

Handbooks for the English Classroom

Storytelling

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INTRODUCTION

Theoretical background

The use of literature in foreign language teaching has greatly increased over the past few years. The materials and activities that derive from literary texts are a great aid to learning in that they appeal to the learners' imagination, increase motivation and, above all, create a rich and meaningful context. Among the techniques available to the teacher, storytelling is one of the most frequently used, especially with beginners and false beginners. Storytelling is an established part of the curriculum in both English-speaking countries and many others, and stories are seen as a first-rate resource in the teaching of the child's own language.

Recent studies⁽¹⁾ show that while four-year-old children are generally capable of telling stories in snatches (the type of story in which the child passes randomly from one event to another, leaving out key facts as understood), six-year-olds can include the cause and effect relationship between different events. They can even implicitly recognise three of the main features of storytelling – the location of the action in space and time, the main plot and the final outcome. As children grow, they become increasingly able to identify other aspects of storytelling and little by little to produce them. Their ability to follow and so enjoy stories also increases with age. Sometimes, children's desire to tell a story is the best indication of how much they enjoy it. However, understanding cause and effect is by no means the only reason that storytelling is useful in linguistic terms. Other reasons for its use are:

- ◆ *The development of listening skills* Possibly the most important of these skills is listening for gist which involves listening for the main idea or plot without necessarily understanding everything. Other skills such as listening for specific information can also be developed through stories.
- ◆ *The acquisition of new vocabulary* Most of the new language in stories is perfectly contextualised and it is usually repeated more than once so that the listener has more than one opportunity to understand the meaning. If additional information is also given to help learners with the comprehension of the story (as with visual aids for example), the introduction of new words need not be a huge task. The grammatical structures included in the story should be seen mainly as formulaic expressions which do not need grammatical analysis but which can be learnt in an ongoing way because they appear frequently in stories in appropriate contexts.
- ◆ *The development of the child's literary competence* By that we mean the child's ability to understand and enjoy literature which involves a range of strategies and skills acquired over the child's life mainly through extensive reading. However, many of these skills can be developed through specific activities. It can be said that the use of stories introduces the child not only to stylistic conventions such as reported speech, metaphor, emphasis, etc, but also to narrative conventions such as the time–space relationship of events, repetition, ellipsis, etc.

- ◆ *The communicative exchange involved in stories* Storytelling is an activity which requires a certain level of interaction between the storyteller and the audience and between the individual listeners. The storyteller can obtain the collaboration of the audience at several points during the story. For example, by asking the listeners to guess the ending of the story, by getting them to suggest an alternative ending, by asking for a resumé of the story up to that moment, by getting the audience's opinion, etc. Interaction with an adult in *a shared context*, to use Bakhtin's term⁽²⁾, which is familiar to the child is the factor described by Vygotsky⁽³⁾ as decisive in linguistic and cultural development. Storytelling fits into this interaction framework – the adult in this case is the teacher and the shared context is the story.
- ◆ *Motivation* If the story is interesting enough and it is told in an appealing way, children will normally pay attention through to the end. Nowadays, motivation, and in general anything to do with factors which affect the emotions are considered crucial in all learning processes.
- ◆ *Stimulation and development of the imagination* The interactive nature of the story, the recreating of scenes and characters and the ideas in the story mean that few other activities can encourage the child's creativity and inventiveness in the way that storytelling can.

Storytelling in foreign language teaching

The teaching of English to children

Storytelling has always been seen as an aid in the teaching of foreign languages, although this has nearly always been with learners of at least intermediate level and through translation or text analysis. The recent interest in using storytelling techniques with lower level learners is for a number of reasons. Apart from the aforementioned advantages which also apply to language teaching, there are others which can be highlighted. One of these is the need for classroom activities which are meaningful to the learners, and which lead to greater learner involvement. There is clearly a great need to create activities in the foreign language classroom which most closely reflect the process of natural acquisition of language and we know that this process basically stems from the need to communicate.

Recent proposals on content based syllabuses have developed out of this need. The selection of vocabulary, structures and activities in these syllabuses is based on a certain topic or area of interest to the learners, or there is a strong focus on using all the opportunities for real communicative interaction in the classroom (*here and now* activities which involve spontaneous use of the foreign language, *classroom language*, etc). This need has also led to the inclusion of resources such as games, stories and task-based activities as a central and not complementary part of the syllabus. As stated earlier, all this is designed to stimulate the learners' interest in communicating in a meaningful way which in turn helps the learner internalise the language.

Storytelling can be linked in the same way to the hypotheses on the learning/ acquisition of language put forward by Stephen Krashen⁽⁴⁾. For example, much of the language used in stories includes many of the features that Krashen refers to as *comprehensible input* – simplified utterances which can be understood by non-native speakers. These utterances have a lot of repetition and clarification, deliberate rhythm and reference to things close by. The language of stories is full of recognisable characteristics which are deliberately highlighted and easy to imitate (rhyme, onomatopoeia, rhythm, intonation) which may be useful when expressing oneself in the foreign language. The comprehension of the story can also be made easier by the use of visual aids, gesture, mime and even appealing to the learners' previous knowledge of stories.

Lastly, the story is by its nature fundamentally a listening activity which fits in with the *silent period theory* as recommended in the early stages of language learning by several experts such as Krashen and Terrell in *The Natural Approach*⁽⁵⁾. It can also be used as a reading activity and be followed by different exercises which relate to other skills such as speaking or writing.

Research into the teaching of foreign languages to children has led to proposals on classroom practice which recommend that language is presented in such a way as to promote acquisition. This process is based on, among other characteristics, the constant supply of the aforementioned *comprehensible input* which gets progressively more complex as the learners' command of the language grows. This research would suggest that syllabus design for this stage of language learning should be based on a selection of activities and tasks which generate the use of language rather than the target language dictating the activities and tasks. Once the respective departments or teachers have decided on the aims for each group or level, storytelling can then be built in to feature strongly in the course.

The use of stories with other learners

Storytelling can also be widely used with other groups of learners such as teenagers and adults. Although it is always very difficult to say which are the main topics or areas of interest for teenagers, it seems clear that they prefer working with contemporary stories which relate to their world and the world around them and even prefer inventing their own stories to listening to those designed for children. The element of fantasy in stories still holds some appeal for teenagers, but they prefer a more modern treatment of it as in science fiction. The learners' greater knowledge of the language allows for more linguistic complexity both when listening to stories and telling or re-telling them. The use of stories with teenagers by no means loses its value but rather takes on a different focus which includes more complex stories and therefore more sophisticated activities.

The fact that storytelling is closely linked to certain attitudinal factors should not be overlooked. Firstly, the motivation that comes from the use of stories can help to create a positive attitude in the learner towards the foreign language, which is vital in creating a more permanent good attitude towards language learning in general. Secondly, the activities based on stories develop an attitude of co-operation between learners and at the same time help them feel confident in using the foreign language. In this book, we have endeavoured to include activities and tasks which require the collaboration of everyone to set them up and carry them through.

The teacher as storyteller

This book aims to encourage teachers of English to use stories in class. The telling of stories from personal experience or imaginary stories is the basis of communication between people in that it is an everyday activity and is nothing out of the ordinary. It is true that to tell stories in a foreign language is different but in whatever situation a story is told, it should be done in a natural way. This helps the process of storytelling to become accepted much more quickly than other activities which manipulate language and have no real meaning. If storytelling is carefully set up and carried out with conviction, it can become one of the best forms of language input. This is of overall value in language learning terms in that it helps the learners to retain the target language more easily. Storytelling is a relaxed and entertaining activity and so it can become enjoyable for everyone which in turn creates a better attitude in the learner towards learning and using the language.

Any teacher with an acceptable command of the language can tell stories in English. Storytelling should not be seen as a chore but as an activity which appeals to the imagination, allows experimentation with the target language and encourages co-operation. When telling a story, you need not be limited to the stories in this book, but can improvise, modify words or even events in the stories, adapt the text to suit your world and that of the learners. Feel free to speak in your own language when you think it necessary, especially in the pre-reading stage. Remember that the time spent telling stories should be relaxed, fun and informal. This can be achieved by changing the layout of the classroom, sitting in a circle and taking on a new personality – that of a storyteller who invites the listeners to become involved in the story and try to follow it. It is invaluable to create an *atmosphere for storytelling*, in other words those touches which mark and characterise as different the time spent on stories.

One way of telling stories is simply to read them aloud or listen to pre-recorded tapes. However, storytelling in its true form only takes place when the story is told to the class face to face when the storyteller can use illustrations, visual aids and even mime and gesture to help comprehension. We feel that storytelling takes on its true value if the stories are told directly to the class, as this reflects how stories are used outside the classroom. This does not rule out the use of a combination of pre-

recorded cassettes and books for some of the stories told in class. That way, interested learners can hear or read stories whenever they want. Most of the stories in this book have as a basic activity what is known in the task-based approach as *semantic mapping*. This is the use of diagrams and maps which draw together the key elements in the story, the relationship between them and the order of events. The diagrams are presented in a clear, visual way and the maps are intended as a guide as much for the teacher–storyteller as for the learners who will use the maps to follow the story and then retell it. The class should also try to maintain the relaxed atmosphere mentioned before when it is their turn to tell the story. As far as linguistic progress is concerned, we feel that getting the class to tell stories should be seen as a fluency-based rather than an accuracy-based activity. Errors should be seen as an inevitable part of the learning process.

Finally, our intention is to provide models for which you can design your own activities using your own choice of stories. To help in this, we have included five different models in order from the simplest to the most complex, followed by various activities listed in the final glossary, which in most cases apply to all stories. The stories are divided into three stages called *Before you read*, *While you read* and *After you read* and are designed to be used in class in that order. However, we suggest that the activities in the *While you read* stage should not be done when the story is told for the first time but during the second reading. This is unless the text is particularly difficult and the opposite is recommended in the notes (as in *The Lizard and the Damsel*).

The final chapter, *The learner as storyteller*, has suggestions on how to get the class to tell stories of their own. The ultimate aim, as we have said before, is for learners to make progress in English in an enjoyable and motivating way but at the same time to create a positive attitude towards other learners and towards the language itself. We hope that our modest work helps to achieve this.

Notes

- 1 Toolan, M. J. (1988), *Narrative: A Critical Linguistic Introduction* (London: Routledge) p.194.
- 2 Bakhtin, M. (1973), *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* (New York: Seminar Press).
- 3 Britton, J. (1987), 'Vygotsky's contribution to pedagogical theory' *English in Education*, vol. XXI, no. 3, pp 22–26.
- 4 Krashen, S. (1985), *The Input Hypothesis* (Harlow: Longman).
- 5 Krashen, S. and Terrell, T. (1983), *The Natural Approach* (Oxford: Pergamon).

1 A children's story

The Tortoises' Picnic

This story will probably be new to the class, but it has a lot of the basic characteristics of many children's stories: the characters are animals, there is a lot of natural repetition of many elements, it is easy to illustrate and act out, there is a funny and surprising ending and the class will recognise the nouns and actions in the story. You can use this story when the class is working on any of the following areas: **family, food, weather, time, animals.**

Before you read **Activity 1**

First, get the class to produce the visuals that are going to be used in the story by giving them the following instructions.

Draw the three tortoises. (mother, father, baby)

Draw the food. (sandwiches, chocolates, ice-creams, fruit, orange squash or other examples of food suitable for your class)

Draw the weather symbols. (flowers for spring, sun for summer, clouds and rain for autumn, snow for winter)

Draw the trees.

Draw a basket.

Draw a tablecloth.

Activity 2

The aim of this TPR (Total Physical Response) activity is to check that the class understand the basic vocabulary. The class should respond in a physical way by actually carrying out the instructions.

Show me father tortoise.

Put him on the table.

Put mother tortoise next to father tortoise.

You are hungry.

Eat a sandwich.

You don't feel hungry.

Take the chocolates.

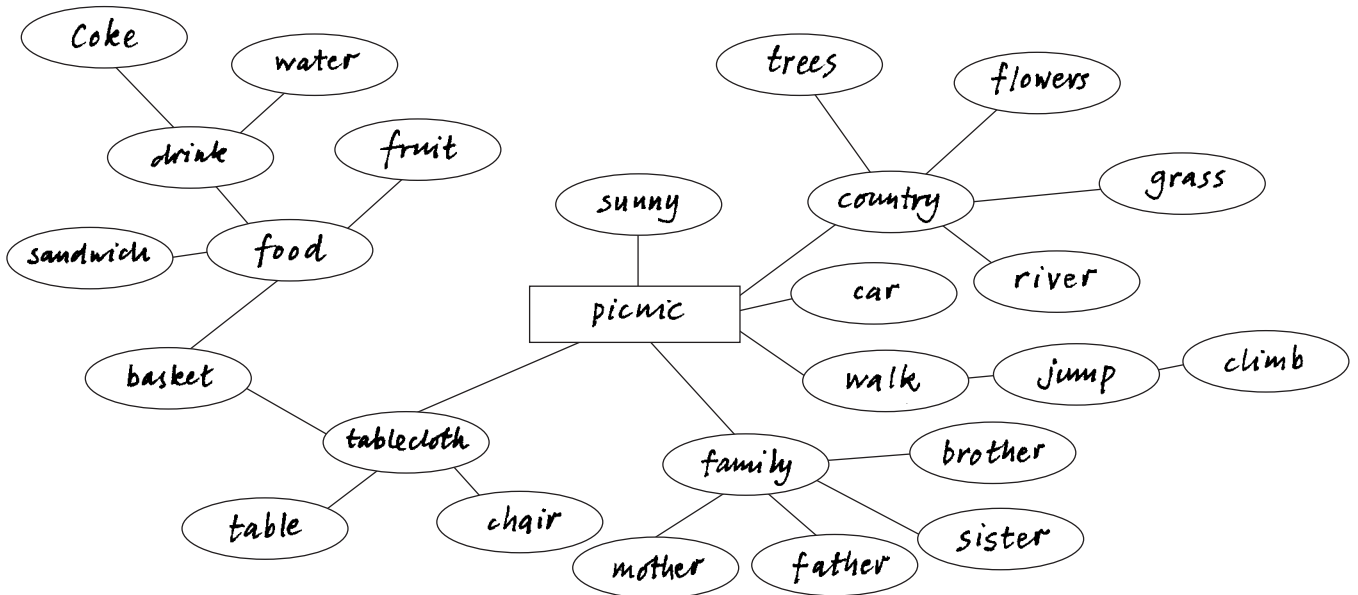
Put the chocolates into the basket.

Take them out.

Put them on the tablecloth.

Activity 3

Ask the class in their own language if they know the word *picnic* and then get them to tell you all the words they associate with it. Accept any of their suggestions, repeating each word clearly in context as you go along. For example: *Oh! So you go to the country with your family. And you take food and chairs and a tablecloth....* Note down the vocabulary suggested by the class in the form of a diagram or word map so that the class has a record of what they know about the subject and what they are going to hear later in the story itself.



While you read

Start to tell the story and put up the pictures of the characters on the board as they are mentioned. Bear in mind the following suggestions:

- 1 Use gesture, mime, actions or movements to help the class understand the situations in the story. For example, put the food in the basket, take it out and put it on the tablecloth, shake the basket to try and find the tin-opener, make baby tortoise disappear behind the trees, mime being cold or hot, etc.
- 2 Put the pictures on the board (or wherever else you have decided to display them) in the same order as in the story. This helps the class to follow the action of the story in space and time.
- 3 The pictures of the main characters – the tortoises – are up on the board when you start to tell the story. Use these pictures to help the class understand the dialogues between the characters which follow in the story. So that the class can tell who is speaking in each dialogue, position yourself in front of the character who is speaking. Alternatively, turn to the left or right depending on the position of the character who is being talked to.
- 4 It is important to use mime to help the class understand expressions of surprise, disagreement, agreement, and to show when someone is giving orders. It is also useful in helping the class understand sentences such as *they walked and walked and walked, they waited, waited and waited* or *they got really hungry*.

THE TORTOISES' PICNIC

Once upon a time there were three tortoises – a father, a mother and a baby. One beautiful spring day, they decided to go for a picnic. They got tins of salmon, and sandwiches, and chocolates, and ice-creams, and fruit, and orange squash and put everything in their baskets and after three months they were ready. It was summer and it was sunny and very hot, and they set out carrying their baskets.

They walked and walked and walked and after three months they sat down and had a rest. They were a mile from home. It was autumn and it was cloudy and raining. They set out again and walked and walked and walked and in three months they reached the picnic place. They were two miles from home. It was winter and it was snowing and very cold. They unpacked their baskets and spread out the cloth, and arranged the food on it and it looked lovely.

Then Mother tortoise looked into the baskets. She turned them all upside down and shook them, but they were empty.

At last she said, 'We've forgotten the tin-opener!'

They looked at each other and at last Father tortoise said, 'Baby, you'll have to go back for it.'

'What!' said the baby. 'Me! Go back all that long way!'

'We can't start without a tin-opener. We'll wait for you,' said Father tortoise.

'Do you promise that you won't touch a thing till I come back?' Baby said.

'Yes, we promise,' they said, and Baby disappeared behind the trees.

And Father and Mother waited. They waited and waited and waited and a whole year passed and they got really hungry.

'Don't you think we could have just one sandwich each?' said Mother tortoise.

'No,' said Father tortoise. 'We promised. We must wait till he comes back.'

So they waited and waited and waited, and another year passed, and they got really hungry.

'It's six years now. Let's just have one sandwich while we're waiting,' said Father tortoise.

They picked up the sandwiches, but just as they were going to eat them, a little voice said, 'Aha! I knew you would cheat.' And Baby tortoise popped his head out of a bush. 'It's a good thing I didn't go back for the tin-opener,' he said.

Activity 1

To check understanding of the basic content of the story, it is a good idea, particularly with beginners, to ask some questions with short *Yes/No* answers. For example:

Are they going for a picnic? *Does baby go back for the tin-opener?*
Have they got the tin-opener? *After six years are they hungry?*

With slightly higher levels, you can ask *or* questions, such as:

Are they tortoises or snakes? *Are they carrying baskets or bags?*
Are they going for a picnic or a walk? *Are they hungry or thirsty?*

With higher level classes, you can ask more complex questions, including *Wh*-questions which require more complete answers. For example:

Who are the characters? *What are they carrying in their baskets?*
Where are they going? *What have they forgotten?*

Activity 2

Another way of exploiting the story is to tell it wrongly by substituting new words for what you think is key vocabulary. The class must say **Stop!** every time they hear a mistake and then provide the correct word. For example:

Once upon a time there were three frogs, a mother, a father and a grandfather. One beautiful winter day they decided to go for a walk...

After you read **Activity 1**

This activity helps to check the class's understanding of the sequence of the story. Divide the story into six parts, summarise the key moments from each part and write them on six separate strips of paper. Get the class to stand in random order in groups of six. They have to reconstruct the story in the correct order, each reading their part and saying if it goes before or after the parts the rest of the class have got. Check the class understand the basic concepts of *before* and *after* by asking questions such as *Louise, do you go after Alex?* The groups themselves can report back to the class at the end of the activity, for example, *I go after Paul and before Laura*. With beginners, you can use pictures drawn by the class instead of sentences. Put them up on the board in the correct order as you read the story. The pictures can show, for example:

- 1 The three tortoises and the basket
- 2 The food on the tablecloth in the snow
- 3 Mother tortoise emptying the basket
- 4 Baby tortoise going off to find the tin-opener
- 5 Mother and father tortoise waiting
- 6 Mother and father tortoise about to eat a sandwich while baby tortoise's head appears between the bushes

Activity 2

Get the class to make simple puppets of the characters and objects in the story or give out different parts of the story written on card (tortoises, food, seasons, etc). Get the class to hold up their puppet or card as the corresponding character or part is mentioned in the story. Each pupil should carry out the actions and gestures of the character or part they represent. Role play activities help to improve the general understanding of the story and the aural comprehension of certain elements in particular.

Activity 3

This activity aims to help the class memorise parts of the story and to practise rhythm and intonation. The process of memorising language is helped if the sentences are written in an imaginary space. By showing movement, actions and the physical location of language, the class can start to view language as a concrete, rather than abstract thing. Pretend to be surrounded by four imaginary walls, one in front of you, one behind and one to the left and right of you. You can also show the class through gesture that it is impossible to pass through the walls. Start to write a sentence on one wall, saying it out loud as you write. For example, ***They set out for a picnic.*** Then mime rubbing it out. Repeat this several times and then get the class to tell you the sentence as you begin to write it. Do this with three other sentences on the three other imaginary walls. For example:

***And they got really hungry.
They put food in a basket.***

And they got tins of salmon.

These four sentences have the same number of stressed syllables and the same sentence stress. This means that when they are said together they produce a rhythm which the class can mark by clapping their hands. Get the class to act out the sentences which contain repetition and which are used as a link to other sentences. For example:

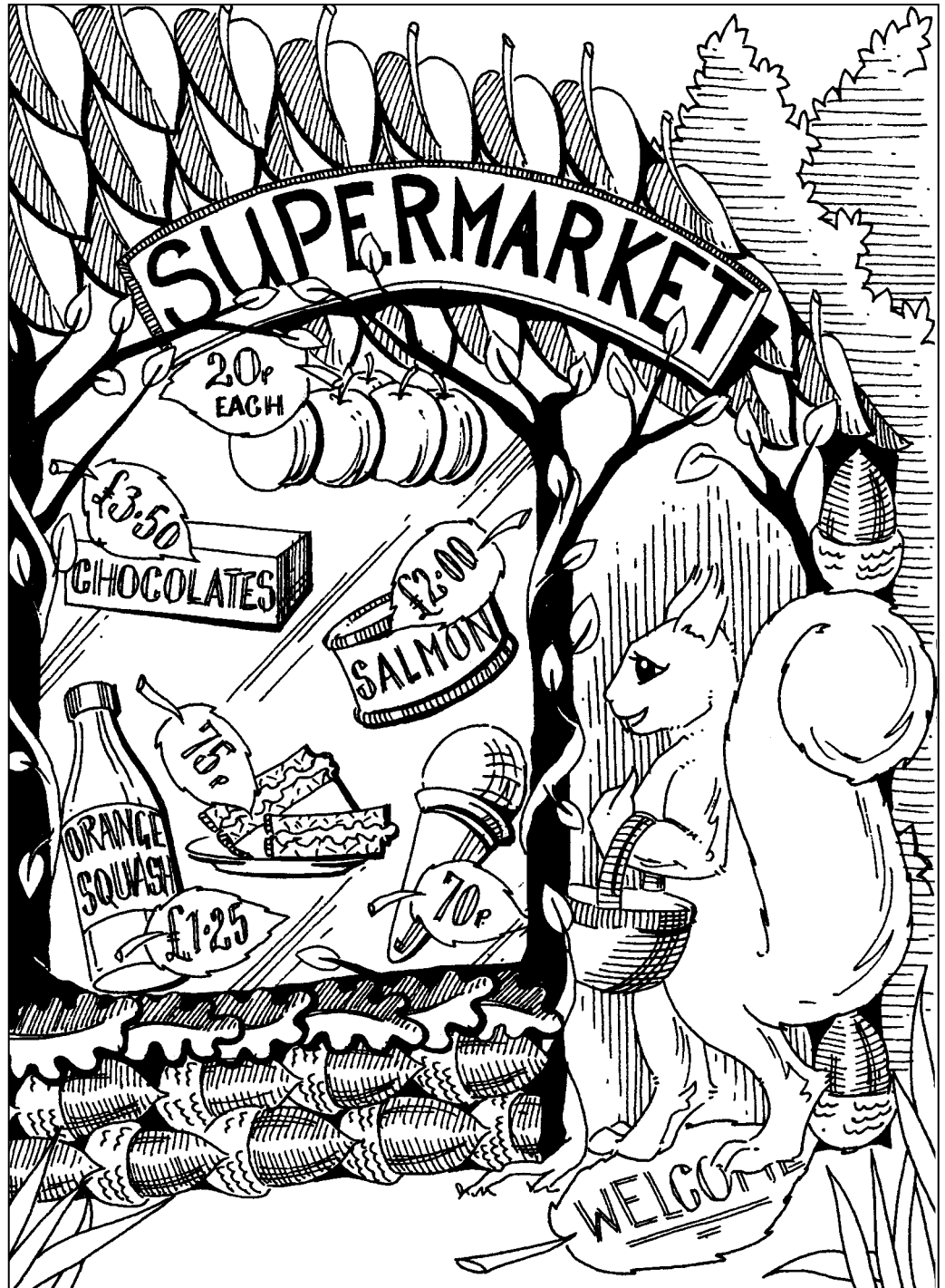
***And they walked and walked and walked.
And they waited and waited and waited.***

The class will find memorising the lines and the intonation easier as you repeat the writing of the sentences on the walls, speeding up the process each time.

You can create 'poems' from any story following this technique, provided you make sure that the sentences you select have the same stress, rhythm and number of stressed syllables.

Activity 4

This activity practises simple maths. Show an OHT or give out copies of the picture of the food and prices and ask appropriate questions.




- 1 Look at the food and the prices. The tortoises buy three tins of salmon, six sandwiches, a box of chocolates, three ice-creams and a bottle of orange squash. What is the cost of the picnic food?
- 2 You've got ten pounds. What can you buy in the supermarket?
- 3 The tortoises walk a mile in three months. How many miles can they walk in six months/nine months/a year?





Other activities


- ◆ Get the class to express a range of meanings using words taken from the story and by practising different intonation and using gestures. For example, *Me?* or *What!* (to show surprise, ask a question, make an offer).
- ◆ Get the class to draw weather symbols for the different seasons. Display them in the classroom, changing them every day to fit the real weather conditions.

It's winter.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
It's snowing.	It's cold.	It's....	It's....	It's....
	C			

Key

Sun  Snow  Rain  Cloud 

Wind  Hot H Cold C

2 The European tradition (1): a well-known tale

The Pied Piper of Hamelin

The Pied Piper of Hamelin is a famous European tale which has been passed from generation to generation in both written and spoken form. Hamelin is a town in north Germany where the action is supposed to have taken place. The tale is famous all over the world and so the class are likely to already know it.

Before you read **Activity 1**

First, get the class to tell you what they can remember about the story but allow them to use their own language rather than English. They will probably have their own version of the story which you can later compare with the one which follows. The ending of the story may cause some disagreement as some versions do not mention the lame boy who acts as a messenger to the town and tells the people what has happened to the other children. The version which follows includes this episode and so make sure the class know the whole story in their own language before telling it in English.

Once everyone has agreed on the content of the story, divide the class into groups and ask them to make flashcards showing the characters and places in the story in preparation for the storytelling session itself. These flashcards should be large enough to be seen from the back of the classroom. The following characters and places need to be illustrated: the mayor, the piper, the townspeople, the children, the rats, the lame boy, the town, the river with a bridge and the mountain.



Activity 2

Present the following characters in the story to the class in English using the flashcards.

The Mayor	The children
The Pied Piper	The rats
The townspeople	The lame boy

There may be a problem in knowing what to call the piper in the story in that he is called the *Pied Piper* in the title. Explain the meaning of *pied* (multi-coloured, wearing brightly coloured clothes). One other word which may need explanation is the compound *townspeople* which is an archaic literary word for *inhabitants*. It can simply be substituted by the word *people*.

Get the class to tell you in English about where the story takes place: in the town of Hamelin, surrounded by a river and with a mountain to the east.

Show the class the flashcards which correspond to these places. As an extra activity, you can ask one of the class to locate Hamelin in an atlas.

Ask the class questions in English such as:

How many main characters are there in the story?

Where does the story take place?

Where is the mountain?

How do you say 'mayor', 'townspeople', 'piper', 'lame boy', 'rats' in your own language?

While you read

Now tell the story to the class but do not expect them to understand everything the first time they listen. Try to make the story come to life and use your voice and gestures to get across what happens in the story. Mime the physical action in the story: *run after*, *jump into*, *walk across*, etc. Help clarify meaning by holding up the appropriate flashcard when the characters or places are mentioned in the story.

Focus on some of the more difficult language in the story: *tune*, *drown*, *get rid of*, *should have*, etc. You can write the words on the board with their translations before you begin the story and allow the class to ask questions when they do not understand.

The story is written in the present simple for ease of comprehension. Stories with reported speech create an added problem for low level learners. The story has been divided into thirteen sections for ease of understanding and for use in follow-up activities.

THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN

This is the town of Hamelin. It is a town in Germany. They have a big problem – there are rats everywhere!

The townspeople say, ‘There are rats everywhere! We will go to see the Mayor. He must help us.’

The Mayor says, ‘I don’t like rats, but what can I do? I cannot make the rats go away.’ The townspeople are angry.

A strange man arrives in town. He wants to see the Mayor. The strange man is the Pied Piper.

The Pied Piper says to the Mayor, ‘Will you give me some money if I get rid of the rats?’

The Mayor says, ‘Yes, of course.’ The Pied Piper is happy.

The Pied Piper plays a tune. Suddenly, all the rats in town are running after the Pied Piper. They all come running after him. He walks into the river.

All the rats jump into the water and drown.

The Pied Piper says to the Mayor, ‘There aren’t any rats anywhere. Please give me my money.’

‘No,’ says the Mayor. ‘Go away! We do not want you here. I will not give you the money you want.’

So, the Pied Piper plays a different tune. The children like the tune that the Pied Piper is playing.

Suddenly all the children are running after the Pied Piper. There is also a lame boy who cannot run very fast. They walk across the bridge.

They come to a mountain but they do not stop. The mountain opens up. The Pied Piper walks into the mountain and the children walk in after him.

The lame boy wants to walk in too, but the mountain quickly closes up. The boy goes home.

There are no children in Hamelin. Only one. The Mayor should have paid the Pied Piper.

Tell the story a second or even a third time until the class have understood the whole thing.

Activity 1

The class can do this activity as a task while you read the story, preferably during the second reading. It can be used as a comprehension check of the story as much as an aid to following the story. Give out copies of the *Who does what?* activity which appears on the next page. Get the class to decide which of the three characters in the left-hand column performs the action on the right. Make sure the class understand they have to focus on who does what at each stage of the story. Another way of exploiting this activity is to divide the class into groups of three and hand out the names of each of the characters written on card. The class should hold up the correct card every time they hear their character mentioned in the story.

WHO DOES WHAT?

- 1) **The Mayor**
The Pied Piper
The people will get rid of the rats.
- 2) **The people**
The Pied Piper
The Mayor say(s), *'I do not like rats.'*
- 3) **The Mayor**
The Pied Piper
The people arrive(s) in town.
- 4) **The Pied Piper**
The Mayor
The people say(s), *'Will you give me some money if I get rid of the rats?'*
- 5) **The rats**
The Pied Piper
The children jump(s) into the river and drown.
- 6) **The Pied Piper**
The Mayor
The rats say(s), *'I will not give you the money you want.'*
- 7) **The rats**
The Pied Piper
The children play(s) a different tune.
- 8) **The children**
The rats
The people walk into the mountain.
- 9) **The Pied Piper**
The lame boy
The Mayor wants to walk in but the mountain closes up.
- 10) **The lame boy**
The children
The Mayor should have paid The Pied Piper.

After you read **Activity 1**

The aim of this activity is to get the class to tell the story. Divide the class into pairs or groups of three. Give out copies at random of the thirteen sections of the story as appear on p.17. Show the picture flashcards to the class one after another to remind them of what happens in the story, allowing them enough time to decide the order in which the characters appear. Then get the class to tell the story by reading their section in turn. Alternatively, give out only twelve (or even fewer) of the thirteen sections so that the story gets broken at some stage(s). That way, the whole class have to fill in the missing action. If the class have made flashcards for each of the sections in the story, they can place their copy of the section under the correct character as the story is being told.

Activity 2

The class can do this activity without having done Activity 1, although it is better if they have. Again, the aim is to get the class to tell the story, but this time without the photocopied sections in front of them. This time they use the following list of words written on the board as a guide.

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------|
| 1 Town | 8 No money |
| 2 People | 9 Tune |
| 3 Mayor | 10 Children |
| 4 Pied Piper | 11 Mountain |
| 5 Pied Piper/Mayor | 12 Lame boy |
| 6 Tune | 13 End |
| 7 Water | |

Divide the class into thirteen groups and give each group a number and a key word or character. Give the class enough time to write their section but make sure they understand that the wording does not need to be identical to the photocopied version. Finally, get the class to read the story following the order of the cues on the board. This activity can be quicker and more spontaneous if done as a class activity rather than in groups. Whenever someone remembers something about the story, get them to put their hand up. If the class cannot remember anything or to give them greater help, you can re-read the first few words of each section, indicating which number on the board it corresponds to.

3

The European tradition (2):

a less well-known tale

The Three Enchanted Oranges

Before you read

There are several pre-activities which need to be done to familiarise the class with the vocabulary used in the story.

Activity 1

Draw a bowl, a comb and a towel on the board. Tell the class that the story they are going to hear is about a rude prince who used to wash his face every day and then empty the bowl out of the window covering the people below with water. Do choral repetition of the following words: **bowl**, **comb** and **towel**. Then write the following sentences on the board:

Every day, the prince washes his face in a bowl.

Every day, the prince dries his face with a towel.

Every day, the prince combs his hair with a comb.

And every day the prince throws the water out of the window.

Use mime and gesture to help make the meaning of the sentences clear.

Activity 2

This is a Total Physical Response activity. Get one of the class to read the following instructions while you act them out using imaginary props or read them yourself while the class act them out:

- 1 Take a bowl.
- 2 Fill it with water.
- 3 Wash your face.
- 4 Take a towel.
- 5 Dry your face.
- 6 Take a comb.
- 7 Comb your hair.
- 8 Now, throw the water into the sink.

Choose two learners to repeat the activity, one reading the instructions and the other acting them out. Write on the board any vocabulary which the class do not understand such as *fill*, *throw* and *sink*. Once the class understand all the instructions, change the last one and act it out:

Now, throw the water into the sink.

Because if you throw the water out of the window, somebody might get very wet.

Write the expression *to get very wet* on the board and translate it into the learners' own language.

Activity 3

Present the characters in the story to the class as below checking for any comprehension problems. Make sure the class understand the words *hungry* and *thirsty* and the irregular past tense forms *rode*, *saw*, *flew*, *came out* and *got married*.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1 The Prince who wanted to know love | 5 Mr Air |
| 2 The Witch | 6 Beautiful girl 1 |
| 3 Mrs Moon | 7 Beautiful girl 2 |
| 4 Mr Sun | 8 Beautiful girl 3 |

Note that the story which is told in the past tense also contains future forms and one first conditional sentence. If the class are likely to find this difficult, translate the sentences before you read the story without giving any grammatical analysis of the forms.

While you read

Try to use a lot of mime and gesture to make this story as lively and dramatic as possible. Much of the action in the story is easy to mime: the part when the witch gets wet (which the class have already seen in the pre-reading activities), when the Prince picks the orange and opens it, the repetition of *rode and rode and rode* and of *some water to wash, a towel to dry and a comb to comb my hair*.

THE THREE ENCHANTED ORANGES

Once upon a time, in a very far away country, there lived a king, a queen and their son, the prince. They lived in a beautiful palace. One day, the prince was washing his face in a bowl. When he finished, he threw the water out of the window, and an old witch who was passing by got very wet.

She was very angry and said to the prince, 'Prince, if you don't find the three enchanted oranges, you will never know what love is!'

So the prince decided to go in search of the oranges. He rode and rode and rode until he saw a beautiful house. He knocked on the door and a nice lady opened it. Her name was Mrs Moon.

'Madam,' said the prince, 'I am looking for the three enchanted oranges. If I don't find them, I will die not knowing what love is!'

'I am sorry, young prince,' said Mrs Moon, 'but I don't know where they are. Go and see my brother, Mr Sun, in his palace. Good luck!'

So the prince rode and rode and rode until he saw a wonderful palace. Mr Sun opened the door.

'I am sorry, young prince,' said Mr Sun, 'but I don't know where the oranges are. Go and see my brother, Mr Air, in his castle. Good luck!'

Then the prince rode and rode and rode until he saw a tall castle. Mr Air opened the door.

'Young prince,' he said, 'I know where those oranges are. They are in the magic garden, in the fourth orange tree on the right. Good luck!'

Then the prince rode and rode and rode until he saw the magic garden. He carefully picked the three oranges and left. He rode and rode and rode and he got very hungry and thirsty. He decided to eat one of the oranges and opened it. Suddenly, a beautiful girl came out of the orange.

She said to the prince, 'If you don't give me some water to wash, a towel to dry and a comb to comb my hair, I'll go back to my orange tree.'

The prince couldn't give her anything, so she went back into the orange and it closed and flew back to the garden. After a few days he got hungry and thirsty again. He opened another orange, and another girl came out.

'If you don't give me some water to wash, a towel to dry and a comb to comb my hair, I'll go back to my orange tree.'

Again, the prince couldn't give her anything, so she went back to the garden.

Finally, the prince arrived at a small village. There he bought a bowl, a towel and a comb. When he was alone, he opened the last orange and another beautiful girl came out.

'This is my last chance to know what love is,' he thought. And before she said anything, he gave her the bowl, the towel and the comb. She washed, dried and combed her hair and rode with him back to his palace, where they got married. And they lived happily ever after.

Activity 1

You can do this activity during the second reading of the story. Give out copies of the map below which shows the route the prince takes in search of the three enchanted oranges and eight places or actions taken from the story. Get the class to match the numbers on the map to the places and actions while they listen.

The Prince's Palace

What number is

- _____ Mr Air's castle?
- _____ The prince's palace?
- _____ Mr Sun's palace?
- _____ Second girl comes out of orange?
- _____ The magic garden?
- _____ Mrs Moon's house?
- _____ Third girl comes out of orange?
- _____ First girl comes out of orange?

Key

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 The prince's palace | 5 The magic garden |
| 2 Mrs Moon's house | 6 First girl comes out of the orange |
| 3 Mr Sun's palace | 7 Second girl comes out of the orange |
| 4 Mr Air's castle | 8 Third girl comes out of the orange |

You can check the answers to this activity by asking where each place or action is located on the map.

What number is the magic garden?

What number is the third girl who comes out of the orange?

What number is Mr Sun's palace? etc

After you read **Activity 1**

The map can be used in more complex tasks after the previous activity has been done. Prepare written questions such as those below:

What happens between number 1 and number 2?

(Answer The witch gets very wet.)

What happens between number 3 and 4?

(Answer The prince rides and rides and rides.)

What happens between number 5 and 6?

(Answer The prince picks the enchanted oranges.)

What happens between number 7 and 8?

(Answer The prince buys a bowl, a towel and a comb.)

What happens after number 8?

(Answer The prince and the girl get married.)

Activity 2

Get the class to tell the story based on a comic strip. Divide the class into pairs and give each pair a number and the title of a key episode from the story:

- 1 The witch gets wet.
- 2 The prince visits Mrs Moon.
- 3 The prince visits Mr Sun.
- 4 The prince visits Mr Air.
- 5 The first girl appears.
- 6 The second girl appears.
- 7 The third girl appears.

Get each pair of learners to write the title, draw the episode and reconstruct the dialogue by writing what each character says as in the frames of a comic strip on a piece of card.

The learners should then look at the others' work and find where their frame fits to rebuild the story in the correct order. The whole class can then retell the story.

4 A modern tale

A Tale with no Name

Before you read **Activity 1**

Prepare the class for using this story by telling them that it is different from others they may know. It is a modern story with no traditional features and the main character in it is a fourteen-year-old girl from London. The story is basically about a dream that the girl has which turns into a small adventure. The beginning of the story where the girl thinks she sees an open door which appears out of nowhere and which has a strong light shining out of it suggests the type of story to follow. Set the scene for the class in English or in the learners' own language. For example:

Imagine that you can see an open door from which a lot of light comes out. You cannot see what there is behind. What would you do? How many of you would walk in?

Now, what do you think was behind? A room? A house? A castle? A UFO? Another planet?

Now, imagine the kind of adventure that you might have once you walk through the door.

Activity 2

This activity also helps the class to predict some of the content of the story. Tell the class that they are going to spend ten minutes writing English as it sounds without worrying about spelling mistakes. For example:

This morning, I had cornflakes, marmalade and toast for breakfast.

This sentence when written down as it sounds would read like this:

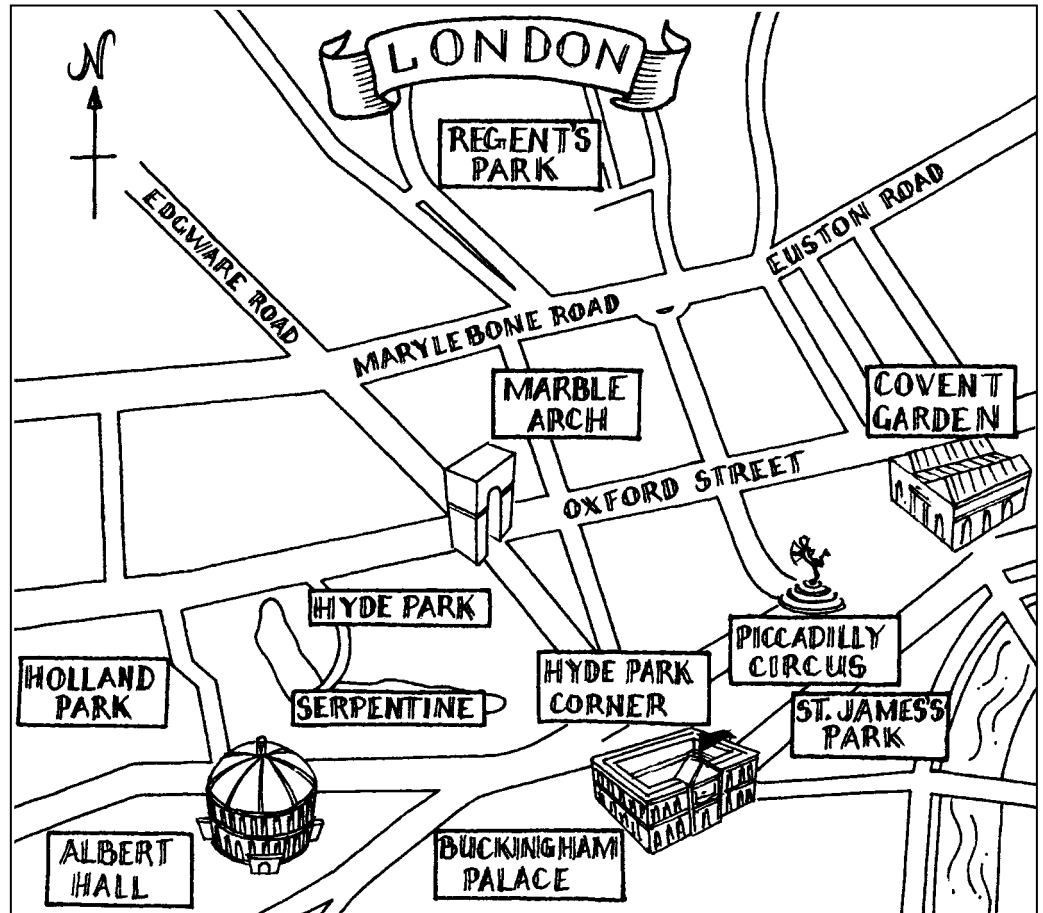
Dis mornin ai had kornfleiks, marmaleid an toust for breikfast.

Get the class to try and predict how this way of writing English relates to the story. After listening to their ideas, get them to predict what problem Betty's friends who live behind the door may have. As they have never been taught to read or write, they cannot study or read or find out information. Before you read the story, give out copies of the following sentences (or write them on the board). Tell the class that these sentences are spoken by Betty's strange friends in the story. Get them to put up their hand when they think they have identified them during the reading of the story.

- 1 *Hus dis gerl?*
- 2 *Luk at her klous!*
- 3 *Ver ar iu from?*
- 4 *Lets teik er houm bifer di polis kum! Kwik!*
- 5 *No, wikannot studi bikos wi don nou hau to riid or rait. Dei never tich as. Wi wotch tivi bet wi never riid or rait.*

Activity 3

Use a map of London and point out the position of Holland Park and get the class to think of other famous London parks such as Hyde Park, Regent's Park, etc.



While you read Prepare the class for some of the less common words which appear in the story: *bush, strange, gather, obey, chance, hardly, fight, vanish, confident.*

Activity 1

It is possible to give the story an alternative ending. If you do so, leave out the last part from *he kisses her* and get the class to write an ending of about eight lines, preferably for homework. Get them to also think of a title for the story, reminding them that the story is written in the present tense. During the following lesson, get the class to read their endings and compare them with the version in the book.

Activity 2

Get the class to prepare questions about what they do not understand in the story during both readings.

A TALE WITH NO NAME

Betty is a fourteen-year-old girl who lives in London. She is very intelligent, but she is shy and doesn't have many friends.

Every day, Betty walks back home from school through one of the most famous London parks, Holland Park. One day, in the middle of November, the sky is grey and dark. Suddenly, like in a dream, she discovers an open door right in the middle of a bush. It is very strange, because a lot of light is coming out of the door. She decides to walk in.

She walks and walks until she realises that she is in the middle of a street, but in a different city. It is white, clean and silent. A boy and two girls gather round and look at her in surprise. They are all dressed in white clothes, like a uniform. They all look very similar. They ask questions.

'Who's this girl?' 'Look at her clothes!' 'Where are you from?'

Betty does not know what to answer.

Suddenly, one says, 'Let's take her home before the police come! Quick!'

So, Betty goes with them to an apartment not very far from there. There, they give Betty some strange food and a drink and begin a conversation. The boy, Cal, tells Betty that they live in a very beautiful country, called *The White Country*. The only thing they don't like in their country is the government. It decides everything, and the people just obey. They have to work very hard for very little money. They have very few opportunities to have a good time, because there is very little free time. So Betty says, 'But if you study you can get a better job. And you won't be so easy to manipulate.'

'No, we cannot study because we don't know how to read or write. They never teach us. We watch TV but we never read or write,' says Cal.

'Oh, but I can teach you how to read and spell,' says Betty.

And she does. She spends fifteen days teaching these people and she becomes a very good friend of theirs. They share everything in the apartment, and go out to the country and have long walks. Betty tells them about her life and her world, and they talk about theirs. She feels, for the first time in her life, loved and useful, and she enjoys it.

One day, Cal says to her, 'Now that we can read and write we will be able to teach all our friends. We'll be able to build a better society. Thanks very much for your help. You are a good friend.' And he kisses her.

Suddenly, everything vanishes. She is sitting on a bench in Holland Park, and it is very dark. She runs to the gates. The park-keeper is locking them.

'Didn't you hear the bell? We always ring the bell before we close.'

'Sorry, I fell asleep,' says Betty, while he opens the gate for her.

Betty walks home slowly, remembering what happened in her dream. She feels happy and more confident than ever before. Then she looks at her watch. The watch says: *19.15 Tuesday November 3rd, 2445.*

Activity 3

Get the class to do this activity during the second reading of the story. They should answer the following question ***What did the children actually say?*** by writing the sentences from the second pre-reading activity (p.26) correctly.

While you read **Activity 1**

Ask the class the following questions in their own language:

Why is it important to know how to read and write?

How were you taught to read and write?

What would you change about how you were taught?

Get the whole class to share their ideas based on what happens in the story.

Activity 2

This activity is a game for checking spelling. Although the class should know most of the vocabulary in the story, this activity helps to check the spelling of the more difficult words. Say the following fifteen words out loud and then get the class to tell you how they are spelt. Write the correct spelling on the board or get the class to do so.

shy	light	strange	share
friends	bush	walks	clean
few	read	write	life
country	answer	decides	

Activity 3

Use this activity after you have read the story to help the class to retell it. Give out copies of the gapped version of the story and get the class to write in the missing words.

Betty home every day from school.
↓
She can see an open door with coming out.
↓
She realises that she is in the but city.
↓
One boy and two girls ask her, 'Where are you?'
↓
Betty with them to an apartment.
↓
Cal tells Betty that they live in a country.
↓
They call their country *The Country*.
↓
They have to work for very little money.
↓
Cal says, 'We don't know how to or'
↓
Betty says, 'But I can you.'
↓
She spends days teaching these people.
↓
They go out to the and have long walks.
↓
She feels for the first time and
↓
Cal says, 'We'll be able to a better society.'
↓
The - is locking the gates up.
↓
She feels happy and more than ever before.
↓
She then looks at her to see the time.
↓
The watch says: 19.15, November 3rd, 2445.

Activity 4

This activity gives the class an opportunity to do some project work. The story can be integrated into a broader area of work on the theme of *The Importance of Spelling*, with the aim of getting the class to remember the importance of speaking and writing accurately in any language. The following stages can be used in the project:

- 1 Get the class to collect examples of bad spelling in posters, leaflets and in any written material, both in English and in the learners' own language. The sections of restaurant and café menus which have been translated into English are often a good example. Get the class to choose the most striking mistakes.
- 2 Focus on words which are often spelt wrongly in English and in the learners' own language. Go over the learners' notes and written exercises checking for individual mistakes. Get the whole class to look at them and choose the ones they think are the strangest, funniest and the most noticeable for whatever reason. Ask the learners' teacher of their own language to help as this stage if possible.
- 3 Get the class to work in groups and make posters of the mistakes they have chosen. They can then vote for the best poster. Use the results as the basis for further discussion on the difference between English and the learners' own language. Ask questions such as *Is spelling more important in English or in your language? How are the two languages different?*

5 A fairy story

The Lizard and the Damsel

The Lizard and the Damsel belongs to the European tradition of stories which have the recurrent theme of the beauty and the beast where at the end the beast turns into a prince thanks to the love of the beautiful maiden. Begin by asking the learners in their own language if they know any other stories of this type.

Activity 1

1 Get the class to make general predictions about the story based on the following questions?

What is the maiden like? (noble, beautiful, kind)

What is the beast like? (ugly, conceited)

What other stories do you know of this type? (*Beauty and the Beast*, *The Ugly Duckling*)

How do these stories usually end? (They usually have a happy ending and the beast or ugly character becomes handsome or beautiful.)

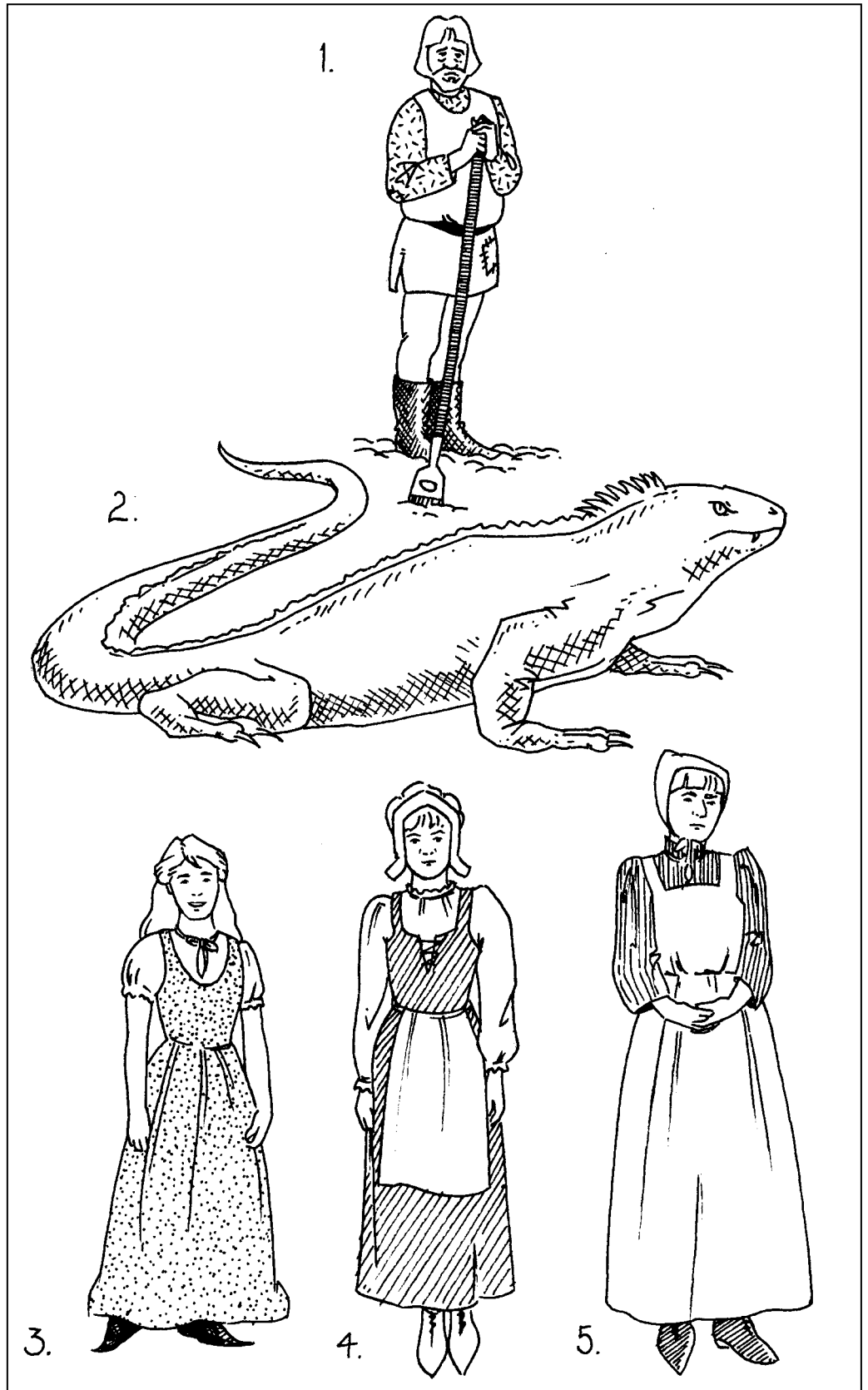
Before you read

This story is more complicated than others as it is virtually all dialogue, so do not expect the class to understand everything. It will be easier for the class if they have copies of the narrative parts of the story from p.37–39 in front of them so that they only have to understand the dialogue.

Activity 1

Present the characters in the story to the class: The Peasant, The Lizard, The Eldest Daughter, The Second Daughter, The Youngest Daughter.

Pre-teach any vocabulary that the class may have difficulty with: *frightened*, *underground passage*, *marble palace*, etc.



**While you
read** **Activity 1**

Make copies of the texts on pp. 37–39 for the class to follow as you read the story. The texts do not include all the dialogue in the story. Divide the class into two groups and give out the A texts to one half and the B texts to the other. Get the class to fill in the gaps with the dialogues in the story. Make sure the class realise there is a lot of repetition in the story. Once you have told the story twice, get the group with text A to read from the beginning of the story. When they reach a gap in the story, get the group with text B to help complete the missing information. Continue in this way with the groups exchanging information each time there is a problem in understanding a word or completing a section.

THE LIZARD AND THE DAMSEL

Once upon a time, a peasant was working on his land when suddenly a big ugly lizard appeared in front of him. The poor man was very frightened.

The lizard told the peasant, 'Peasant, I know that you have three daughters, and the three of them are very beautiful. I want a wife. You must give one of them to me. If not, terrible things will happen to you and your family. Tomorrow morning I will come to your house to get her.'

'But Mr Lizard,' said the peasant, 'you are very ugly. They won't like you.'

'You must try to convince them or, as I said, terrible things will happen to you and your family,' said the lizard, and he went away.'

When the peasant returned home, he called his eldest daughter and said, 'My dear daughter, as I was working on our land this morning, a big ugly lizard appeared in front of me. He said that if one of you doesn't marry him, terrible things will happen to us and our family.'

'I will never marry a lizard,' said the eldest daughter. 'Sorry, father.'

Then the peasant called his second daughter and said, 'My dear daughter, as I was working on our land this morning, a big ugly lizard appeared in front of me. He said that if one of you doesn't marry him, terrible things will happen to us and our family.'

'Father, I'm sorry, but I will never agree to marry a lizard,' said his second daughter.

Then the peasant called his youngest daughter and said, 'My dear daughter, as I was working on our land this morning, a big ugly lizard appeared in front of me. He said that if one of you doesn't marry him, terrible things will happen to us and our family.'

'Father, I don't want to marry a lizard, but I will marry him so that nothing terrible happens to you,' said the youngest daughter.

'Thanks, dear daughter,' said the peasant. 'Tomorrow morning, the lizard will come to get you.'

The next morning, the lizard knocked at the peasant's door.

'Who's there?' said the peasant.

'It's the lizard. I've come to get your daughter.'

The youngest daughter was very frightened when she saw the big ugly lizard. But she didn't say anything and just followed him. The lizard took her by the hand and they walked along underground passages until they came to a beautiful garden. In the middle of it there was a beautiful marble palace.

'Who lives here?' asked the damsel.

'I do,' said the lizard. 'I live in this beautiful palace, but I am always alone. I am so ugly that nobody wants to live with me. Now I think that I

have done something wrong. Go back to your father. Nothing is going to happen to him. You are free.'

And the lizard started to cry. The youngest daughter had a very good heart.

She felt so sorry for him that she said, 'I don't mind that you are a lizard. I want to be your wife.'

Suddenly, all the lizard's skin came off and he changed into a handsome young prince.

'Thank you, gentle damsel,' said the prince. 'A long time ago, a witch turned me into a lizard. She said that only a young kind damsel could change me back into a prince. You have been so good to me that I want you to be my wife.'

The little damsel and the prince got married and lived happily ever after.

TEXT A**THE LIZARD AND THE DAMSEL**

Once upon a time, a peasant was working on his land when suddenly a big ugly lizard appeared in front of him. The poor man was very frightened. The lizard told the peasant,

‘But Mr Lizard,’ said the peasant, ‘you are very ugly. They won’t like you.’

When the peasant returned home, he called his eldest daughter and said,

‘I will never marry a lizard,’ said the eldest daughter. ‘Sorry, father.’
Then the peasant called his second daughter and said,

‘Father, I’m sorry, but I will never agree to marry a lizard,’ said his second daughter.

Then the peasant called his youngest daughter and said,

‘Father, I don’t want to marry a lizard, but I will marry him so that nothing terrible happens to you,’ said the youngest daughter.

. . . said the peasant. . . .

The next morning, the lizard knocked at the peasant’s door.

‘Who’s there?’ said the peasant.

The youngest daughter was very frightened when she saw the big ugly lizard. But she didn’t say anything and just followed him. The lizard took her by the hand and they walked along underground passages until they came to a beautiful garden. In the middle of it there was a beautiful marble palace.

‘Who lives here?’ asked the damsel.

. . . said the lizard. . . .

And the lizard started to cry. The youngest daughter had a very good heart.

She felt so sorry for him that she said, 'I don't mind that you are a lizard. I want to be your wife.'

Suddenly, all the lizard's skin came off and he changed into a handsome young prince.

. . . said the prince. . . .

The little damsel and the prince got married and lived happily ever after.

TEXT B

THE LIZARD AND THE DAMSEL

Once upon a time, a peasant was working on his land when suddenly a big ugly lizard appeared in front of him. The poor man was very frightened.

The lizard told the peasant, 'Peasant, I know that you have three daughters, and the three of them are very beautiful. I want a wife. You must give one of them to me. If not, terrible things will happen to you and your family. Tomorrow morning I will come to your house to get her.'

. . . said the peasant. . . .

'You must try to convince them or, as I said, terrible things will happen to you and your family,' said the lizard, and he went away.

When the peasant returned home, he called his eldest daughter and said, 'My dear daughter, as I was working on our land this morning, a big ugly lizard appeared in front of me. He said that if one of you doesn't marry him, terrible things will happen to us and our family.'

. . . said the eldest daughter. . . .

Then the peasant called his second daughter and said, 'My dear daughter, as I was working on our land this morning, a big ugly lizard

appeared in front of me. He said that if one of you doesn't marry him, terrible things will happen to us and our family.'

Then the peasant called his youngest daughter and said, 'My dear daughter, as I was working on our land this morning, a big ugly lizard appeared in front of me. He said that if one of you doesn't marry him, terrible things will happen to us and our family.'

. . . said the youngest daughter.

'Thanks, dear daughter,' said the peasant. 'Tomorrow morning, the lizard will come to get you.'

The next morning, the lizard knocked at the peasant's door.

. . . said the peasant.

'It's the lizard. I've come to get your daughter.'

The youngest daughter was very frightened when she saw the big ugly lizard. But she didn't say anything and just followed him. The lizard took her by the hand and they walked along underground passages until they came to a beautiful garden. In the middle of it there was a beautiful marble palace.

. . . asked the damsel.

'I do,' said the lizard. 'I live in this beautiful palace, but I am always alone. I am so ugly that nobody wants to live with me. Now I think that I have done something wrong. Go back to your father. Nothing is going to happen. You are free.'

And the lizard started to cry. The youngest daughter had a very good heart.

She felt so sorry for him that she said, . . .

Suddenly, all the lizard's skin came off and he changed into a handsome young prince.

'Thank you, gentle damsel,' said the prince. 'A long time ago, a witch turned me into a lizard. She said that only a young kind damsel could change me back into a prince. You have been so good to me that I want you to be my wife.'

The little damsel and the prince got married and lived happily ever after.

Activity 2

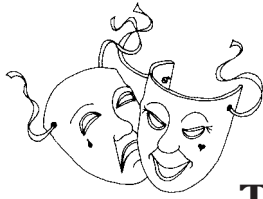
The story falls naturally into three sections. Once all the class have the complete text in front of them, get them to try and locate where these sections fall, focusing on where the action takes place, the characters who appear, etc. The class will make use of the sections in the next activity.

After you read **Activity 1**

The follow-up to reading the story is for the class to perform it as a play. The story lends itself to this treatment in that it already contains a lot of dialogue, it falls into three sections of more or less the same length, and the acting is relatively straightforward. The following photocopyable texts are provided to help with the setting up of the play:

- 1 a list of the order in which the characters appear
- 2 the lines that each of the characters have to say (This does not mean that the class cannot have the whole text in front of them.)

Although improvised plays have their place in this stage of learning, we prefer to perform this play from the text which will mean the class will have to rehearse and learn their lines. There are six roles of differing length in the play to assign to members of the class. The largest role is that of the lizard and then that of the youngest daughter. The play can be done in an informal way or if a more theatrical touch is required, you can prepare costumes and a basic set. Get the whole class involved in the preparation and assign different functions to the members of the class according to their interests: prompter, set designer, stage manager, etc. If enough of the class want to, you can set up a group competition and vote for the best version of the play.



The Lizard and the Damsel

A LITTLE PLAY

Cast of characters

Lizard/Prince played by
 Damsel played by
 Peasant played by
 Eldest daughter played by
 Second daughter played by
Narrator
Prompter

Order of appearance

Act 1: In the peasant's orchard
 (*Narrator*)

Lizard – Peasant – Lizard

Act 2: In the peasant's house
 (*Narrator*)

Peasant – Eldest daughter
 (*Narrator*)

Peasant – Second daughter
 (*Narrator*)

Peasant – Damsel – Peasant

Act 3: In the Lizard's palace
 (*Narrator*)

Peasant – Lizard
 (*Narrator*)

Damsel – Lizard
 (*Narrator*)

Damsel
 (*Narrator*)

Lizard
 (*Narrator*)

End



The narrator's lines**Character** Narrator **Played by**

Once upon a time, a peasant was working on his land when suddenly a big ugly lizard appeared in front of him. The poor man was very frightened. The lizard told the peasant

LIZARD – PEASANT – LIZARD

When the peasant returned home, he called his eldest daughter and said

Then the peasant called his second daughter and said

Then the peasant called his youngest daughter and said

The next morning, the lizard knocked at the peasant's door.

The youngest daughter was very frightened when she saw the big ugly lizard. But she didn't say anything, and just followed him. The lizard took her by the hand and they walked along underground passages until they came to a beautiful garden. In the middle of it there was a beautiful marble palace.

DAUGHTER 3 – LIZARD

Then the lizard started to cry. The youngest daughter had a very good heart. She felt so sorry for him that she said

DAUGHTER 3

Suddenly, all the lizard's skin came off and he turned into a handsome young prince.

LIZARD

The little damsel and the prince got married and lived happily ever after.

The lizard's lines**Character** Lizard / Prince **Played by**

NARRATOR

'Peasant, I know that you have three daughters, and the three of them are very beautiful. I want a wife. You must give one of them to me. If not, terrible things will happen to you and your family. Tomorrow morning I will come to your house to get her.'

PEASANT

'You must try to convince them or, as I said, terrible things will happen to you and your family.'

NARRATOR

PEASANT – DAUGHTER 1

NARRATOR

PEASANT – DAUGHTER 2

NARRATOR

PEASANT – DAUGHTER 3 – PEASANT

NARRATOR

PEASANT

‘It’s the lizard. I’ve come to get my daughter.’

NARRATOR

DAUGHTER 3

‘I do. I live in this beautiful palace, but I am always alone. I am so ugly that nobody wants to live with me. Now I think that I have done something wrong. Go back to your father. Nothing is going to happen to him. You are free.’

NARRATOR

DAUGHTER 3

NARRATOR

‘Thank you, gentle damsel. A long time ago, a witch turned me into a lizard and said that only a young kind damsel could change me back into a prince. You have been so good to me that I want you to be my wife.’

NARRATOR

The youngest daughter’s lines

Character The youngest daughter **Played by**

NARRATOR

LIZARD – PEASANT – LIZARD

NARRATOR

PEASANT – DAUGHTER 1

NARRATOR

PEASANT – DAUGHTER 2

NARRATOR

PEASANT

‘Father, I don’t want to marry a lizard, but I will marry him so that nothing terrible happens to you.’

PEASANT

NARRATOR

PEASANT – LIZARD

NARRATOR

‘Who lives here?’

LIZARD

NARRATOR

‘I don’t mind that you are a lizard. I want to be your wife’

NARRATOR

LIZARD

NARRATOR

The peasant’s lines

Character The Peasant **Played by**

NARRATOR

LIZARD

‘But Mr Lizard, you are very ugly. They won’t like you.’

LIZARD

NARRATOR

‘My dear daughter, as I was working on our land this morning, a big ugly lizard appeared in front of me. He said that if one of you doesn’t marry him, terrible things will happen to us and our family.’

DAUGHTER 1

NARRATOR

‘My dear daughter, as I was working on our land this morning, a big ugly lizard appeared in front of me. He said that if one of you doesn’t marry him, terrible things will happen to us and our family.’

DAUGHTER 2

NARRATOR

‘My dear daughter, as I was working on our land this morning, a big ugly lizard appeared in front of me. He said that if one of you doesn’t marry him, terrible things will happen to us and our family.’

DAUGHTER 3

‘Thanks, dear daughter. Tomorrow morning, the lizard will come to get you.’

NARRATOR

‘Who’s there?’

LIZARD

NARRATOR

DAUGHTER 3 – LIZARD

NARRATOR

DAUGHTER 3

NARRATOR

LIZARD

NARRATOR

The eldest daughter's lines**Character** The eldest daughter **Played by**

NARRATOR

LIZARD – PEASANT – LIZARD

NARRATOR

PEASANT

‘I will never marry a lizard. Sorry, father.’

NARRATOR

PEASANT – DAUGHTER 2

NARRATOR

PEASANT – DAUGHTER 3 – PEASANT

NARRATOR

PEASANT – LIZARD

NARRATOR

DAUGHTER 3 – LIZARD

NARRATOR

DAUGHTER 3

NARRATOR

LIZARD

NARRATOR

The second daughter's lines**Character** The second daughter **Played by**

NARRATOR

LIZARD – PEASANT – LIZARD

NARRATOR

PEASANT – DAUGHTER 1

NARRATOR

PEASANT

‘Father, I'm sorry, but I will never agree to marry a lizard.’

NARRATOR

PEASANT – DAUGHTER 3 – PEASANT

NARRATOR

PEASANT – LIZARD

NARRATOR

DAUGHTER 3 – LIZARD

NARRATOR

DAUGHTER 3

NARRATOR

LIZARD

NARRATOR

Activity 2

This activity can be done after the previous one or independently of it. Divide the class into groups of three and get them to prepare an interview with the main characters in the story: The Lizard, The Prince, The Damsel and The Peasant. Get each group to decide who is going to be these characters. If the class have performed the story as a play, the learners who played those roles can this time be the interviewees. In the interviews, the class can prepare literal questions (which can be answered using the exact words from the text) or invent their own which will generate unrehearsed answers. You could also record the interviews on audio or video tape for future use. Here are some examples of possible interview questions:

Interview with the Lizard-Prince

(literal questions) What did you say to the peasant?
Where did you live?
How did you become a lizard?

(invented questions) Why did the witch turn you into a lizard?
What did you eat when you were a lizard?
How does it feel to be a lizard?

Interview with the Damsel

(literal questions) What did your father say to you?
What did you answer?
Why did you decide to be the lizard's wife?

(invented questions) Did you study or work when you lived at your father's?
What did you think of your sisters?
If you were a lizard's wife, what would people say?

Interview with the Peasant

(literal questions) What did the lizard say to you?
What did your eldest daughter say?
What did your youngest daughter say?

(invented questions) Is it hard to be a peasant these days?
Why didn't you shoot the lizard?
Are you happy to be a prince's father-in-law?

6 New stories

The learner as storyteller

Whenever learners are allowed to spend a certain amount of class time telling stories about their past experiences in their own language, the educational benefits are twofold: we are helping them to develop their storytelling ability and also feel more in control of emotional factors such as self confidence and inhibition. This *sharing time*, as it is sometimes called, is not easy to achieve in the foreign language classroom. Often low level learners do not have the linguistic resources to tell stories in English, although they may often want to do so. However, we feel that learners can often say more than expected, provided they have enough stimulus, prompts and, of course, the necessary vocabulary provided by the teacher. There are two key factors for the success of storytelling activities. One is the role of teacher as guide and helper and the other is the setting up of an appropriate context. This chapter aims to describe how to get learners to tell stories in English and is divided into three sections with activities which range from limited learner participation to considerable learner participation.

Limited learner participation

Activity 1

The first activity does not require the class to tell stories but to select ones they would like to have read to them. To do this you can set up a *story box* with a list of titles of the stories you can read over the year and get the class to select the ones they would like and the order in which they would like to hear them. You can do the same with readers which have simplified versions of stories. When dealing with stories that the class do not know, it is worth getting them to look at the cover and inside cover, the illustrations, the list of contents etc so that they get an idea of what the story is about. This also helps to establish which are the most popular stories for use with successive classes and those which can be exchanged with the titles chosen by other classes. Once the class have selected the stories and established an order for them, a regular day for storytelling can be fixed which helps both teacher and learners to do the pre-activities to the stories (draw pictures of the characters, revise useful vocabulary, imagine an alternative ending, etc). Once you have told the stories in class, they can be recorded onto audio tape for later use. This provides a permanent selection of stories that the class can listen to or read whenever they like.

Activity 2

Get the class to make flashcards of stock characters for use when improvising tales and for illustrating a range of different stories. The characters they can draw and label are: Princess, Prince, Witch, King, Queen, Fairy, Giant, Frog, Wizard.



Give out the flashcards and get the class to improvise a story beginning *Once upon a time...* and introducing the characters one by one. You can assign further roles or characters so that the whole class gets a chance to contribute. In addition to characters, the class can also produce cards with the pictures and names of different actions and of magic objects (a wand, broom, magic mirror, etc) so that the story can be told in a more detailed way. If the class has a particularly large number of learners, it is advisable to get one group to demonstrate the activity first so that the others know exactly what to do.

Activity 3

This activity shows learners how to invent *chain* stories. Get one of the class to suggest the name of a well-known character (for example, Charlie Brown). Write the following headings and example on the board:

Questions

Answers

What is your name?

Charlie Brown

Continue asking the class questions such as those in the list below and writing the answers on the board (or letting a volunteer write them up).

How old are you?

Where do you live?

Who is your teacher?

What is your favourite sport?

How many brothers and sisters have you got?

Have you got a pet?

Once all the answers are up on the board, tell the class that they are going to work together to imagine a day in the life of Charlie Brown (for example, last Saturday). Make sure you ask very specific questions, such as those in the list below, that can be answered in a few words. Make sure the class realise that any new answers must not contradict earlier ones. You can nominate members of the class to be *reporters* who write down the answers and point out if anyone makes a mistake. These *reporters* can then describe the day in Charlie Brown's life based on the answers given by the rest of the class.

When did you get up?

What TV programme did you watch during breakfast?

What did you do after breakfast?

What song did you listen to?

Where did you go with Snoopy?

Greater learner participation: telling stories from stories

This second section includes activities designed to take stories or parts of stories from stories the class already know.

Activity 1

This activity is based on using very well-known stories but telling them with some deliberate changes. It can be used in two ways: by getting the class to invent the changes and build them into the story or by getting the class to listen out for them as you read the story.



LITTLE RED RIDING HOOD (A New Version)

Little Red Riding Hood's mother says, 'Grandma is on the phone. She says she's ill. Why don't you get your motorbike and take her some magazines?'

'OK,' says Little Red Riding Hood. 'I will.'

'Be careful with the traffic. Don't go too fast,' warns her mother.

Little Red Riding Hood drives to her grandmother's. When she gets there, she knocks on the door.

'Come in,' says grandmother. 'The door is open.'

When Little Red Riding Hood walks into the bedroom, Grandmother is listening to rock music on her Walkman.

'Grandma,' says Little Red Riding Hood. 'This is a surprise! You like rock music!'

'Yes,' says Grandma. 'I listen to a lot of rock every day.'

'And Grandma,' says Little Red Riding Hood. 'You like reading comics!'

'Yes,' says Grandma. 'I read a lot of comics every day.'

'And Grandma,' says Little Red Riding Hood. 'You like chewing gum!'

'Yes,' says Grandma. 'I like chewing gum but I like little girls like you better.'

Suddenly, Little Red Riding Hood takes an aerosol out of her pocket and sprays Grandma until she faints.

'I knew you were not Grandma.'

Later, she finds her grandmother hiding in the garage.

'Thank you,' says Grandma. 'That burglar wanted to steal all my things.'

'I know how to deal with burglars,' says Little Red Riding Hood, putting the spray back into her pocket. 'Let's call the police.'

Activity 2

Get the class to identify and write down all the changes as they listen to the story. This can be done in note form and in the learners' own language.

Activity 3

Once the class have made notes of the differences between the two versions, they can read the new version a second time and do the following more controlled activity.

1 Write differences between the traditional tale and this one.

Traditional

Little Red Riding Hood lives in a small town.
Little Red Riding Hood hasn't got a telephone.
Little Red Riding Hood takes Grandma some cakes.
Little Red Riding Hood walks to Grandma's.
Little Red Riding Hood must walk through a forest.
Little Red Riding Hood says, 'Your eyes are very big.'
Little Red Riding Hood says, 'Your ears are very big.'
Little Red Riding Hood says, 'Your mouth is very big.'
Grandma is really a wolf.
Little Red Riding Hood cries, 'Help!'
Little Red Riding Hood's father kills the wolf.
Grandma is hiding in a cupboard.
In the end, they lived happily ever after.

New version

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Activity 4

This activity gets the class to tell stories the wrong way round, starting with the end. Choose a traditional story like the one below. Prepare the vocabulary first and hand out copies of the following key words. Allow the class to take notes on what happens in the story as they listen.

- | | |
|----------------|-----------------|
| 1 coin | 4 mouse-dog |
| 2 bow | 5 mouse-cat |
| 3 mouse-donkey | 6 wedding night |

THE VAIN LITTLE MOUSE

Little Mouse lived in a beautiful little house. One day, when she was sweeping the floor, she found a coin.

She said, 'With this coin, I'm going to buy a nice red bow for my hair. I'll look beautiful!'

She was really beautiful with the red bow in her hair. She sat next to the window so that everybody could see her.

'Little mouse, you do look pretty,' said the donkey. 'Will you marry me?'

And she asked, 'What will you do at night?'

'I will bray like this,' said the donkey. And he brayed.

'Oh no, I'll get frightened,' said the mouse.

Then the dog asked her, 'Little mouse, you are beautiful. Why don't you marry me?'

'What will you do at night?' asked the mouse.

'I will bark like this,' said the dog. And he barked.

'Oh no, I'll get frightened,' said the mouse.

Finally, the cat asked her, 'Beautiful little mouse, will you marry me?'

'And what will you do at night?' asked the mouse.

'I will sing like this,' said the cat. And he sang a beautiful song.

'Yes, I will marry you,' said the mouse.

So they got married, but on their wedding night, guess what! The cat did not sing his beautiful song. He ate the vain little mouse.

Telling a story the wrong way round is easier if the story is simple and repetitive as in the example here. Once you have told the story, divide the class into groups and get the learners to reconstruct the story in the following order, starting with the end.

- | | |
|-----------------|----------------|
| 1 wedding night | 4 mouse-donkey |
| 2 mouse-cat | 5 bow |
| 3 mouse-dog | 6 coin |

Activity 5

In this activity, the class imagine an episode in the story, having already heard the beginning. As with the previous activity, prepare the vocabulary and then tell the story through once or twice. Let the class take notes as they listen.

THE CAT AND THE MOUSE

1 Once upon a time, a mouse fell into a big barrel of wine. Suddenly, he saw a cat walking past the barrel. He thought he was drowning, so he shouted, 'Help! Please, get me out of here! I'm drowning! Get me out, and then eat me if you like!'

The cat got him out of the barrel and put him safely onto the floor. The mouse said, 'Let me dry a little and then you can eat me.'

2 But suddenly, he ran away into his mousehole. So the cat said, 'Liar! You said I could eat you!'

3 And from its hole, the mouse answered, 'If I said that, I must have been drunk!'

The class can anticipate or imagine what happens in sections 2 and 3 by answering the following questions, first in writing and then orally:

(before reading section 2)

Will the cat eat the mouse? If not, why not?

(before reading section 3)

What will the mouse say to the cat?

Activity 6

In this activity, the class tell a story which begins at the end of one they already know. For example, in the *Pied Piper of Hamelin* a follow-on story could be like this:

The Mayor goes to the mountain and cries, ‘Pied Piper! Give our children back! I have the money for you!’

The mountain opens up. The children come out, go back to Hamelin and the Pied Piper gets his money. The lame boy is happy because his friends are back. There are no rats anywhere, and there are children everywhere, again. A man from another town comes to Hamelin.

He says to the Piper, ‘Our city is beautiful, but we have a problem – there are rats everywhere! Could you please come and play your tune?’

**Maximum
learner
participation:
the learner as
storyteller**

Lastly, the activities in this section help the class tell their own stories. There is still an important role for the teacher, however, in helping set up the stories rather than expecting the class to invent them with no preparation.

Activity 1

In this activity, the class invent half the story based on basic information you give them. Divide the class into groups and then tell them a very short story. Divide the action in the story into sections and ask questions (preferably ones which have been photocopied and handed out to the groups) about each of them. The groups answer these questions and expand the initial section so that it contains more than a single sentence. Get the class to think of details about the time and place of the action, the characters, etc and then they can tell their versions of the stories and compare them. For example:

A TRIP AROUND THE EARTH

Last night you saw a UFO landing next to your house.

Questions: What were you doing?

How did you see it?

Whose is the UFO?

How did it land?

What was it like?

You meet people from outer space.

Questions: Did anybody see you?

How did you meet them?

What were they like?

What did they say to you?

They invite you to go aboard.

Questions: What was the inside of the UFO like?

How many rooms did it have?

Did you see robots?

You take a trip around the Earth with them.

Questions: What was the Earth like from the UFO?

How fast was the ship?

Who drove the ship?

Back here, you tell your parents and friends.

Questions: Where did you land?

What did your parents say?

What did your friends say?

But they don't believe you...

Questions: What did they say to you?

Did you get upset/angry?

... until you show them something.

Questions: What did you show them?

What did they say?

Activity 2

In this activity, the class suggest two words at random and then have to make up a story about them. (This is what Rodari refers to as *fantastic binomia*.) The activity works best if the class is divided into groups.

Example 1: words **cat** and **bus**

My cat likes taking buses. The other day...

I saw a cat at the bus stop today...

My cat was ill the other day. I put him in a basket to go to the vet. But on the bus...

Example 2: words **girl** and **tree** (adapted from *Exercises in the imagination* by Rodari)

A girl was taking a walk in the country. She saw an apple tree. The fruit looked good, so she ate one. Then...

Once upon a time there was a girl who hated trees. When she saw one, she destroyed it. But one day...

A girl was running about the country when she saw a tree. The tree had a hole. Inside the hole there were two little squirrels...

Activity 3

In this activity, the class do not simply reply to the hypothetical situation described in the sentence but write a short story based on it. Here are some possible examples:

Imagine that... *you have wings.*

you win the pools/lottery/a big prize.

you shrink to be 50 cm high.

you can hear people talking very far from you.

your pets start talking.

your TV shows tomorrow's news.

Activity 4

In this activity, the class tell a story based on a picture or series of pictures. There are various ways of using pictures:

- ◆ a series of pictures which suggest a story. Here, it is better to let learners invent a story individually and then compare.
- ◆ a single picture or photo of a famous person. Here, the class can work together to invent an anecdotal story which could have happened to the person or talk about their life or current interests and activities.
- ◆ two photos or pictures which appear to have nothing in common. It may at first seem difficult to construct a story around two unconnected pictures, but it can be done if some cues are given. (See Activity 2.)

Drawing a picture from a story is a useful activity for lower levels where the picture can show how much the class have understood.

Activity 5

Get one group of learners to talk about or invent a surprising story and to write only the beginning and the ending. The rest of the class have to say what they think happened in the middle.

Examples

1

Bob, Ann, Rod, Sheila and I went out for a picnic

.....

Finally, the five of us ate only one egg.

2

Lucy, who was learning to play the flute, got a ticket for the concert

.....

.....

In the end, Lucy played the flute.

3

She saw a thief breaking into my flat

.....

.....

At last, she realised she had called the fire brigade.

4

I wanted to take karate lessons

.....

.....

When I finally met them, they were Japanese.

Activity 6

It is possible to get the class to tell stories about real objects. Again, it is better to use two objects and try and link them than to use a single one, unless it is an object which will create a lot of ideas. The physical contact with unusual objects encourages the class to tell stories. The objects should be passed round while the story is being told and not simply held up for the class to look at.

Examples an old alarm clock
 a top hat
 a foreign coin/note
 a ship in a bottle

Activity 7

This activity is based on telling stories about *extreme moments*. Get the class or the learners in groups to choose an intense moment they remember having lived through and then try to retell it.

Examples The most surprising person I've ever known.
 The best present I've ever had.
 The coldest/hottest I've ever been.

Activity 8

There are some activities which could be called *subversive* in that they get the class to tell stories with the roles of key characters exchanged (and therefore their actions, personalities, etc). For example, in *The Lizard and the Damsel* it is the lizard who has three daughters and he wants them to marry humans. In other classic stories, the characters who are normally good and kind are those who are unpleasant physically and in their personality. Or it is the Princess who has to perform great deeds to set the Prince free...

Guidelines for selecting and adapting stories

Selecting stories

A good selection of stories which arouse the interest of the learners is an essential ingredient to the success of storytelling as a whole. There is no real foundation in the idea that traditional stories do not interest children and there is a range of traditional European stories which are very closely linked to each other to choose from. There is a cultural basis which underlies these stories and the social and moral values which they communicate belong to a common tradition which overcomes the natural differences between neighbouring countries. It therefore seems logical to include a selection of these stories in the English language classroom. We believe that any traditional story is valid and can be attractive to learners, provided it is presented in the right way. Any teacher who decides to use stories should bear in mind certain factors such as the age, the language level, the cultural background, and the tastes and interests of the learners. The groups of stories included in this book can be used as general guidelines for the selecting of stories in general:

1 Children's stories

The main aim of stories in this category is to amuse the listener. There are both old and more recent stories belonging to this tradition and the example in this book, *The Tortoises' Picnic* where the characters are animals is an important sub group to this category. Other examples are *The Horse that Played Cricket*, *The two Elephants* and *The Dog that Talked*.

2 Traditional European tales

This category contains adaptations of the classic stories, such as *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*, written by the great storytellers (Perrault, Andersen, etc). Stories such as *Little Red Riding Hood*, *Pinnocchio*, *Jack and the Beanstalk* etc belong to this tradition. Most western countries have a version of such stories with slight variations one from another. However, within this category there are also other stories which are less well known and which are based more on the national traditions of each country. One such story is *The Three Enchanted Oranges* which is a traditional tale from Spain. These stories can be of enormous interest to learners because they can immediately identify with the style. The only disadvantage is that they have to be translated into English.

3 Modern stories

The concept of the *new fairy tale* refers to stories with modern characters and settings which often include an element of fantasy, which can be close to science fiction. These stories aim to break traditional stereotypes. Great Britain has a wide range of such stories, such as those by J. R. R. Tolkien (*The Hobbit*), Ursula Leguin (*A Wizard of Earthsea*) and Roald Dahl (*Tales of the Unexpected*). Young people of twelve years upwards often enjoy this type of story.

4 Fairy Stories

The Lizard and the Damsel is an example of this category of stories which contain traditional magical characters, such as witches, fairies, dragons, magicians, etc. We believe

that learners, particularly those between six and nine years old, can still enjoy these stories in English even if they first heard them in their own language.

5 The learner as storyteller

As already stated in the chapter dedicated to this topic, it is impossible to expect low level learners to invent and tell stories in a language they are only just starting to learn. The stimulus and help provided by the teacher are fundamental during these early stages. If the level of teacher intervention is adapted to suit the level of the learners, then the learners themselves can participate in storytelling techniques.

Other possible factors to bear in mind are as follows:

- ◆ Choose stories which relate to target areas in the syllabus (size, physical description, clothes, etc), to areas of language (vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar), and socio-cultural aspects (food, social norms, etc).
- ◆ Choose stories of interest not only to the class, but to yourself too as you are the person who is going to tell the story. In general, if you are interested in the story you are telling, you will tell it better.
- ◆ Choose activities which best support the story and not vice versa. The most important criterion is to choose an interesting story.
- ◆ Lastly, avoid overly long or dense stories if you intend to tell them to the class face to face. Limit the story to ten minutes' telling time, including the use of gestures or visuals.

Adapting stories

Once you have chosen a story, it is likely to need some adapting before it can be used in class. The first step is to adapt the level of the language to suit the class. Even if you are using a simplified version of an existing story, it may still need a final review to suit the level of your class. Try to make sure that the level of the language contained in the story is slightly higher than the average level of the class. Other factors to check when adapting stories are the time–space relationship, the characterisation, the tenses and the level of complexity of the ideas.

Apart from the preparation of visual aids, if appropriate to the story, it is also advisable to prepare the text itself in the following ways:

- ◆ Mark any aspects of pronunciation, intonation, voice and character changes on the final text so that you can bring the story to life when you actually read it.
- ◆ If the story is new to you, it is best to try and memorise it so that you can tell it without the text in front of you. The easiest way to do this, is to read a section of the story out loud, record it and then play it back several times. Then, tell the story with the text in front of you but try and reduce the number of times you look at it until you can tell the whole story without the text. The maps of the stories as described on p.20 can be helpful when trying to memorise the story. Pre-recorded versions of well-known stories can also be useful in providing a model.

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