

## Business Spotlight – Short Story

### Trainer guidelines

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#### Forward

Research shows that repeated reading of the same text can really help students assimilate language. The trick is to get them to do it without boring them rigid. The strategy described below gets your students to read the same text up to three times and to actively use the language themselves without leaving them comatose.

#### Using the short story work sheets

- Stage 1 - 5 mins: Preview and warm-up discussion.
- Stage 2 - 5 mins: Pre-teach vocabulary.
- Stage 3 - 30 mins: Read story and complete story matrix. Encourage students to fill-up the last box - *Key phrases / vocabulary* - as they will need this for stage 6. Compare results with partner (see also additional notes below).
- Stage 4 – 10 mins: Listen to the complete story (either a recording or live reading by the trainer) and read the text at the same time.
- Stage 5 – 10 mins: Timed reading: on the word ‘Go!’ students try to read each block of ca. 200 words in a minute, raising their hands when they have finished. At the end of each minute, find out how far each student has got and allow them to finish the block before starting the next section. Encourage your students to build up their reading speed to ca. 200 wpm if possible. I deliberately push the students quite hard at this point.
- Stage 6- 15 mins: Retell the story to a partner using only the story matrix.
- Stage 7 – 15 mins +: Post-reading activities: discussion questions based on the story themes.

#### Notes to stage 3:

After students have read through the story, they should complete the story matrix, creating a summary for future use.

The first four fields ascertain setting, characters and central issue. Following these are three fields for noting the major events and the result of these events. To do this, students need to analyse cause and effect, and be able to reduce the plot to its most elemental form (e.g. *Event1: Boy meets girl -> Result: They fall in love*). This is followed by a field for *End result*, which the three key events lead to (*End result: They get married, ~~get a mortgage and spend the rest of their lives paying it back to the bank and live happily ever after~~*).

The final field on the matrix requires key phrases and vocabulary. The student adds the content words for each part of the story<sup>1</sup>. ‘Chunking’ is important here, as this enables the student to deal with longer phrases and standard collocations. The selection of vocabulary listed should be sufficient to re-tell the story.

Once students have completed their matrix, they compare it with another student(s). There will inevitably be differences in what each decides is a key event, and the vocabulary selected. This can lead to an interesting discussion on different interpretations of the story.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> This can also be done as a whole class activity with the trainer writing the collocations on the flip chart / board that the students propose.

<sup>2</sup> Guidelines developed with the help of Judith Ellis, ELTA Rhein.