Teaching English with Infographics: Design, Create, Use

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Key ideas:

- What are infographics?
- Why are they valuable for language classes?
- How can teachers use infographics?
- What makes a good infographic?
- What questions do I ask to design my own infographic?
- What sites can I use to design infographics?

What are infographics?

"A visualization of data or ideas that tries to convey complex information to an audience in a manner that can be quickly consumed and easily understood" (Smiciklas, 2012, p.3).

They come in different types and formats: static, interactive, or animated infographics.

Why are they valuable for language classes?

The following can be developed around infographics: language skills, visual literacy skills, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, content knowledge.

Infographics are often associated with these adjectives: clear, concise, creative, engaging, powerful, effective, appealing, memorable, digestible, attractive, informative, stimulating, and captivating.

How can teachers use infographics?

- Teachers can use infographics as texts – assign tasks like you would with any reading text.
- Teachers can create their own infographics for their students – create materials like you would in any other format.
- Teachers can make their students create infographics – assign infographics as products instead of a writing or presentation assignments.

What makes a good infographic?

"Good infographic design is about storytelling by combining data visualization design and graphic design. Many of the good infographics follow a simple three-part story format: introduction, key message, and conclusion" (Krum, 2013, p. 27).

What questions do I ask to design my own infographic?

- What do I want to communicate and why? What is my thesis statement?
- What data and information do I need to support my thesis statement and tell my story?
- What would be a good design to support my message? What visual elements would I need?

What sites can I use to design infographics?

- www.easel.ly
- www.piktochart.com
- www.visual.ly
- www.visme.com

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References:

Krum, R. (2013). Cool infographics: Effective communication with data visualization and design. Indianapolis, IN: John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
Smiciklas, M. (2012). The power of infographics: Using pictures to communicate and connect with your audiences. Indianapolis, IN: Que Publishing.

Note: Explore Nik Peachey's list of generic ideas to use infographics with students, explore: http://nikpeachey.blogspot.cz/2016/01/9-generic-activities-for-exploiting.html