

A story-based approach to video



My Storytelling Membership

The ideas and stories that I shared in my session come from my **Storytelling Membership for Teachers**.

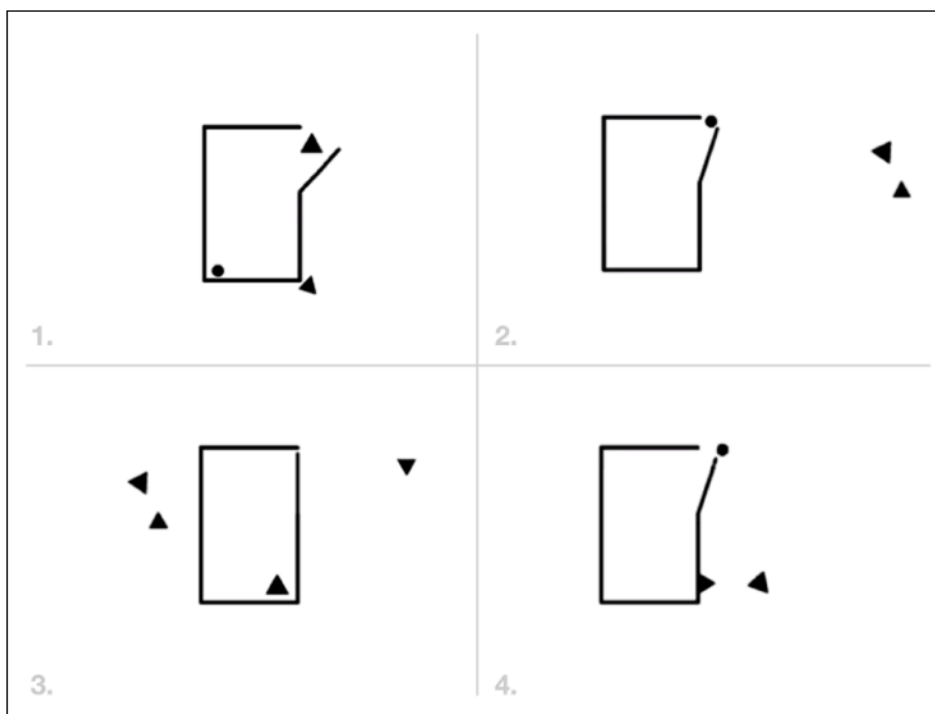
You can find out more here: <https://jamiekeddie.podia.com/storytelling-membership>

Although subscription is currently closed, I will be opening it up again soon to my Sunday Post subscribers.



1. Angry triangles

In this activity, you will replicate a well-known psychology experiment from 1944. In the original experiment, subjects watched a short animation and then wrote a text to put the narrative into their own words.



You can access the animation on YouTube:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sx7IBzHH7c8>

An Experimental Study of Apparent Behaviour
Fritz Heider & Marianne Simmel
The American Journal of Psychology
Vol. 57, No. 2 (April, 1944) pages 243 - 259

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**JAMIE
KEDDIE**

Activity outline

1. Ask your students if they are aware of any well-known psychology experiments. If so, ask them to describe them to you.
2. Tell your students that today, they are going to take part in a well-known psychology experiment from 1944. Ask them how they feel about that.
3. Tell them that they are going to see a short animation.

Note: Make sure that your students understand that this animation comes from the days before YouTube. Make sure that they don't get too excited at this point.

4. Tell students that they are going to watch the animation twice. Play the entire video twice. Ask students if they enjoyed it.

Note: In the original experiment, subjects also watched the animation twice.

5. Now give students the task:

"Write down what happened in the video."

Note: This is the exact instruction that subjects were given in the original experiment. You can give students a time limit to write their texts: 5 minutes, for example.

6. Once students have finished writing, put them into pairs. Ask them to compare their texts and ask them to make a note of the following:

- * What do your stories have in common? (Find three things)
- * In what ways are your stories different (Find three things)

7. Take feedback and find out if, like the original subjects, your students decided to anthropomorphise the triangles and the circle.

Note: The experimenters found that almost all of their subjects agreed that:

- * The rectangle is seen as a house.
- * The big triangle is seen as an aggressive or violent individual.
- * The two triangles have a fight
- * The smaller triangle and the circle belong together in some way or another.

8. Ask students to suggest what we can learn from this experiment.

Some more notes

Dictionaries: For language learners, you could provide some useful words and phrases (*have an argument; have a fight; aggressive; to get stuck in the house*, etc.) The problem with this, however, is that you will be putting ideas in your students' heads and you don't want to do that. I suggest that you provide students with bilingual dictionaries to carry out the task.

Video excerpt: Although the video is quite short, I feel that the narrative gets quite complex in the second half. The experimenters recognised the conflict between the two triangles as being the "central event". That means that in the classroom, you could simplify things by just showing students the first 30 seconds of the video (just after the fight ends.).

2. Frog fail



Video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ohcDPgd1V5Y>

An alternative way to do things – the teacher is the storyteller:

A hungry frog
Hiding in a pond
His eyes just above the surface of the water
Above the pond
Sitting on the end of a twig
A tasty-looking dragonfly [1, 2]

As quickly as he can
Predator leaps at prey
He opens his mouth
He sticks out his tongue
He stretches out his arms

But oh, what terrible timing:
At that exact moment
The dragonfly remembers something important that she has to do
And she flies away [3]

The frog falls back to the pond
And lands in the water with a splash
And he thinks to himself:
"I'm glad that no one saw that. It would have been quite embarrassing."

Unfortunately for the frog, there is something that he doesn't know. [4]



- [1] Ask students to draw the scene
- [2] Ask students to guess what happens next
- [3] Ask students to guess what she has to do and where she goes
- [4] Invite students to ask questions in an attempt to work out what the frog doesn't know. The answer = the incident was filmed and put on YouTube

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3. Audrey Hepburn chocolate advert



1. Tell students that they are going to hear a story. Play the following advertisement so that students hear the audio but don't see the visuals. (Don't tell them that it is an advertisement at this stage.)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z6HKWuZPrdU>

2. Ask students the following:

- * Do you know the piece of music? (*Moon River* written by Henry Mancini and Johnny Mercer)
- * Who is the singer? (Audrey Hepburn)
- * Where and when do you think this story is set? (You can hear seagulls, beeping horns, and Italian voices. Those may provide clues)

3. Tell students that the story is set in *the market square of a chic Italian seaside town*. Tell them that it involves the following:

- * *An overturned fruit stall*
- * *An elegant and attractive young woman on a bus*
- * *The bus driver's hat*
- * *A handsome man in a convertible sports car*

Ask students to guess what happens in the story and listen to their ideas.

Note: All language *in italics* is taken from the main text. Teach unknown words accordingly.

4. Write the following phrases on the board and ask students to copy them into their note books:

- * *a traffic jam*
- * *she is getting restless*
- * *pulls up beside the bus*
- * *she takes the hat off his head*
- * *gestures for her to join him*
- * *sits back and enjoys the breeze*
- * *to get out of the way*
- * *until the fruit stall problem is resolved*
- * *he smiles and they drive away*
- * *melons and pineapples all over the road*
- * *to accept the offer*

5. **Storytelling gap fill:** Tell students that you are going to read the story to them. Tell them that every now and again, you will stop and invite them to finish your sentences with the phrases on the board.

6. Read the text on the last page. Invite students to 'fill the gaps' (i.e. complete your sentences with the phrases **in bold**). Whenever this is required, I like to give students a signal by putting hand over my mouth.

I usually let students shout out their answers. Although this can be a bit hectic, it usually works. Don't say whether or not their choices are correct. But repeat the process a few times until everyone is satisfied that their answers are correct.

7. Ask students to guess where this story comes from. They will probably think that it is from a movie. But this is not the case. Tell them that it is from an advertisement from 2014.

8. Give out copies of the text (on the following page) and ask students the following:

- * Audrey Hepburn died in 1993. So how do you think they made this advertisement? (Possible answers = filming with a lookalike or a double; using footage from a pre-existing Audrey Hepburn movie; CGI = computer-generated images). The answer is CGI.
- * What do you think the product is? It isn't mentioned in the text (i.e. it is not the car). Decide what the product could be.
- * Now try to look for a way in which you could integrate the product into the story. How would you include it?

9. Put students into groups and ask them to discuss whether or not they like the advertisement and why.

10. Take feedback.

11. Ask students to go back to the text. Ask them to choose 8 words, phrases, idioms, or grammatical features that they like and would like to make their own.

12. Ask students to share their chosen language choices and say why they like them.

The text (handout)

Part one

Picture the scene:

A chic Italian seaside town in the sixties

We are in the market square

And the fruit seller is having a bad day

We don't know exactly what has happened

But his stall has overturned and there are **melons and pineapples all over the road**

This is causing **a traffic jam**

An impatient bus driver is shouting at the fruit seller, telling him **to get out of the way**

Then we get a close-up of one of the passengers on the bus:

An elegant and attractive young woman: Audrey Hepburn

Like the other passengers, **she is getting restless**

They can't continue their journey **until the fruit stall problem is resolved**

Part two

An expensive-looking sports car **pulls up beside the bus**

It's a silver convertible with a very handsome driver

He notices Audrey Hepburn on the bus

He catches her eye and smiles at her through the window

Audrey Hepburn smiles back

Moon River starts to play

The handsome driver **gestures for her to join him**

Part three

Audrey Hepburn hesitates for a moment

Then she decides **to accept the offer**

She gets off the bus

And as she passes the bus driver, **she takes the hat off his head**

And instead of getting into the front of the car, she gets into the backseat and puts the bus driver's hat on the handsome man's head

At first, the handsome man is confused

But then he realizes what's going on and **he smiles and they drive away**

Audrey Hepburn **sits back and enjoys the breeze**

Moon River fades out

4. Yu Ming is Airmn Dom

Video and lesson plan here:

<https://mailchi.mp/jamiekeddie/a-video-activity-yu-ming-is-ainm-dom>



5. Teeth

Two old men in a rowing boat in the middle of a lake.

John and Rob. Old friends.

They sit facing each other.

In silence.

Fishing rods in hand.

They haven't caught anything yet.

Suddenly, John sneezes.

He sneezes hard.

He sneezes so hard that his false teeth fly out of his mouth.

They go over the side of the boat and: Plop!

They sink to the bottom of the lake.

Rob thinks that this is the funniest thing he has ever seen.

He laughs uncontrollably.

John is not amused.

An hour passes.

Two old men in a boat in the middle of a lake.

John and Rob. Old friends.

They sit back to back.

In silence.

Fishing rods in hand.

Suddenly, Rob feels a pull.

He's got one; he's caught a fish.

He reels it in; he lands it; it's a big one.

But surely not!

Can it be true?

That inside the mouth of the fish are some false teeth – John's false teeth?

Rob taps John on the shoulder to show him what he's got.

John takes the teeth out of the fish's mouth and puts them into his own mouth.

Unfortunately, they don't fit.

Apparently these are not John's teeth after all.

John throws them over the side of the boat.

They sink to the bottom of the lake.

Poor Rob!

Note: The story is based on a short film which you may have seen before. If you watch it, you will find out why things ended badly for Rob.

<https://vimeo.com/5800357>