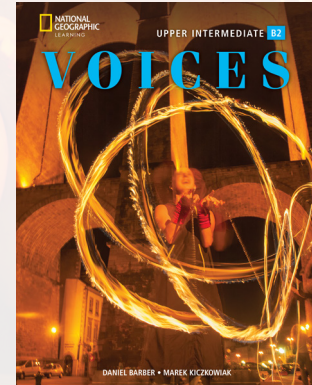
TEACHING TIP

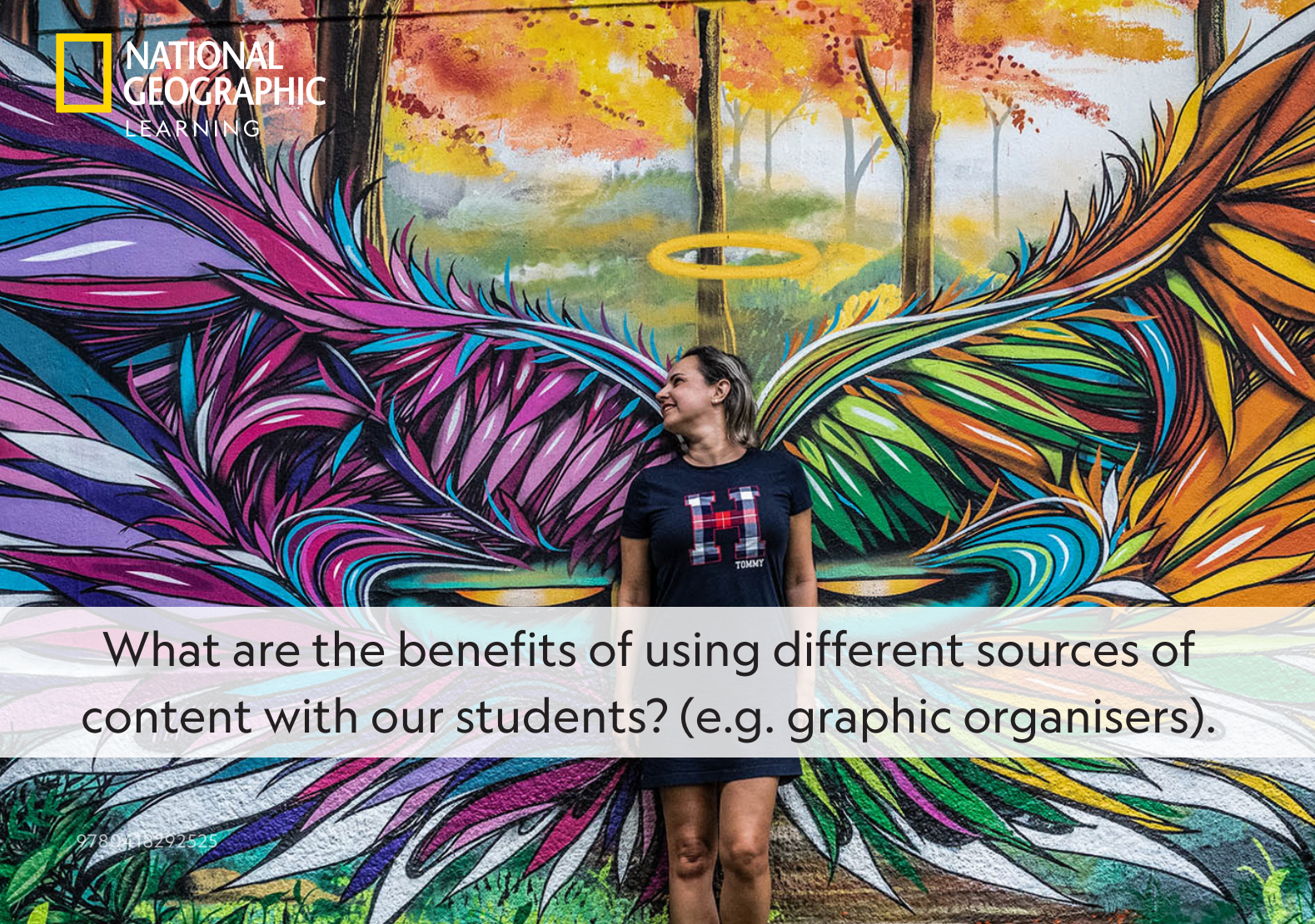
An image is never just an image, especially if it's a National Geographic photograph.

There are many ways in which you can use them to drive authentic communication and develop students critical and creative thinking skills.

For example, ask students to look at a photo and to describe what they can see, what they think about it and what they wonder about it.

Alternatively, put students into groups and ask them to come up with the story behind the photo, or to imagine they're going to interview the people in the photo before getting them to roleplay it.





What are the benefits of using different sources of content with our students? (e.g. graphic organisers).

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To help students who struggle with reading and understanding how texts are organised, it can be a good idea to provide them with a graphic organiser. These can help learners to visualise the information in a way which facilitates their understanding. Different types of graphic organisers can be used for different text types (e.g. timelines, mindmaps, Venn diagrams) which can aid them in seeing relationships between concepts and related information.

