

# Writing a story (teacher's notes)

## 1. Warm-up (Activity 1) 3 mins

Procedure: Draw a spidergram on the board with an empty central bubble.

Ask students what word can collocate with the other four. Elicit the word 'story'.

Answer: story.

Very briefly, ask for some examples of stories and if they like reading them (no details at this point).

Announce that in this lesson they are going to learn to write a story in the PET format.

## 2. Lead-in (Activity 2) 5 mins

Aims: to engage students in the context of the lesson.

Procedure: Display the photo of a girl in a costume of Mary Poppins (do not reveal who this is yet). Ask questions from the worksheet. Let the students discuss briefly in pairs and report back some ideas back to you. They need to understand that this is a Halloween costume impersonating Mary Poppins. Other answers can be different.

Announce that this girl's name is Sarah and they are going to read a story about her. They will need to read the text in order to check their predictions.

## 3. Read a model text (Activity 3) 5 mins

Aims: to provide the students with a model text and check their predictions while practicing reading for gist.

Procedure: Distribute a copy of a sample story about Sarah. Set a time-limit of 2 minutes for students to look through the text and check their predictions.

Let them discuss their findings in pairs and check as a whole class.

Tell the students that this is a model story corresponding the exam task.

Optional: ask a few more comprehension questions if necessary.

## 4. Analysing the text for useful language (Activity 4) 7 mins

Aims: to provide necessary language to complete the writing task.

Procedure: Students are presented with the original exam task for this sample story. Divide them into groups of 4. They need to analyse the story and answer the questions. To make the process faster, assign roles inside the group, e.g. two people look for 'clothes' vocabulary and get ready to explain it, the other two analyse grammar, then the first two look for the linkers, etc. When monitoring, provide students with microteaching if necessary. After 5 minutes of work, ask them to report back the answers and compare with the other group.

Answers:

1. Costume (clothes for a carnival, e.g. Halloween party), to be dressed as (to wear costumes of), high-heeled shoes (shoes which have high rather than flat heels), bracelet (a piece of jewelry which can be worn on a wrist).

2. was (past simple, irregular), set off (past simple, irregular), had made (past perfect), wanted (past simple regular), arrived (past simple regular), were x3 (past simple irregular), started (past simple regular), hurt (past simple irregular), was thinking (past continuous), heard (past simple irregular), goes (present simple), had won (past perfect).

3. as, because, when, so, when, but, so, when.

4. 109.

5. Yes.

## 5. Analysing the text for structure (Activity 5) 5-7 mins

**Aims:** to provide the students with a structure for the writing task.

**Procedure:** Students put the names of the story parts in the correct order and into the chart. It is best for them to work on their own first. Then they pair up, check their ideas and try to analyse the model text according to these parts. Check as a whole class afterwards. For fast finishers: offer them to find other features of the story, like direct speech, suspense, number of paragraphs, etc.

Part	Example
1. Title	The Costume
2. Exposition	Sarah was excited about her fantastic costume as she set off to the party. Sarah had made it herself, because she wanted to look like her favourite book character.
3. Action	When Sarah arrived, all her friends were already there. Most of them were dressed as monsters or animals, so they were amazed when they saw Sarah! But when she started to dance, her high-heeled shoes really hurt her feet, so she had to sit down. She was just thinking she should go home when she heard a voice, 'And the first prize for tonight's best costume goes to ... Sarah!'
4. Resolution	She had won a beautiful bracelet to wear!

## 6. Preparing to write (Activity 6) 5 mins

**Aims:** to generate ideas in order to promote written production.

**Procedure:** Students work on their own. They think of the ideas for their stories about Sarah. Let them use the sticky notes in the worksheet or they copybooks for putting down ideas and useful vocabulary. Monitor and be ready to help, but do not offer any ideas (it is their story, not yours).

## 7. Writing 10-15 mins

**Aims:** to practice writing a ~100-words story in the Cambridge Preliminary Exam format (Writing Task 3).

**Procedure:** distribute A4 sheets for writing. If you have an opportunity, print out the samples of official Cambridge answer sheets for the task (although it is optional). Set a time to writing the story. Announce that the process of writing should also include some time for proofreading. Let the students write their first draft for 7-10 minutes, then proofread and make corrections.

**For fast finishers:** proofread their writing and think of alternative ways to express the ideas, upgrading the language, etc.

## 8. Optional: peer correction 5 mins

**Aims:** to provide a focus on language accuracy.

**Procedure:** If you have time and all your students finished earlier, let them exchange their papers to proofread and correct their classmates' stories. Do it if your students are already familiar with the task requirements, descriptors and error correction codes.

## 9. Publishing (content feedback) 5-7 mins

**Aims:** to provide a communicative purpose for the writing task.

**Procedure:** ask students to pin their stories all over the classroom (apart from each other). Let them circulate around the classroom, read each other's stories and vote for the ones they liked most. They can do this till the end of the lesson. Leave 2-3 minutes for them to come back to their seats and comment about their opinions.

## 10. Language Feedback 0 min

**Aims:** to upgrade students' language accuracy and provide language relevant to the students' needs.

**Procedure:** collect the students' work at the end of the class to mark it and return it with comments in the next lesson.