

A Digital Video Checklist

Availability	What video equipment do you actually have access to? How many video recorders do you need? Adapt your task to the tools, as well as the tools to the task.
Extra Equipment	Tripods? Extra batteries? Memory cards? Lenses? Power cords? Adaptors? USB cables? Video / audio playback cables? Be prepared, and don't forget you will need to playback as well as record.
Memory	Some cameras have integral memory, others have removable memory cards. These can be useful if you are going on location, or if you will be unable to download the recordings to a computer for a while. If you are buying memory cards, it is worth spending a little more and treating them well - cheap cards can corrupt easily and it is a shame to lose a great recording.
Power	Is it easy to charge up your camera? Are batteries expensive, specialised, or integral? The best kind of batteries are easily available, rechargeable and replaceable.
Vision	The quality of the picture may not be that important, but it depends on your task. For whole classroom recordings, you will probably want a camera with a reasonable range. Think about how the camera copes with different lighting conditions, too.
Sound	For language education, this may be more important. If you are recording in a busy classroom with poor acoustics and an inbuilt mic, you probably won't be able to hear much. Traditional camcorders tend to have more powerful directional mics, but some pocket camcorders have external mic sockets, which are probably best of all.
File Format	Think about storage, editing, sharing and playback. Some traditional camcorders can use proprietary formats which are hard to manipulate. Some formats create large files which take up space, or are hard to transfer. Other formats are incompatible with certain editing software. But if you want to burn it to a disc or plug it straight into the TV, none of that may matter!
Editing	Often, editing is unnecessary, but iMovie for the Mac, and Windows Movie Maker for PC's are both very easy to use and come as standard with their respective machines. However, even simple editing can be time-consuming. If you want students to edit, you will need to be able to teach them yourself.
Software	Many cameras come packaged with inbuilt software which opens up when attached to a computer. Some of this software is great for editing, storing, making discs, uploading and sharing, so play around with it and figure out what it can do.
Sharing	If you want students to have their own copies, you will have to share somehow. You might need to upload to a server or a website, burn discs or transfer to USBs... bear in mind that all these activities can be time-consuming. There are also security issues, especially if the students are minors. Vimeo is a site which has bulk uploading to save time, and password protection for security, although there is a small yearly fee.