

# 22

## Preparing and practicing telling stories

### Goal

*The students acquire strategies and concrete tips for preparing and improving their oral storytelling abilities. The exercise (which should be repeated various times, of course) furthers their oral expression competence in the first language and contributes to the development of their lexical and syntactical repertoire.*

2<sup>nd</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> grade

20–45 minutes

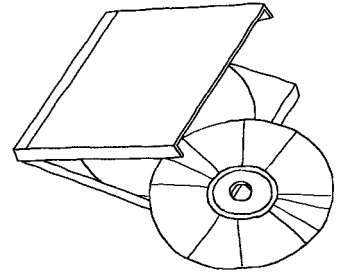


Procedure:

- The instructor tells the students a short story. S/he pays particular attention to implementing and emphasizing her storytelling tips (see next page). (Variant: the instructor first narrates the story in a dull, monotonous voice, and subsequently in a lively and vivid manner).
- The students listen attentively. The ensuing discussion centers around how to tell a story in a clear and interesting manner that captures the interest of the listeners. In doing so, the individual points should be practically put to the test as well.
- Collectively, the students arrange the points in form of a list “Tips for vivid story telling” (example: see below).
- For the practical application (maybe in a later lesson), the students imagine an episode or story which they would like to present in observation of the aforementioned tips. (Variant: in pairs; which allows for a dialog). See also #23 (Everyday stories), 24 (Telling personal stories) and 25 (Narrating creatively).
- It is also useful to write down key words for the main thread of the story as a short written preparation. Those who wish may write out the whole story and use this text as foundation for the subsequent practice.
- Questions and problems relating to language are discussed and clarified with the help of the instructor. The instructor may also provide good examples for varied sentence beginnings, etc.
- The students now begin to practice telling stories. For that purpose, they will select two tips each which they may want to keep especially in mind.
- If every child has practiced telling the story two to three times, s/he seeks out a partner to tell the story. The feedback received will contribute to further improve the presentation.
- The final presentation may take place before the entire class or within the stage group. The other students listen carefully and provide critical feedback, based on the adherence to the tips for telling stories.
- Aspects related to language should definitely also be part of the discussion: what was difficult in the first language; what (and how) would we need to learn additionally?

#### Hints:

- This exercise can be very challenging for more inhibited learners and those with weak competencies in the first language. The instructor or a student with well developed language skills should definitely offer assistance in such cases. However, these kinds of exercises are particularly instructive and helpful for weaker students; disappointing experiences must therefore be avoided with all means.
- To generate an additional motivation for storytelling, the class or group may decide to record the narrations and to make them available as CD or MP3 files. Moreover, if a common theme is selected (e.g. vacation adventures from the country of origin), it may result in a thematically coherent, attractive audio collection.
- See also #10 ("Preparing for a conversation"), which pursues similar goals in terms of communicative situations, as well as #25 (narrating creatively), #29 (practicing reading out loud) and #30 (preparing the presentation).



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### Tips for narrating

- Speak loudly and clearly so that everyone understands you!
- Make deliberate use of your voice: loud and soft, threatening, friendly, sad, happy...
- Use your facial expression and gestures: scowl, make a tired or happy face, use body language appropriate for the action.
- Always resume eye contact with your public; also pose a question to the audience once in a while.
- Describe the persons and animals in your story precisely and vividly. What do they look like, what kind of an impression do they make?
- Describe the places of the action in your story precisely and vividly. What can you see, hear, smell, what is the atmosphere like?

