How to use subtitled DVD movies to help your language learning

You can use subtitled DVDs to help your oral comprehension. Here are some ideas of activities you can do. You can think of others:

- Firstly, look at the beginning of the movie to see if you like it. Don’t hesitate to stop the DVD if you don’t like it, and choose another. You will learn more if you work on a movie that you enjoy.

- You may choose to look at the whole movie simply for pleasure. This first viewing lets you understand the story, the characters, the plot, etc. This first understanding can help you afterwards when you do activities based on short extracts.

- Note that watching a subtitled movie one or more times doesn’t help improve oral comprehension much. You tend to read the subtitles rather than listen to the movie.

- You can watch the first few minutes of a movie with subtitles to give you an idea of the situation, then continue to listen without reading the subtitles. You can simply put a piece of paper at the bottom of the screen. If you can’t follow the story, read the subtitles until you can again follow the story. If necessary, you can pause the DVD, replay it and re-view the passage with subtitles.

- You can alternate watching with and without subtitles as you wish. This technique helps you to work actively to understand better. It also allows you to test what you know. You can benefit from repeating the extracts you want to remember.
You can:
- watch the first few minutes of a movie to give you an idea of the situation, then
- pause and note where you are on the DVD, fast-forward for several seconds, then
- watch (and read) and try to guess the content and language of the extract you missed, then
- look at the extract again to check if you were right

You can look at the movie **without** subtitles. If you don't understand, go back and **read** the subtitles, then listen again to the passage **without** subtitles.

You can watch a short extract of the movie **with no sound** and try to predict what is said from reading the subtitles. Use a dictionary if necessary. Replay the DVD and watch the movie **without** subtitles, but **with sound** and compare what you predicted with what is actually said.

Look at a short extract of the file **without sound and without subtitles**.

Try to guess:
- what is happening, using everything you know from the picture (people, place, gesture) and
- what is said, relying on what you understand of the situation. To check, watch the extract again **with sound**, then **with subtitles** if you need to.