Advertising, Modals and Road Safety (part 1)

**Titular:** Advertising, Modals and Road Safety (part 1). **Target:** Bachillerato. **Asignatura:** Inglés. **Autor:** Lucia Carel Aguilera, Licenciada en Filología, Jefa del Departamento de Lenguas Extranjeras.

**Justification**

Since I came across this video in a teacher training programme, I've been wondering how to introduce it in the 6th form syllabus. Road safety is a quite big issue in our society nowadays. It's the second cause of death in Spain, right behind cancer. By the age of 16 to 18, our students start driving motorbikes, cars, etc. and not always in safe way. Yesterday, a former student died in a motorbike accident because he wasn't wearing a helmet... And this pulled the trigger to create this pack of lessons. These task-based lessons plan focused on a public service announcement campaign by Metro Train in Melbourne, Australia to promote rail safety. This song is written and performed by the band Tangerine Kitty, it's available on youtube.com and on iTunes.

**Level:** B2

**Skills Involved:** speaking, listening and writing

**Materials:** whiteboard, different colours of markers projector, computer with internet connection, blank paper for each group of four and copies of the lyrics for each student.

**Sessions:** 3 sessions of 50 minutes

**Warm-up:**

Write in the centre of the whiteboard the word 'STUPID' in capital letters and ask your students to write synonyms on the board. Try it to make it very playful and engaging by using different colour markers and allowing as many pupils as possible to go to the board at the same time or as soon as a word comes to their minds. Possible answers:"idiotic, ridiculous, daft, silly, unintelligent, dumb, senseless, mindless, moronic, imbecilic, ludicrous, dull, nutty wacky, dim, asinine, foolish, simple-minded, etc." If you find that they have trouble finding them, you can give some hints like the meaning of prefixes (un- in unintelligent) and suffixes (-less in mindless).

Circle the word 'dumb' and ask your student about the dumbest thing they have ever done. If they are too shy to answer you can always use some personal anecdotes from your childhood and your adolescence:
"One day I was really bored in Maths class and I was playing with the stapler and I wondered how strong my
nail was to resist a staple. It sounded like a good idea and I staple my nail. It hurt. A lot. I started bleeding all
over the table but I was so ashamed about my stupid action that I didn't dare to tell the teacher until he
approached and he saw the blood all over the place. When he saw my face of pain and shame, he didn't ask and
sent me to the bathroom. But the staple removal was even more painful than the stapling itself. I cleaned
myself up and went back to the classroom with some toilet paper bandage around my thumb. I was 12 and I felt
really dumb."

"I was eight years old and I was having breakfast a Saturday morning on my own, while my mum was still
asleep. I put a slice of bread in the toaster, after a couple of minutes, it jumped and I considered it wasn’t
toasted enough. So I put it back, pushing a little bit thinking that the deeper it will get more grilled. My kitchen
was paper-painted, no tiles, and with wooden pieces of furniture. Old style. While looking through the window
and realised that the toast didn’t come up and I went to check the toaster. I had pushed too much inside and it
had got stuck. The toaster was on flames and it spread to the walls, and the cupboard nearby. I ran to wake me
mum up shouting: ‘the kitchen is on fire! Mum, wake up!’ She mumbled: ‘shut up and go back to bed’ until she
smelt the wood burning. When we managed to put out the fire, the kitchen was completely damaged, she had
to pay to redo the whole kitchen and money was really tight at that time. She still reminds me nowadays how
expensive my toast was."

Encourage them to use past tenses and connectors and you’ll refer to them again when you’ll work the
narrative. You can right some hints on the whiteboard while they speak but avoid any correction otherwise they
will not feel comfortable to express themselves. In order to show some possible answers, I ask my former sixth
form students to tell me some of their anecdotes, I have selected some of them and this is what they told me.

“After watching fencing during the Olympic games, my cousin and I thought it would be fun to try it on our
won. We found a couple of real swords and my grandfather’s place. We did some fencing as we had seen before
until I cut my cousin forearm. We rushed to the hospital and he got six stitches even though the wound was
quite deep. Nowadays I cannot look at his scar without feeling guilty."

“Some friends and I went on holidays on our own, we were at a hotel where our room was looking at the
swimming-pool. My friends challenged me to jump from our third-floor balcony into the pool. Unfortunately I
landed on my belly or what’s called a bellyflop. And because of the height I injured myself and couldn’t enjoy the
rest of the week without being in horrible pain."

“My parents have got a piece of land and they own a truck. My friends and I decided to give it a ride around
town without a driving license. We got stopped by the police who brought us back to our very angry parents”

“Most of us were already 18 and we’d got a driving license. We decided to go to some club nearby the capital
and he got pretty drunk. It was the end of the year and we were celebrating that everybody passed the
University Entry Exam. Nobody wanted to be designated driver, so when we came back home a friend drove the
car thinking that he could be able to handle his dad’s car by driving very slowly. We didn’t make it, at the first
curve we crashed the car against a wall. We got some bad injuries but we were alive, at least. We could get
ourselves killed, the car was destroyed. I still have nightmares of the moment of the impact and it haven’t be
able drive or to be inside of a car without having cold shivers in my neck.”

Procedure:

Warn your students that they are about to watch the beginning of an ad that’s called ‘Dumb Ways to Die’.
Just play the first 36 seconds, until the end of the first chorus and ask them what they have understood so far.
Then tell them that the ad continues but they have to figure out the lyrics by group of four. In order to save
some time, make the groups previously and try to compensated the levels. Hand out a copy of the lyrics of the part they have already seen with a blank space to go on. And play the ad in mute mode so the student are watching and they describe what they see on the screen, Put in repaeat and give them 15 minutes to finish the task. Do not allow any dictionary or translator on their smartphones. Remind them that you’ll collect the paper after 15 minutes and that will motivate them to do it better. Here are the lyrics given to the students:

**Dumb Ways to Die**

Set fire to your hair
Poke a stick at a grizzly bear
Eat medicine that’s out of date
Use your private parts as piranha bait

Chorus:
Dumb ways to die
So many dumb ways to die
Dumb ways to di-ie-ie
So many dumb ways to die

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**Bibliografía**

None, this a completely invented activity with no book nor website support.