

# TED TALK LESSONS



EFL IDEAS

## Dao Nguyen: WHAT MAKES SOMETHING GO VIRAL?

TEACHERS' NOTES

### WARM-UP QUESTIONS

1. What do you mostly use the Internet for?
2. What are your favourite websites or apps you use?
3. What do you think about social media?
4. Which social media do you use and what for?
5. How do you decide if you should share something that you see online?
6. How do you protect your privacy on the Internet?

### VOCABULARY

Read the sentences and try to work out the meaning of the underlined words/phrases.

1. Last year, some BuzzFeed employees were scheming to prank their boss, Ze Frank, on his birthday. They decided to put a family of baby goats in his office.
2. Ze kept on getting delayed: he went to get a drink, he was called to a meeting, the meeting ran long, he went to the bathroom
3. But it performed so much better than we had expected. What was it about the goats in the office that we didn't anticipate?
4. The following week, armed with the additional knowledge that food videos are very popular, we dressed two people in hazmat suits and wrapped rubber bands around a watermelon until it exploded.
5. It wasn't the biggest live video that we had done to date. The biggest one that we had done involved a fountain of cheese.
6. This is who I am. This is my upbringing, this is my culture, this is my fandom, this is my guilty pleasure, and this is how I laugh about myself.

7. This is the group of jobs that makes me feel something -- makes me curious or sad or restore my faith in humanity.
8. Turns out that this quiz went extremely viral among a group of 55-and-up women who were surprised and delighted that BuzzFeed determined that they were 28 and 5'9".
9. This quiz was successful not because it was accurate, but because it allowed these ladies to do a very important job -- the humblebrag.
10. One brainstorming session involved the job of bonding. So, could we make a recipe that brought people together?

**Match the words/phrases (1-14) to their explanations (a-n).**

- 1) to prank (h)
- 2) to delay (m)
- 3) to anticipate (d)
- 4) hazmat suit (l)
- 5) rubber band (j)
- 6) to involve (k)
- 7) upbringing (c)
- 8) to restore (b)
- 9) to turn out (g)
- 10) delighted (n)
- 11) determined (i)
- 12) humblebrag (a)
- 13) session (e)
- 14) to bond (f)

- a) to pretend to be complaining but in reality to be proud of something
- b) to bring back
- c) the way a child is raised
- d) to expect or predict
- e) a meeting
- f) to form a close relationship
- g) to happen in a particular way
- h) to play a practical joke on someone
- i) to have a firm decision or a strong desire to do something
- j) a circle of elastic rubber
- k) to have or include as a part of something
- l) a suit that protects against *hazardous materials*
- m) to make someone late, not on time
- n) very pleased

## TED TALK

Watch the video and answer the questions.

- 1) What animal did the BuzzFeed employees put in their boss's office as a prank?  
**Baby goats.**
- 2) Why was their boss (Ze Frank) delayed? **He went to get a drink, the meeting ran long, he went to the bathroom.**
- 3) Why was their Facebook Live experiment video so successful? **Because people were participating in the shared anticipation of something that was about to happen. They were part of a community, just for an instant, and it made them happy.**
- 4) What are some of the "jobs" that the content is doing for the reader or the viewer?  
**Humor, identity, help to do something, makes me feel something, help to bond**
- 5) Which "job" did the video about baking involve? **Bonding**
- 6) According to the speaker, which questions are important to answer if we want to create better content? **Who are you? How did you get there? Where are you going? What do you care about? What can you teach us?**