

Telling a story

Topic: Storytelling

Aims:

- To develop the ability to tell a story fluently.
- To develop the ability to understand and accurately use a range of narrative tenses.

Level: Intermediate and above

Introduction

The use of narrative to tell stories and anecdotes forms an important part of our everyday communication. During this lesson students will have the opportunity to develop both their accuracy and fluency by creating and then telling a story. They will then have the chance to develop their understanding of a range of narrative tenses by focusing on both the meaning and the form of the structures.

The lesson plan is followed by some suggested follow up activities.

Procedure

Speaking task:

- Give the students the questions from **Worksheet A** and ask them to read them and look for any words they don't understand.

Rationale: As students read through the questions they will be forming a mental framework of the story that they expect the questions to be about.

- Check that they understand three key words: **wings**, **angel** and **priest**. You can do this by making a quick sketch on the board and asking what it is.
- Tell the students that the questions are all about a story, but you don't have the story and that they must invent the story for you. Put them in pairs to do this and tell them that they must do it together orally and must not write anything down.

Rationale: by insisting that they don't write you will push them to use their oral ability more. If the students really struggle you could let them make brief notes.

- Circulate around the room and be available for support if students need it. Also listen carefully as they work on the story and make notes of any errors or new vocabulary they need for feedback later on. You could also make notes of some of the good sentences or vocabulary some students are using too, so you make a balance between correction and praise.
- When they have finished, tell students that they will have to tell the story and give them a little more time to work together and make sure they can remember everything.

- Get the students to change the pairs so that they all have a new partner to work with and get each student to tell their new partner the story they invented.

Tip: This is another good time to monitor carefully and listen for errors or new vocabulary that the students need.

- Once they have both told their partner the story, ask students which story they preferred.

Tip: at this point you could use the notes that you've made while monitoring to do some feedback and correction.

- Ask questions from **Worksheet A** at random around the class to the students and see if the students answer using the correct tenses.

Focus on Meaning:

- Give out **Worksheet B** with the concepts and example sentences and ask the students to match them to the concepts to the sentences.

Answers:

<p>Example sentences:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It had been raining for many days. 2. Paul was walking home from work when he saw the old man. 3. When he told his wife about the man with wings she said he was mad. 	<p>b. c. a.</p>
<p>Concepts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. A finished action that is followed by another action b. An action that happened before a time in the past c. An action that was interrupted by a second action 	

- Once they've matched them, tell them the correct answers.

Language work – timelines

- Give students the timelines **Worksheet C** and ask students to match the lines to the example sentences. Then ask them to label the parts of the timeline with the correct actions.

Tip: Some students may be quite confused by timelines the first time they see them, so it might be a good idea to draw one on the board as an example making clear that the line is time passing and where future and past are in relation to now.

Past _raining _ _ _ ? Now Future

Past told wife said mad Now Future

Past _ walking home _ ? Now Future

 saw man

- ### Focus on Form:

- Tip:** When I do this with students I prefer to use the minimum of metalanguage and only label the 'generative' part of the form that can be used to generate more sentences.

1. Past perfect continuous

2. Past simple – Past simple

3. Past continuous – Past simple

- Check that they have done it correctly.

Follow up:

- Get the students to write their story.
- Ask them to illustrate their story.
- Put the stories up around the room and get the students to read them all and award marks out of ten. You could give them a list of criteria to do this for example; imagination, range of vocabulary, correct use of tenses, spelling, good use of descriptive language etc.