

8

This unit looks at

ideas and activities on how to

- prepare to tell a story for the first time
- prepare to read a story, using pictures and familiar language
- retell stories in different ways
- get children to retell a story as a class.

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Introduction

Children love stories. They

- are always eager to listen to stories
- know how stories work
- want to understand what is happening
- can enjoy hearing stories in English when they start English lessons
- enjoy looking at story books by themselves
- can reread the stories they like when they can read in English themselves.

REMEMBER

Young learners acquire language unconsciously. The activities you do in class should help this kind of acquisition. Stories are the most valuable resource you have. They offer children a world of supported meaning that they can relate to. Later on you can use stories to help children practise listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

The value of stories

- Read the paragraphs below. From each paragraph, decide which are the four most important reasons for using stories in your classes.

The educational value of stories

Stories

- help children relate new things to what they know already
- help children to look at real life from different viewpoints and imagine what it feels like to be someone else
- can introduce the child to other cultures and attitudes
- let children share their experiences with the group – everyone listens and feels sad or happy
- can link to other subjects the child is learning about in school
- help children develop their thinking skills
- are interesting and enjoyable, and can be fun.

Stories for language teaching

Stories

- can be told with pictures and **gestures** to help children understand
- help children enjoy learning English
- introduce new language in **context**
- help children **revise** language they are familiar with
- help children become **aware** of the structures of the language
- help children **acquire intonation** and pronunciation by listening
- can help bring English into other subjects
- can lead on to lots of activities using listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

Stories are first of all for enjoyment. Children need to understand something about the story (not every word, but the main gist or story line) if they are going to enjoy it. Pictures and gestures help a lot, but your intonation and the way you tell it or read it are very important.

REMEMBER

There is a difference between telling and reading a story. One of the most important differences is your intonation pattern.

- 1 When you tell a story you
 - speak **spontaneously**
 - use natural **intonation** to help make the story seem real
 - are looking at the children and you can see if they understand
 - can use your face and body to make **gestures**
 - practise first and have some support, e.g. notes on cards
 - don't need to worry if you make mistakes (children are unlikely to notice).
- 2 When you read a story you can
 - repeat and rephrase in a natural way
 - stop and talk to the children about what is happening
 - stop and show pictures and talk about them
 - sometimes talk to individuals about an aspect of the story.

8A

Telling a story after preparation

TEACHER: I'm going to tell you a story about two animals. Look.

The animals are ...

(The teacher puts up the two pictures on the blackboard and points as she speaks.)

TEACHER AND CHILDREN: *(together)*

A bird and ...

TEACHER: ... And an elephant.

CHILDREN: *(All shout)* A fox!

TEACHER: No ... It's an elephant!

CHILDREN: ... a fox!

TEACHER: It's a fox. I'm going to tell you a story about a bird and a fox.

(As the teacher tells the story, she points to the cards.)

TEACHER: A fox saw a bird eating some cheese.

(The teacher shows the children the pretend piece of cheese.)

And the fox said, 'Hey you, give me your cheese. I like cheese and I'm really hungry.'

The bird said, 'No, you can't have my cheese.'

And the fox said, 'Can you fly, bird?'

And the bird said 'Yes I can fly.'

'So fly down here to me and give me your cheese.'

And the bird said, 'Look I can fly but you can't have my cheese.'

And the fox said, 'Can you sing, bird?'

And the bird said, 'Yes, I can sing. Listen to my song'

And the bird ...

(Here the teacher gestures with her hand to show that the bird opens his mouth and that cheese falls to the ground.)

... and says 'Oh no, my cheese!'

And the fox said, 'Ha, ha, ha ...

Now I've got your cheese. It's my favourite ... mmmm.'

8.1 Telling a new story

- ☞ How do you prepare yourself to tell children a story for the first time? List three things you might do so that you tell it well.
 - Look back at the classroom extracts 4B, 4C, and 4D (pages 47 and 48). The teacher was revising words for animals the children knew and introducing some new words to her class, especially for this story.
- 🎧 — Now listen to the teacher in 8A telling the story.
 - Notice how she catches the pupils' attention by saying the fox was an elephant!
 - The teacher tells this story using picture flashcards and her own actions. The language is basic and clear. As you listen, imagine you are telling it.
 - What actions or **gestures** would you use?
 - Would you use different voices for the fox and the bird?



LANGUAGE FOCUS 8.1

Intonation and actions

- 1 Listen to the CD again, and this time try to tell the story along with the teacher, with the same intonation and stress. Try this a couple of times.
- 2 Listen again, doing the same thing, but this time doing the actions that you think would help children's enjoyment of the story.
- 3 Think of a class you know. What changes might you make to this story for them?

RECORD Record yourself telling the same story, as if for your own class.

Story questions and prompts

a *Who...?* questions

- Practise asking these questions until you can say them fast. Can you imagine the answers you might get? The children can say simply *The bird* or *The fox*.

	was eating the cheese (at the beginning of the story)?
	saw the bird eating the cheese?
	wanted the cheese?
Who	asked the bird some questions?
	sang a beautiful song?
	dropped the cheese?
	ate the cheese in the end?

b *What...?* questions

Add some more short answers to the table, then practise all six questions, giving possible answers.

	was the bird eating?	He asked him to sing a song.
	was the fox thinking?	...
What	did the fox ask first?	...
	did he do then?	He flew away to another wood.
	do you think they both did next?	...
	do you think will happen next?	...

c *How/Why do you think...?* questions

Read the tables. Think what the answers would be and then practise asking and answering these questions.

Why do you think he asked the bird to sing?	because he liked listening to birds singing?	
	to make him open his mouth wide?	
	to make him drop the cheese?	
How do you think	the bird felt, at first?	happy? pleased? sad?
	he felt at the end?	hungry? jealous?
	the fox felt, at first?	proud? cross? angry?
	at the end?	a bit silly? stupid?

RECORD Choose some questions from each table to record on your cassette. Grade them before you record – i.e. start with the ones that will be easiest for your children, and end with the most difficult.

Write down the simplest answers that children might give to each question; practise rephrasing these answers, then building on them.

Telling and performing a story with very young learners

Using body language, gestures, and actions is very important to all learners, but especially to very young learners. When children act and perform a story they quickly become familiar with the language you use. This is how one teacher told a story with her class.

The children already know Spot the dog from storybooks (see Resources, page 142).

The children stand in a circle and copy the teacher while she is telling the story.

The teacher says	The teacher and children
<i>Spot is looking for baby animals</i>	— start looking all around the classroom
<i>miaou, miaou</i>	— all make a cat sound
<i>Who's that?</i>	— ask the question with a hand gesture
<i>a cat...</i>	— pretend to be a cat
<i>no baby animals here</i>	— wave their finger to say 'no' with a sad face

The teacher goes on telling the story, asking children to introduce other animals.

At the end of the story Spot finds some baby animals.

The teacher says	The teacher and children
<i>Oh look, piglets – hurray!!</i>	— point and jump up and down
<i>Spot is very happy now.</i>	— clap their hands

By telling the story this way the teacher is involving the children and helping them connect the language they are hearing with what they are doing – and there is no need for pictures. (Many thanks to Silvana Rampone for this story idea.)

TEACHING TIPS

Telling a story

- ✓ Some teachers arrange their class differently for story time, like the teacher in 2G (page 25) who arranged her class to learn a new song.



- ✓ When you tell a new story to children who are just beginning to learn English you can
 - tell the bare story line in English using lots of dialogue, actions, gestures, and sound effects for animals and machines
 - let the children ask you questions in their mother tongue and show them again with actions, gestures, and pictures what you mean
 - let the children's questions show you what you have to make clearer.
- ✓ When telling a story for the first time to any group of children
 - use actions, gestures, pictures or other support material
 - let the children **predict** what they think will happen next (it doesn't matter if they predict in their mother tongue – accept their contribution and **recast** it in English.)
 - change, leave out bits, and add to a story to make it more suitable for your class
 - practise repeating phrases and adding questions for the children
 - practise using your voice for characters – speak loudly, softly, slowly, high-pitch or low-pitch – according to the character
 - involve the children as much as possible
 - speak to them and look at them when you are telling the story.

If, after all this, there is something important that children do not understand, go over it again and explain the problem in their mother tongue and then say it again in English.

8.2 Reading a story to very young learners

When you tell a story to children you can help them understand by

- using a book with pictures
- showing them real things that are talked about in the story
- miming what happens in the story to help children understand meaning
- make the sounds for things in the story, for example, *animals, trains*
- repeating **key words and phrases**
- asking and answering questions about the story.

Listening to a story and looking at the pictures

Now you are going to hear a teacher, Susan, with very young learners (see also IL, page 18).

They are reading a story together called *Elmer* (see Resources, page 142). Elmer is different from all the other elephants because he is brightly coloured – all the colours of the rainbow. Here is the text that Susan is reading from.

As he walked in the jungle Elmer met all the animals. They always said 'Good morning Elmer.'

Each time Elmer smiled and said: 'Good morning.'

After a long walk, Elmer found what he was looking for – a large bush – a large bush covered with berries.

Elmer caught hold of the bush and shook it and shook it so that the berries fell on the ground.

(From *Elmer* by David McKee)

8B

Listening to a story and looking at pictures

TEACHER: And Elmer, as he walked in the jungle, Elmer met all the animals and they always said, 'Good morning, Elmer.'

And each time Elmer smiled and said ...

What did Elmer say? Sh ... sh ... sh

He said ... he said 'Good morning.'

What did Elmer say?

ALL THE CHILDREN: Good morning.

TEACHER: After a long walk, Elmer found what he was looking for. A very big bush.

A large bush covered with elephant berries.

What colour are elephant berries?

What colour?

Grey. They're grey. Elephant coloured berries. Grey berries.

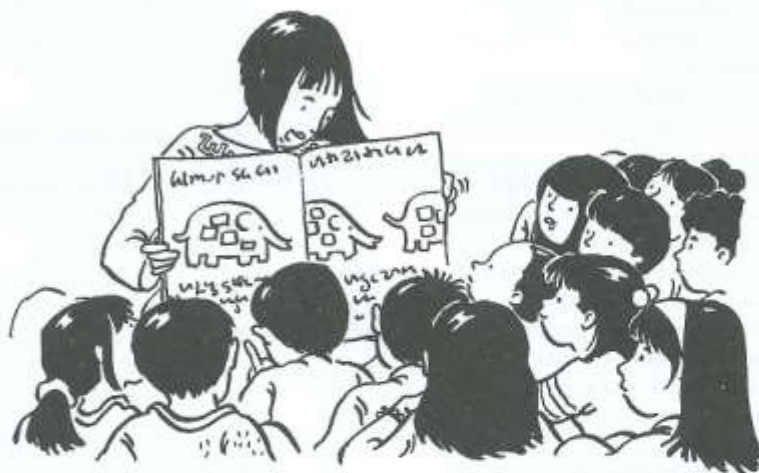
See Elmer. He caught hold of the bush and shook it and shook it.

ONE CHILD REPEATS: Shook it.

TEACHER: And all the berries fell on the ground. See him he's shaking, shaking the bush. See them ... see them ... see all the berries.

ONE CHILD REPEATS: See them.

Susan with six year olds.



Listen to 8B and notice the difference between the written story and the way the teacher tells it.

These very young children naturally

- repeat the phrases Susan uses
- talk a lot in their mother tongue about what they can see in the pictures.

LANGUAGE FOCUS 8.2a

Story questions and prompts

- 1 How many questions and prompts does this teacher use in 8B? Can you find five or six?
- 2 Read the table. Make five sensible questions, and suggest one obviously silly answer and one correct answer for each one.

RECORD Record these on your cassette, for example,
— *What did Elmer shake? His head? (No!) The bush? (Yes!)*

Who did	Elmer	meet in the jungle?
What did	he	always say to them?
What might		find, after his long walk?
		shake?
		do next, do you think?

Moving away from the text

Later in 8C the teacher uses the children's familiarity with colours to involve them more in the text. At this point, Elmer has been rolling in the berries hoping that the berry juice will make him grey. The teacher asks questions that fit the context of the story.

— *He's covered himself in berry juice. Grey. Will he be yellow? Will he be purple? Will he be grey?*

As the teacher asks about all the colours the children know, she increases the children's interest in the story.

Talking about what is happening

In children's stories there is often repetition of the same situation. Children enjoy repeating the same kind of language that was used in other parts of the story.

- 1 Read the extract 8C and put an arrow (→) by each line where these five things happen:
- The teacher uses a checking question to make sure the children understand what is happening.
 - The children repeat things the teacher has said.
 - The teacher reminds children of the language they already know.
 - The teacher recasts in English what the children comment on either in English or in their mother tongue.
 - The teacher repeats the chunks of language she wants the children to become familiar with.
- 2 Listen twice to 8C. The second time say the teacher's part along with the teacher.
- At the end of this story the children talk to their teacher about the colours they can see and the colours they like.

8 C

Talking about what is happening

TEACHER: On the way, he passed the other animals again. See, he's going by ...

Each one said. Listen to what they said, 'Good morning elephant.'

What did they say?

CHILDREN: Good morning, elephant.

TEACHER: Did they know it was Elmer?

Do they know Elmer?

CHILDREN: No.

TEACHER: Elmer smiled and said, 'Good morning.'

What did he say?

CHILDREN: Good morning.

TEACHER: And he was pleased that he wasn't recognized. They didn't recognize him.

Look at all the elephants ...

(*The children look at the pictures and talk in their mother tongue.*)

TEACHER: When Elmer rejoined all the elephants ...

(*One child interrupts and says in his mother tongue that all the elephants together look like an army and another child says they are not smiling.*)

TEACHER: Yes it looks like an army of elephants, doesn't it? All grey elephants. Yes. And not smiling ...

CHILD: Purple ... purple.

TEACHER: Well nearly grey. They were all standing quietly. See them standing quietly. You know 'be quiet' ...

Did they see him?

CHILDREN: No.

TEACHER: Did he see him?

CHILDREN: No.

TEACHER: Are they smiling? Are they happy? Not happy. What are they? They are very quiet.

CHILD: Very, very quiet.

TEACHER: And are they happy?

CHILDREN: No.

TEACHER: Not smiling. Not happy.

Susan with six year olds.

LANGUAGE FOCUS 8.2b

Telling and talking

- Read 8C again.
Underline under all the parts the teacher is actually reading from the book, telling the story.
- 🎧 Check by listening again to the CD.
Then study the parts where she talks about the book. She uses instructions questions for different purposes. Listen and repeat all these, talking along with the teacher, for example, *see, he's going to...*

🎧 Pronunciation point

Sounds /t/, /d/, and /ɪd/

- Say these eight words and group them according to the pronunciation of their *-ed* endings. Do they end in /t/ or /d/ or /ɪd/?

<i>passed</i>	<i>pleased</i>	<i>recognized</i>	<i>rejoined</i>
<i>smiled</i>	<i>walked</i>	<i>covered</i>	<i>decorated</i>

Extension ideas

- At the end of the story, the elephants celebrate 'Elmer's Day'.
- Make an Elmer's Day poster.
 - Give out outline drawings of elephants and let the children colour them in.
 - Get the children to choose labels of phrases from the book as reading cards – they can add them to the poster to remind them of what was said, e.g.
He shouted BOOO!
On one day a year they decorate themselves and parade.

TEACHING TIPS

Reading a story

- ✓ Read the story several times before you use it in class.
- ✓ Practise reading and telling the story aloud.
- ✓ Record yourself, then play it back, and listen to it.
- ✓ Prepare
 - the questions you are going to ask the children – about the pictures and about the story
 - how to rephrase phrases in the story
 - the comments you could make about the pictures.
- ✓ Keep all the stories you read in your reading corner and encourage children to look at them again.
- ✓ When children can read, set them reading tasks, e.g.
How many times did Elmer say 'Good morning?' or Put this set of reading cards in the right order.

8.3 Ways to retell a story

When children have heard a story once, you can tell it again. Each time you retell a story, children

- will become more familiar with the language of the story
- will be able to participate more
- will be able to participate in different ways.

When the children are listening, you can

- stop telling the story and see if the children can remember what happens next
- put up some pictures of scenes from the story. Ask children to point to the picture of what or who you are telling them about.
- ask the class to stand up and mime all the actions as they happen
- divide the class up so that each group can pretend to be one of the main characters. Each group becomes that character and only mimes the actions he/she does.
- act out the story as you tell it, and later get some children to take parts, come out to the front, and act with you
- let the children sit in groups. Give a set of pictures from the story to each group. As you tell the story ask the groups to put the pictures into the right sequence.
- ask the children to listen carefully, then make some deliberate mistakes/changes, e.g. *One day a fox saw a bird eating a hamburger.*
- use **Cuisenaire rods** for the characters and places in the story and ask the children to say what is happening.



If the children can read, you can

- give out cards with the key words and phrases from the story written on them. Ask each child to hold up their word when they hear it

wolf

house made of straw

house made of brick

little pig

house made of wood

huff and puff



— write out the story in sentences on cards and ask groups of children to put them in the right sequence after you have told the story again.

LANGUAGE FOCUS 8.3

Instructions when retelling a story

- Read the ideas in this section again. Choose four different ways you might retell a story.

RECORD Write and record four different sets of instructions, with examples, telling the children what to do while you are telling the story in this way.

I'm going to read you the same story again, only this time I want you to stand up and mime all the actions as you hear me read about them. So you listen. Then mime what they do, OK? Like this – if I read 'her mother gave her the basket' you do – what?

8.4 Retelling a story as a class

If you use stories frequently, the children will know a lot of stories. Children enjoy retelling a story with you.

Retelling from memory

- 🎧 Listen to the teacher in 8D getting the children to retell the story of *The Three Little Pigs*. The children remember the story – but not some of the language.

Notice how the teacher accepts what they say, using positive words like 'OK', and does not correct the structures because the children are getting the meaning across very well.

- She often rephrases and recasts what they are trying to say, adding the right words.
- She does not interfere – but helps quickly by giving them the language they need.
- She builds on their responses, adding detail.

8 D**Retelling *The Three Little Pigs***

TEACHER: OK, so what is the first thing that happens in *The Three Little Pigs*, John?

JOHN: Once a pig made a house and a fox ... and the fox ... blew it ...

TEACHER: Blew it ... blew it down. OK, that's right. OK, the first pig made his house with? What did he build it with? What did he build that house with?

JOHN: Grass.

TEACHER: Yeah. Grass. Straw. He built it out of grass. That's right. And who blew it down?

JOHN: A fox ...

TEACHER: A fox? A wolf.

CHILDREN: Yes. Yes. A wolf.

TEACHER: That's right and the second pig ...

CHILD: The little pig going to his brother's house.

TEACHER: And what did that little pig make his house out of?

CHILD: A wooden house.

TEACHER: OK, a house made out of?

CHILDREN: Wood.

TEACHER: That's right. Yes. Wood. Sticks. Branches from the tree. He built his house out of sticks.

Candace with ten to eleven year olds (re-recorded by Alan).

8 E**Preparing for a new story**

TEACHER: Now this story is called 'The Real Story of the Three Little Pigs.' And the wolf is telling the story. So, what do you think the wolf is going to say?

CHILD: Eat the three little pigs.

TEACHER: So he's going to say, 'Yes I'm very bad. I ate the three little pigs.' So what else do you think he's going to say?

CHILD: He's going to say ... I went to the pig's house and ... and say please ... open the door and not open and ...

TEACHER: So he's going to say 'I said please open the door and they said no they were so rude. Right. They were so rude.' OK and ... Yes, Narn?

NARN: He's changing his clothes and saying 'I'm your mum.'

(The children all know the story of Little Red Riding Hood and they all laugh.)

TEACHER: So, 'I'm your mum'. That sounds like *Little Red Riding Hood*.

Katherine with ten to eleven year olds (re-recorded by Alan).

Retelling from a different point of view

The children in 8D were retelling the story because they are going to read another story in 8E. This is also about the three little pigs – but it is the wolf's story. The teacher

- revises the original story
- asks the children to predict what they think the wolf will say when he tells his version of the story.



Listen to 8E and notice

- how the teacher listens as the children answer – and then rephrases and recasts what they say
- how the children can connect different stories and be very inventive.

As we can see in 8E, children are able to use the stories they know to express more than just the story.

- The language in stories is supported by context.
- This helps children understand.
- When they understand they become more interested and more confident.
- And confidence helps them to take chances with language and try to communicate.

LANGUAGE FOCUS 8.4**Stress on key words**

- Read the teacher's part of 8E and mark the words you think are the **key words**, the words that must be **stressed**. You should find around 13 or 14.



Then listen to the CD and check to see if those words are stressed. There may be some other words stressed too. Think about why these words are stressed.

Finally repeat the teacher's part, then choose one section (about five lines) to record on your cassette.

TEACHING TIPS**Retelling stories**

- ✓ Keep all pictures with the story in a story pack.
 - Take these out before you retell the story.
 - The pictures will help children remember the English words.
- ✓ Encourage the children to do the telling.
- ✓ Do not interrupt while they are trying to communicate.

Story time

NOTE

In this unit, Story Time will replace Topic Talk and Further Ideas.

Think of two stories suitable for a class you teach, one you can tell, and one you can read. Then follow these steps, to prepare each story for your class.

- 1 Plan how you would introduce the class to each story, and how you would prepare for it.
 - 2 Plan what pictures or other visual aids you would use, and how and when you would use them. What might you say about each picture to the children? Suggest two things for each picture.
 - 3 Write a list of questions you might ask for each page or part of the story (some easy ones and some more open-ended ones.) For each question, think of two possible answers that children may give.
 - 4 Plan two ways of retelling each story, asking children to do something different each time, to make it fun for them. Work out what instructions you would need to give.
- RECORD 5 Find a person/some people you can tell your story to, as a rehearsal for your lesson. Record yourself telling the story to this person, talking about it and asking questions. Then record yourself retelling it to the same people in a different way.

Read Chapter 1 from Wright, Andrew. 1995. *Storytelling with Children*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.