

Learning and Teaching Resources for Learning English through Short Stories

The resources presented here are meant to be examples to show the types of activities/materials that can be designed and developed to help students to work on the various focuses of the module in the *Suggested Schemes of Work for the Elective Part of the Three-year Senior Secondary English Language Curriculum (Secondary 4-6) (2007)* (hereafter referred to as “SoWs”). Teachers are encouraged to adapt, modify and develop their own resources or make use of other relevant materials to suit the needs and interests of their students.

Part 1: Reading and appreciating short stories

Lessons 1-3: Understanding the key features of a story (please refer to SoWs pp.14-15)

Activity

Read one of the following stories. Then answer the questions that will help you to understand the key features of a story (e.g. character, setting, theme, opening/ending, title). Explain your views where appropriate.

A. “The Dance” by Tara Milliken

(available at: <http://www.merlynspen.org/>)

1. Based on your reading of the first two paragraphs, where do you think the story takes place?
2. At the beginning of the story, what does the narrator do? How about the people around her?
3. Is the narrator able to see clearly? Why/Why not?
4. Why does her “body start to shake” (paragraph 4)?
5. What happens to the narrator at the end?
6. Do you think she feels better or worse than when she was at the beginning? Give a reason.

Teachers’ notes

*“The Dance” is a fairly short story of around 300 words. However, depending on students’ needs and abilities, teachers might like to simplify the language before asking them to read it. Vocabulary activities and/or a glossary may also be provided.

*As students work through the questions, teachers might like to discuss interesting features of the story with them.

B. “A Long Walk Home” by Jason Bocarro

(available in Canfield, J., Hanson, M.C. and Kirberger, K. (1997). *Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul*. Deerfield Beach, Florida: Health Communications.)

1. What does Jason’s father ask him to do, after taking the car to the garage for inspection?

2. Why is Jason late? What reason does he give his father?
3. Why does his father choose to walk home after he discovers that Jason lied?
4. How does Jason feel about his father's decision to walk all the way home? Explain your answer.
5. What does Jason learn from this experience?

Teachers' notes

*"A Long Walk Home", a story of around 450 words, is set in Spain. Before asking students to read the story, teachers might like to draw their attention to the fact that the car is an important means of transportation in the country and that it is common practice that families take their cars regularly to servicing stations for maintenance.

*The language is generally accessible but if appropriate, teachers might like to provide students with additional help through vocabulary activities and/or a glossary.

*As students work through the questions, teachers might like to discuss interesting features of the story with them.

C. "The Fun They Had" by Isaac Asimov

(available at: <http://users.aber.ac.uk/dgc/funtheyhad.html>)

1. How do the children feel about the "real book" Tommy has found?
2. Describe the characters of Maggie and Tommy. How does Tommy feel towards Maggie?
3. Which part of paragraph 9 is meant to surprise readers?
4. How does Maggie feel about her education?
5. What contrast does the story make between education now and education in the future?
6. We see the events of the story through the eyes of the children. Why do you think Asimov chose to tell it this way?
7. What might surprise readers in the last paragraph?
8. What do you think the message of the story is?

Teachers' notes

*"The Fun They Had" is a sci-fi story of around 1150 words. Before they read it, students might be asked to share any sci-fi stories they have read, whether in English or Chinese. They might also be asked to consider what education will be like in 2157, which aspects they think might be better and which less fun.

* Vocabulary activities and/or a glossary may also be provided.

*As students work through the questions, teachers might like to discuss interesting features of the story with them.

You might like to read other short stories from books or websites listed on the next page for appreciation and to see how the key features of a story are treated differently by story writers.

Story Resources

The following is a short list of story resources for further reading:

Books:

1. Simplified readers which come in different levels:
 - Macmillan Readers
 - Oxford Bookworms Library
 - Penguin Longman Readers

2. Collection of short stories for intermediate or advanced learners:
 - Adkins, Alex and Shackleton, Mark (Eds.) (1989). *Recollections*. Surrey: Nelson.
 - Royston, Mike. (Ed.) (2000). *Tales in the Telling*. Oxford: Heinemann New Windmills.
 - Shackleton, Mark (Ed.) (1989). *Further Recollections*. Surrey: Nelson.

Websites:

1. Modern short stories:
 - www.merlynspen.org (a site with stories written by students)
 - www.rong-chang.com/qa2/ (contains 100 free one-page English stories for ESL learners)
 - www.short-funny-stories.com (for one interested in humorous stories)
 - www.short-stories.co.uk (a wide range of stories of different types and lengths)
 - www.shortstoryradio.com (a site where one can listen to short stories)
 - www.storiesmania.net/community/ (contains a wide range of stories and offers good examples of readers' comments and responses to stories)

2. Classic short stories:
 - www.bnl.com/shorts/
 - www.geocities.com/short_stories_page/
 - www.literaturepage.com/category/stories.html
 - www.readbookonline.net/

Part 2: Reading and writing specific aspects of a short story and planning the module story

Lesson 10: Adapting a story outline (please refer to SoWs pp.16-17)

A. Modifying a simple story outline

Activity

Read the following example to see how a simple story outline can be expanded and adapted.

Example: boy sees girl and falls in love

Jack Chan was standing as usual in the crowded bus that morning when all of a sudden he saw her. Her, the girl of his dreams. His life was never to be the same after that moment.

Teachers' notes

** Depending on students' needs and abilities, teachers might consider providing them with the following guiding questions:*

- Where did the boy see the girl? And when?*
- What did the girl look like? (Describe her appearance, her clothes, etc.)*
- Why was the boy so attracted to the girl? (Her friendly face, her warm personality, he saw her somewhere before, or what?)*
- What happened between Jack and the girl, which changed his life from that moment onwards? (e.g. something happened on the bus which brought them together)*

B. Using different narrative techniques to modify a simple story outline

There are different ways of narrating a story, e.g. in the form of a diary, as a past experience, as a telephone conversation, by any of the parties in the story (first person, third person). Before starting to write, the writer needs to decide on how or in what capacity he is going to narrate the story.

Example: boy sees girl and falls in love

- 1. Impersonal third person narration – Jack Chan was standing as usual in the crowded bus that morning when all of a sudden he saw her. Her, the girl of his dreams. His life was never to be the same after that moment.*
- 2. First person narration by the boy – I think I was wondering where I would go for lunch that day when the bus turned a corner rather sharply and made me look round. There I saw...*
- 3. First person narration by the girl – I was sitting quietly on the bus reading some notes when I suddenly felt someone was staring at me. I looked up to see who it was and saw a boy of about my age with his eyes fixed on me from down the bus. When he realised I had noticed him, he quickly looked down.*

(Further types could be a diary entry, a narration by an observant fellow-passenger, memories

of an old man about how his friend met his future wife and so on.)

Activity

Produce a simple story outline following the examples given above or in any capacity of a writer you can think of.

Lessons 11-12: Creating setting (please refer to SoWs pp.16-17)

- It is important for a writer to create a suitable setting as it helps to set the scene for the development of the story and make it appealing to the readers. Making use of the example of the simple story outline illustrated in the previous lesson (*e.g. boy sees girl and falls in love*), a number of settings can be created. In fact, the love story could happen in any part of the world, at any time of human history, and might even be set in another world or in another galaxy. Read the following example as an illustration of a historical setting.

Spring was in full blossom. The air was scented with flowers and small puffs of cloud floated along gently through the blue sky. Chung was leading his horse along the street when he looked up and saw just for a moment a face he could never forget.

- To add to the effect of your setting, you can make use of the five senses by thinking what you would *see*, *hear*, *smell* and possibly *touch* (which includes *feel on the skin*, *sensations of heat and cold*, etc.) and *taste* in a certain setting. These aspects are most typically represented by means of adjectives and adverbs as well as physical detail.

Activity 1

Read the following examples and discuss how the effect is created.

1. *It was hot. New York boiled. You could cook eggs on the sidewalk. I had to keep on brushing sweat out of my eyes. No amount of sweat could stop me from seeing what I saw next. A girl. The girl. My girl.*
2. *The smell of salt, sea and fish filled the air in the bustling waterfront market as hawkers called out to passers-by about how fresh and cheap their goods were. Mei Ling was sitting quietly on her sampan mending her father's net and watching the cat snooze, dreaming of victories over harbour rats daring to approach her boat.*

Activity 2

Create a setting for the simple story outline you have been working on since the last lesson. Focus on the description and detail.

Suggested answers:

Activity 1

1. The scene takes place on a hot day in the busy city of New York. The intensity of the heat is described in vivid sensory terms - the city “boiled” (touch) and one “could cook eggs on the sidewalk” (touch and taste). The sun is so strong that it blurs one’s vision, as the main character has to “keep on brushing sweat out of his eyes”. This hot, “sizzling” environment sets the scene for the emotional experience that the main character is about to encounter.
2. The text presents a vivid seaside picture. The bustling fish market, with which the scene opens, is brought to life through images associated with smell (that of “salt, sea and fish”) and sound (hawkers calling out to passers-by). A more relaxed, restful atmosphere is, however, created as our attention is drawn to another part of the setting, where we see the main character, Mei Ling, quietly mending her father’s net and her cat soundly asleep. Altogether, this is a soothing scene where people and nature seem to co-exist in harmony – Mei Ling, the cat, the sea and the market.

Lessons 13-14: Establishing a character (please refer to SoWs pp.16-17)

Activity 1

Read the following sample pieces of writing about character based on the simple story outline in Lesson 10: *boy sees girls and falls in love*. Discuss how they try to make the characters come alive. You might like to consider some of the following:

- description (of appearance)
 - the way in which the story is told (e.g. by the author, by one of the characters in the story)
 - context/setting
 - actions
 - feelings of others towards the character
1. *She was listening to music on a discman and her face had a dreamy expression. He wondered if she was listening to a favourite love song. Her hair was long and glossy. She was dressed in soft colours. Just then the passenger next to her wanted to leave and spoke to her. She turned and smiled sweetly and then moved to let the man pass.*
 2. *She reminded me of a bird, nervously looking around and constantly ready to fly off. She seemed unable to keep still. There was a lock of hair that kept on falling over her eyes and she had to flick it away every few minutes. Her voice was low. Although I could hear her friend as they chatted about school I could not catch her replies.*
 3. *He was in most ways a normal Hong Kong schoolboy, but when you looked again you saw that his eyes had a special sparkle of fun and his clothes were worn with a fashionable grace that broke no rules but made him smarter than most. He had a ball in a bag casually flung over his shoulder. He was not aware that I was watching him but he was carefully surveying the other passengers on the bus.*

Suggest other ways that can be used to make a character interesting.

Activity 2

Produce a short piece of your own, possibly based on the story outline you worked on or any others to establish character for your story.

Activity 3

Read one or more of your classmates' work and say what you learn about the character from what you have read and see if it agrees with the writer's intention. Add some brief comments at the bottom of the piece of writing you read.

Teachers' notes

**For Activity 2, teachers might like to refer students to the sample texts in Activity 1. If appropriate, they might like to provide further support by giving a few more examples to help students to create and establish characters, e.g. the character*

- giving his/her seat to an old lady on the bus*
- being very neatly dressed*
- having a lot of Hello Kitty accessories*
- having a shaven head*

Lessons 15-16: Writing a dialogue (please refer to SoWs pp.16-17)

Activity 1

Read the following dialogues and share your views on what sort of character and setting you feel is established. You may also discuss if they are necessary to a story and what sort of stories they would contribute most to.

1. *“I do not have time to waste. Respond to my question at once,” my boss demanded.*
“Well...”
“Well what?” he erupted. “Did you or did you not take the confidential file?”
“Sort of...I didn’t mean... it wasn’t...”
“Do you never finish sentences? You cannot half take something. Anyway my patience is over. I am calling the police,” he announced with determination. I could see he had already lost all interest in me and my story.
2. *“Now,” she smiled, “take a seat and let’s talk about it. Can I get you a cup of tea? You look awfully upset you know.”*
“It’s me son,” the old woman sobbed. “He’s gone. He ain’t at home.”
“Could he have gone on a trip? Here take a tissue. Yes, have a good cry. It will be good for you,” she said holding out a packet of tissues.
“No, he’s taken his clothes.”
3. *“I am leaving you.”*
“What?” he shrieked. “After all I have done for you? How can you go? Have you no sense of shame? I should have known you’d do this. For years I have put up with your stupid ideas knowing they’d get you into trouble one day.”
“I wish you could just let me go and say goodbye gently.”
“Never, you evil woman. My curses will follow you everywhere. How can you be so selfish? I need you to do the cooking and cleaning. I hope you die in misery in the streets. Never come back here. My door will be forever closed to you.”
“Goodbye then and I wish you some happiness,” and so saying she walked out of the house of torment.

Activity 2

Write a dialogue/speech of your own. You may base your work on the simple story outline you have been working on, any others you think of or one of the following:

- a teenage boy tries to make friends with a teenage girl he has just seen
- a couple talk to each other about their neighbour who recently moved in
- a boy rehearsing how to break bad news to a classmate

Activity 3

Read one or more of your classmates’ work and give some brief comments using the Peer Feedback Form on Writing a Dialogue/Speech.

Teachers’ notes

Teachers might like to remind students that effective dialogues/speeches **show instead of tell explicitly what the characters are doing/thinking and/or how they are feeling. For example, while “I’m mad at you” tells readers the character’s mood directly, “Come here*

this instant or get out of my sight forever!” shows the character’s anger through his speech. Teachers might also like to refer to the following websites for more ideas about writing dialogues:

- <http://jerz.setonhill.edu/writing/creative/shortstory/index.html#dialogue>

- <http://www.pammc.com/dialogue.htm>

Peer Feedback Form on Writing a Dialogue/Speech

Tick the appropriate boxes and add comments in the 'Comments' box at the end.

	Needs Improvement	Satisfactory	Well Done
Content			
• The dialogue/speech is clear	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• The dialogue/speech is relevant to the plot	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• The dialogue/speech is interesting	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• The dialogue/speech helps the reader to understand the character(s) better	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• The dialogue/speech helps to create the setting of the scene in the reader's mind	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organisation			
• The dialogue/speech is free of unnecessary details	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• The ideas are connected to each other	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Language & Style			
• The dialogue/speech is natural	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Grammar structures are used accurately	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Words and expressions are appropriately used	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments

Lessons 17-18: Identifying themes (please refer to SoWs pp.16-17)

Activity 1

Many short stories have a theme (or even a number of themes). These can often be expressed as abstract nouns, e.g. loyalty, friendship, family values, despair, sportsmanship, romantic love, etc. Read and identify themes in the following story summaries and share your views with your classmates. Try to use some abstract nouns to express the themes.

1. *A man believes his best friend has stolen a much valued possession. He won't listen to denials and ends the precious friendship. Years later he finds the missing item where it has been all these years. He is filled with regret.*
2. *A spider tries to build a web but fails, tries again but the wind breaks it, tries again and succeeds.*

Activity 2

Choose one of the following films and discuss with your classmates what themes they have identified and justify your views:

- *Lord of the Rings*
- *Titanic*

Activity 3

Try to produce some ideas for your module story to illustrate some themes or adapt your outline to make it appropriate for a particular theme of your choice.

Suggested answers:

Activity 1

1. trust, suspicion, forgiveness, regret
2. perseverance

Activity 2

1. good versus evil, ambition, loyalty, bravery, home, trust, loyalty, etc.
2. love, class, pride, bravery, nobility, etc.

Teachers' notes

**For Activity 3, teachers might like to ask students to adapt simple story outlines they have been working on in the previous activities before telling them to move on to their own module story outline.*

Lessons 21-22: Writing opening and closing sentences (please refer to SoWs pp.18-19)

When constructing a story, you do not have to follow a strict chronological order of the events. You can make use of some interesting ways to open and close stories, such as the ones below, to attract your readers:

- speech starting in the middle of the action
- setting the scene
- startling the reader
- a proverb or saying
- a formula
- starting with the end of the story and working backwards
- ending at the beginning, coming full circle
- a summing up/a comment on the action
- a question
- a surprise
- a death/sunset
- the achievement of a goal (marriage, killing the dragon, overcoming the fear of seeing the dentist, the protagonist succeeding in speaking to the girl he admires, etc.)

Activity 1

Read the examples of opening and closing below and try to classify them according to the categories on the list above.

Examples based on the “*boy meets girl and falls in love*” outline:

Opening sentences

1. *Do you believe in love at first sight?*
2. *They say she had made a wish on a wishing star the night before. I don't know if that's true or not, but I do know...*
3. *It was one of those late October days when Hong Kong was one of the loveliest cities on earth.*

Closing sentences

1. *Sadly, I never saw her again.*
2. *Reader, I married him and he is sitting in the next room now.*
3. *Well, the first move in the game has been made. The final outcome is yet unknown.*

Some other examples:

Opening sentences

1. *Should he turn and look back at the island where he had spent the last five years? No, he wouldn't! The future was before him.*
2. *Have you ever met an alien?*
3. *“Pride comes before a fall,” they say – and how true it is.*

Closing sentences

1. *And so you see, that's how I met my wife and became an actor.*
2. *Well, I suppose it's true – every cloud does have a silver lining.*
3. *And frankly I think she got exactly what she deserved.*

Activity 2

Bring a selection of stories to class (gathered from books and websites) with openings and closings written with different techniques. Share the story openings and closings with your classmates.

Activity 3

Write drafts for the opening and closing sentences for your module story. Make them interesting by applying the techniques you have learnt.

Teachers' notes

**Teachers might briefly discuss the categories with their students before asking them to do Activity 1.*

Lessons 23-26: Preparing for the module story (please refer to SoWs pp.18-19)

Activity 1

Before actually starting to write your module story, discuss with your classmates to get ideas or inspiration for your piece of work. In your discussion, ideas for generating the seed for the story should be suggested. Suggestions may include:

- retelling a legend/traditional story
- retelling a story to suit modern Hong Kong
- news briefs
- favourite television series (e.g. *Prison Break*, *24*, *X-files*)
- inspiration from a title (look at lists of books and films)
- personal experience
- a desire to create a particular style or mood
- a desire to teach a certain lesson
- an interest in a special theme (e.g. peer pressure, dating)

Activity 2

Having finished your first draft, you can ask your classmates to read and comment on it. In responding to their suggestions and queries, you may develop new ideas. You may also improve your draft by using better phrasing and extra techniques you will gain from the latter part of the course. You are supposed to make a number of drafts as the lessons move on over the following weeks.

Lessons 27-28: Writing story twists (please refer to SoWs pp.20-21)Activity 1

Read the following examples of stories with twists (sudden unexpected endings to stories) and see how they are used to surprise readers. Share your views with your classmates.

1. *Maupassant's The Necklace: a woman borrows a beautiful necklace for a party and loses it; she replaces it and leads a life of poverty for years paying for it, but eventually discovers it was a fake.*
2. *Saki's The Mouse: a shy gentleman suffers agonies in a train carriage when a mouse gets into his clothes and he cannot undress to remove it because a lady is sitting opposite seemingly staring at him. When they arrive at a station she asks him to help her get out as she is blind.*

Activity 2

Match the following story plots with the twists.

Story plots		Twists
1. A woman, wanting to show off at a party borrows a diamond necklace from a richer friend. She loses the necklace. She borrows money, buys a replacement and gives it to her friend. She and her husband have to give up all their pleasures and work extremely hard for many years to repay the loan.		a. He uncovers his face and sees it is his son whom he has been separated from.
2. A shy gentleman gets on a train. There is one lady in the carriage with him. He finds there is a mouse inside his clothes. The lady seems to be looking at him all the time. He is too embarrassed to take off his clothes to remove the mouse. He is close to a nervous breakdown when they arrive at a station.		b. The man she chooses has an identical twin brother. There is no way of telling them apart.
3. Egbert has had an argument with the difficult Lady Anne. He returns to the room to say he is sorry. She sits looking out of the window. He asks her to forgive him but she says nothing. He gets increasingly upset and begs her to be reasonable.		c. She asks for help as she is blind.
4. A young woman wants to buy a Christmas gift for her husband so she sells something to get the money. Her husband does the same. They exchange their Christmas presents.		d. The seller cuts it up into little pieces for him.
5. A woman sees a man leaving a neighbour's house late at night with a hammer. The neighbour is found murdered. The woman goes to court and is asked to point to the murderer.		e. Actually she had worn a fake made of glass.

6. An antique dealer disguises himself and travels round the countryside buying valuable pieces of furniture at giveaway prices pretending he wants them for other purposes. He finds a very beautiful piece, says the wood might be useful and buys it very cheaply. He goes to get his van.	f. Slowly he realises that he is one of them.
7. A policeman comes home and tells his wife he is leaving her. She kills him with a frozen leg of lamb she is about to cook for dinner. She puts it in the oven and calls the police. They come and investigate. She asks them to eat.	g. She has sold her hair and he has bought her combs; he has sold his watch and she has bought him a watch chain.
8. A man fights in a war and after a great effort kills a brave enemy.	h. As they do so, they wonder where the murder weapon is. They need to find it.
9. A doctor tries to help a boy who says he can see dead people who do not realise they are dead.	i. She has died of a heart attack.
10. A man and woman find they have a magic wish. They wish for money to give their son.	j. They get a large insurance payment after their son is killed in an accident.

Activity 3

Try to write good twists for one or more of the following situations:

1. A boy sees a girl from the back on a train. He is filled with love and deep feelings for her.
2. Someone is trying to sleep in a room said to have ghosts. A door begins to open slowly.
3. A student discovers a terrible crime in a school and goes to tell the principal.
4. A daughter arriving home late at night sees someone on the sofa and believes it is a serial killer. She fires her gun and hits the person. She goes over and looks - it is her father.
5. A man suffers a terrible life on a desert island for years.

Activity 4

Write the last paragraph of a story (can be your module story) using your best twist and make the story end with maximum force and surprise.

Teachers' notes

** Teachers might ask students if they know of any stories with good twists. If they do, a few minutes' exchange on that can be pursued after completing Activity 2.*

Suggested answers:

Activity 2

1. e 2. c 3. i 4. g 5. b 6. d 7. h 8. a 9. f 10. j

Activity 3

1. It isn't a girl; it is his ex-girlfriend; it is an alien
2. It is a cat; it is a friendly ghost; it is the host but the host is actually an evil spirit
3. The principal is the criminal; the student is a ghost and no can see her/him; it's a school project
4. The father was the serial killer; the father was already dead so the shot did not harm him; the story suddenly returns to the beginning- she is trapped in a time loop
5. He's in hell and it will never end; he could leave easily if he crossed the island; he has been put there by a television company; he escapes but gets carried off to a coast that leads only to a great desert; it's a psychological experiment held by the aliens that control Earth and use it for their experiments

Lessons 29-30: Developing symbols (please refer to SoWs pp.20-21)

Activity 1

To express ideas or states of mind and help create the style of writing, a writer will develop symbols by making use of the power of words and images. Examine the symbols below and try to work out what the writer is trying to convey through them:

- a rose fading
- a spider catching a fly
- the sun setting
- a crossword/jigsaw puzzle being completed
- a traffic light turning to green
- a polluted setting

Activity 2

Think of symbols you might use in relation to your own module story and produce a paragraph or two.

Teachers' notes

** Teachers should note that the level of intricacy of the symbols students develop depends on their standard and past learning experiences. Therefore, very simple and direct symbols to those carrying deep symbolic meanings are all appreciated. The focus here is to get students to understand the basic concept of symbolism and try to develop some symbols of their own.*

Suggested answers:

Activity 1

- a rose fading - love dies
- a spider catching a fly - someone is trapped in an unpleasant situation
- the sun setting - something ends
- a crossword/jigsaw puzzle being completed - something is brought to a successful conclusion
- a traffic light turning to green - something positive happens in someone's life
- a polluted setting - a story of corruption

Part 3: Telling, writing and performing stories

Lessons 31-36: Telling a story (please refer to SoWs pp.22-23)

Activity 1

Choose a story and prepare to share it with the class orally. You do not need to actually tell the whole story but summarise or describe it in brief. Consider the following examples as brief summaries or opening sentences:

1. *One of my favourite stories is Snow White. In it the wicked step-mother of a princess tries to destroy her so that she can be the most beautiful woman in the country...*
2. *The other day my neighbour told me a story...*
3. *There is a beautiful story in the Bible...*
4. *I recently found a really scary ghost story on the Internet...*
5. *There is an African legend...*
6. *Once Monkey was travelling along when...*

Activity 2

Consider the following questions which may help you to start thinking about how your story can be told so that it is interesting and attracts the audience.

1. How can the voice be made interesting?
2. What way of speaking fits the type of story that you have chosen to present?
3. Would it be better for you to hold the storybook, or speak from memory?
4. Would it be more effective for you to use exact words from the book or to chat to your audience as if you are friends exchanging news? Is it a good idea to address the audience (e.g. *Now this part is really frightening!*) or just to tell the story?
5. How can gesture be used?
6. How would you use eye contact?

Lessons 43-48: Performing a story (please refer to SoWs pp.22-23)

Activity

You need to perform your story in class. Discuss with your classmates the following questions on the various techniques which can help you to present your story effectively. You do not need to use all the techniques at one time but they can help you start thinking about how stories can be brought alive.

1. How can you use your voice to create effect?
2. Is it a good idea to address the audience (e.g. *Now this part is really frightening!*) or just to tell the story?
3. Should each character in the story speak differently?
4. Would the story be more interesting with two or more performers telling different parts of it?
5. Could one person tell the story while one or two others mime it?
6. Would costume help?
7. Could (hand/shadow) puppets be used?
8. Would music add to the atmosphere?
9. Are there any audio-visual aids that would add to the story?
10. Can lighting be used to enhance the story telling experience?
11. Are there any props that would make the story come alive (e.g. *something to pass round, a magic necklace to suddenly show*)?

Teachers' notes

** Teachers should remind students if they decide to use any props, costumes, slides etc. Students will provide their own and check with the teacher beforehand that the necessary equipment is available.*

** Teachers may suggest that students can take different approaches like a narrator telling the main story accompanied with mime or acting, puppets, one student reading a story very expressively from a book, a story with music or powerpoint to add atmosphere, a student telling a story from memory with gesture and comments to the audience, etc.*