If cats could talk ...

Language level:	Elementary (A2)
Learner type:	Young learners; Teens; Adults
Time:	20 minutes + 20 minutes (to extend over 2 days)
Activity:	Writing and performing a dialogue
Topic:	Animals & pets
Language:	Open-ended
Materials:	Video

Preparation, materials and equipment

For this activity, you will need an YouTube video titled ***The two talking cats***. To access the clip, click on the following link:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z3U0udLH974

Decide how you are going to display the clip in class. Possibilities include:

- Laptop or desktop (good for small groups)
- Computer, projector + screen
- iPhone or other mobile device (good for one-to-ones/intimate classes)

Don't forget the loudspeakers

If you don't have Internet access in class, you could download or 'capture' the video from YouTube. Use www.savevid.com or a similar site. Note, however, that in doing so, you will be breaching YouTube's Terms of Use.

Lesson plan (day 1)

1. Write the following on the board:

   If cats could talk, what would they talk about?

2. Brainstorm your students and make a list of possible cat conversations on the board. For example:

   - Mice
   - Their owners
   - Other cats in the neighbourhood
   - What they did the night before
   - Their kittens
   - Their favourite brand of cat food / tuna fish
   - Dogs
   - Cat hygiene
   - Famous cats (Garfield, the Pink Panther, Shrödinger's cat, etc)

3. Show students the clip

4. Put students into pairs and ask them to do the following:

   - Give the cats names
   - Decide what they are talking about
   - Write out a dialogue which should last approximately 30 seconds

5. Offer students linguistic support (suggestions and corrections) as they write

6. Take in all dialogues for marking.

Lesson plan (day 2)

1. Give back marked dialogues and give students the opportunity to look at the corrections and suggestions that you have made.

2. Tell your students that they are going to recite their dialogues. Give everyone a few minutes to practice and prepare for this.

3. Ask for a volunteer student pair to sit beside the computer screen. Play the video clip with the sound turned down, and ask them to provide the cats' voices. Do not ask students to synchronise their lines with the cats' silent meows. This is very difficult – almost impossible.

4. Let each pair take it in turn to act out their dialogues.

Variation

Choose a theme – something that your students have already been studying (global warming, the lottery, the Internet, etc). Ask students to create a dialogue based around the theme. Ask them to include as much target language as possible.