

## 14-19 Reshaping Languages Training Zone

### Creating a Voki

#### Tutorial transcript

A Voki is an online talking avatar which can be used as an engaging way to promote speaking and listening skills in the modern foreign languages classroom. You can choose from a range of customisable characters, and make them speak with a foreign accent or with your own voice. Vokis also protect pupils' identities online and encourage shyer ones to speak.

To create a Voki, go to [www.voki.com](http://www.voki.com) and click the Get Started button. This is the main Voki interface and as you can see you have different options to choose from. First of all, let's choose a character by clicking here. As you can see there are different categories to choose from for example:

POLITICS, HOLIDAY, DIGIMON, DOGS, CATS, CLASSIC, TOONS, ANIME, ANIMALS, EDGY, ODDBALLS, RANDOMS, VIP and back to POLITICS.

OK, I think we are going to go for TOONS. So I'm going to click here and then I'm going to select this gentleman here. OK.

You can then change the hairstyle, by clicking here and choosing from one of the options. OK, I think we'll go for this one. You can also choose the mouth type that you have, for example from fat lips to thinner lips. I think we'll go for this one. Then you can go on to CLOTHING and choose what your avatar is going to wear. I think we'll go for this nice red jumper. OK. And then if you want to you can go for some headwear as well. How about this one? Cool! And finally if you want to you can even go for some BLING. So I think I'm going to give my character these ones I think. Very cool!

If you want to you can also tweak some of the facial features by clicking here. So you can make the mouth larger or smaller and the same for the other things here so nose, body, height, width. You can also move the avatar around so that it appears exactly where you want on the image. I'm going to leave him there I think.

When you are happy with your creation, click DONE and that will take you back to the main interface again. Now we are going to change the background by clicking here. Again you can see there are a number of different categories to choose from ranging from NIGHT-LIFE, CITY VIEWS, OUTDOORS, TRAVEL, ANIMATED, HOLIDAYS, OBSCURE, SPORTS, INDOORS etc. I think we are going to go for TRAVEL. So I'll click here. If you want to you can also click on this icon and upload an image of your own. For example, it could be a classroom scene or a photo that has been taken on a foreign language excursion.

OK, so I'm now going to scroll down, until I come to this one which includes the Eiffel Tower. Lovely. When you are happy with your background image, press DONE again. Then you can choose the colour of your player by clicking here and there are 9 different options to choose from. I'm going to go for this one I think and click DONE again.

OK having made your choices about how your Voki looks, it's time to give it a voice. There are four options to do this, record by phone, text to speech, record with a microphone and upload an audio file. I'd ignore the telephone option though unless you wanted to ring a US number. Could be expensive. The second option allows you to write a text in a foreign language and have it spoken back to you in a male or female voice. This helps pupils to improve their writing skills and improve their pronunciation at the same time. The third option lets you record up to a minute of audio if you have a microphone connected to your computer and the fourth lets you upload an audio file which will then automatically lip-sync with your Voki.

Let's try options 2 and 4 and see what happens. OK, so for Option 2, we click here and then we type in an example phrase.

*Bonjour. Je m'appelle Joe. Mon anniversaire est le vingt-trois novembre. J'adore le chocolat!*

I can then choose French for the Accent or Language, like that and then the voice can be a male voice or a female voice. For this example, I'm going to stick with Bernard. Now if I press play, we will be able to hear what Bernard sounds like. Here we go:

*Bonjour. Je m'appelle Joe. Mon anniversaire est le vingt-trois novembre. J'adore le chocolat!*

I'm sure you'll agree the pronunciation is good, apart from perhaps the pronunciation of my name. When you're finished, press DONE again.

To upload your own mp3 file created on a piece of software like Audacity, click the folder icon and browse for your mp3 file. Here's one I made earlier and I'm going to click on the Voki example and click Open. Now press upload, to put your Voki into action:

*Bonjour. Je m'appelle Joe. Mon anniversaire est le vingt-trois novembre et j'adore le chocolat!*

I personally prefer the sound of a human voice compared to text-to-speech, but it's obviously up to you. When you're finished, press DONE again and then you're ready to publish. OK, so click Publish.

Now here you have to give a name to your scene so I'm just going to call this one Test and press Save.

Now here is where you can decide whether you want to create an account or not. You don't have to but the advantage of doing so is you can save your Vokis and edit them later. For pupils I would suggest that they shouldn't be creating their own accounts to protect their own identity and also according to the terms and conditions of the site they need to be 13 or above anyway to do so. Always check with your senior management team if you're not sure about your school's policy on this.

So I would suggest clicking No, thanks and carrying on to the next screen. Brilliant! Your scene has been saved. Click Close. Now you are on the Sharing and Embedding screen where you can select the size you want your finished Voki to be and copy the embed code so you can paste it on to a blog, wiki or VLE in HTML mode. I normally choose the MySpace code because I've found the first code has not always worked on some platforms.

So I'm going to select Large and click here to highlight the code so I can then copy it. So right-click and Copy. So now if I go to my blog here and click the HTML tab here, I can now paste in the code. So I'll click here. right-click and Paste. There's quite a lot of code with a Voki, but don't be put off by that because all you need to worry about is here, the width and the height values. Now I know the width of my blog is 370 pixels so I need to change the width here so that it fits properly and to do that I'm going to use the Windows calculator. OK, so we launch the calculator. If you're not sure where it is on your computer, it will be under the Start Menu, All Programs, Accessories and there it will be.

Now the current width is 300 so I'm going to put that into the calculator and divide it by 370 which is my perfect width for my particular blog. I press equals and I multiply this result by the present height which is 400 and that will give approximately 324. So now I just change the code so the height is now 324 and the width is 370 and now all I need to do is add a title such as *My First MFL Voki!* and now I'm ready to publish. So we click Publish and View Blog and there we are.