The train tunnel joke

Language level:	Pre-intermediate (A2)
Learner type:	Young learners; Teens; Adults
Time:	30 minutes
Activity:	Listening; Writing; Speaking
Topic:	Transport
Language:	Verbs of thought (*wonder*, *wish*, *hope*, etc)
Materials:	Video; Worksheet

Preparation, materials and equipment

1. For this activity, you will need a short film from Iranian director Ehsan Amani titled ***Sili (The Slap)***. To access the video on YouTube, click on the following link:

   http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l60bW7lhRNc

2. Make a copy of the **Lost in Thoughts** worksheet on page 5 for each student.

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

1. Tell students that you have a joke for them. Tell them the following:

There are four people in a train carriage: An attractive girl, an older woman, a young soldier and a colonel.

[Make sure that students understand that a colonel is a high-ranking officer, far superior to a lowly soldier]

The attractive girl is reading a book. The older woman is knitting. The colonel is reading a newspaper. The soldier is looking out the window, lost in thought. The train goes into a tunnel and the carriage becomes completely dark.

2. Find out if anyone knows the joke. If so, ask them to keep quiet at this stage. For those that don't know the joke, ask them to guess what happens at this point.

3. Play the video clip from the beginning and pause it at 1:45 (after the train has come out of the tunnel).

4. Ask students (who don't know the joke) if they can guess what happened: Who kissed who?

5. Give out copies of the **Thought Bubbles** worksheet. Ask students to decide what each passenger is thinking and write their thoughts in the appropriate bubbles. This can also be done in pairs or small groups.

> As students write, you can offer language support. For example, you might want to suggest verbs of thought such as:
>
> - *I wonder why / what / if …*
> - *I wish (that) I had(n't) …*
> - *I hope (that) …*
> - *I really regret (+ ing form of verb)*
> - *I can't believe (that) …*

Note that if there are students who already know the joke this does not matter as they will have to recall the various thoughts and put them into words.

6. When all worksheets have been completed, let students compare and share their ideas. During this step and the previous one, the teacher can circulate and help with language.

7. Ask students to tell you what they wrote in the woman's thought bubble.

8. Play the clip until 2:10 and find out what the woman is thinking.

9. Repeat steps 7 and 8 for the girl, the colonel and the soldier. In each case, ask students to share what they wrote in the thought bubbles before playing appropriate sections of the clip (see the table on the next page).

10. Make sure that everyone understands the joke.

Section of video	Passenger	Thought
1:45 – 2:10	Woman	"*You got a good slap. Kissing a young girl deserves a slap. If you had kissed me, you wouldn't have been slapped.*"
2:10 – 2:26	Girl	"*Dumb asses! I am sitting here, and you kiss an old lady! You guys must be blind. You deserved to be slapped.*"
2:26 – 2:46	Colonel	"*See, for God's sake! Filthy stink! This trash does the kissing, and I get the slap.*"
2:46 – End	Soldier	"*What a feeling. Kissing the palm of your hand, slapping colonel across the face.*"

Variation

During steps 7 – 9, students will realize that neither the woman nor the girl were kissed. In most cases, this will present a logical problem. The situation becomes yet more complex when we find out what the colonel is thinking. You may want to change the activity so that students are 'detectives'. After hearing each thought, they must reassess their theories about what happened in the tunnel.

Lost in thoughts