

Using stories to teach the Simple Past

What the teachers say about this activity

Most learners love stories. Stories can be used to teach the simple past because they mostly narrate past events. This procedure is suitable for students who have some previous knowledge of verb tenses.

Stage 1: Prepare	Select an interesting story to be read in class. Make sure you read the story before coming to class and note down the simple past form of the verbs in the story.
Stage 2: Explain	In class, tell learners that you are about to read to them an interesting story and that they should pay attention. The idea of simply listening to a story serves as an appetizer to ensure that you captivate them. Tell them you will read it twice. For the first reading, all you require them to do is to listen. For the second reading, you will tell them what to do when the time comes. This is to ensure that the learners do not worry about the verbs as they listen to the story. It may be easier for them to identify the verbs after they have enjoyed the story for its own sake.
Stage 3: Main Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read the story to the learners in an interesting way. For example, you may use different voices for different characters in the story or you may dramatize a few actions from the story as you read.• After the first reading of the story, ask the learners a few simple questions: Did you enjoy the story? Who is your favourite character? What did you learn from the story? etc• As the questions are asked, allow one or two learners to respond.• Keep the question and answer session brief to ensure that you still have time to focus on the main topic of the day, which is the simple past of the verbs.• Remind the learners of what verbs are by giving a simple definition and a few examples.• Explain that most of the verbs in the story are in the simple past because the story is about something that happened in the past.• Tell them you are about to read the story a second time, and as they listen, they should write down in their notebooks the verbs that are in the simple past.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read the story slowly, repeating each sentence to ensure that the learners get the information. (This may not be necessary if the students have a copy of the story.)
Stage 4: Exchange and Check	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• After the reading, ask students to exchange their notebooks. This is to ensure quick feedback on their performance.• Write on the board the verbs you had already identified while you were preparing for the class.• Ask learners to tick (ü) the verbs identified in the notebooks given to them.• Illustrate on the board how to tick and how to write the scores.• Ask learners to return the notebooks to their owners.• Round up the class by praising the learners for doing well and telling them to be determined to work hard and do even better next time. <p>Variations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• For a large class, teacher may read the story the first time for the entire class to listen and then group the students to identify and write the verbs. This may only work, however, when the students have a copy of the story.• Another option is for the teacher to give learners an opportunity to give answers while reading the story the second time. As each sentence is read, a learner raises his hand and says the verb while the teacher writes it on the board. This will, however, not allow for assessment of individual learners' performance.

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