


How can we use 'story' to teach English?

Show notes





In this podcast series from the British Council, we try and provide solutions to some of the key questions being asked by English teachers around the world.

Each episode explores a specific topic through interviews, a focus on recent developments or reports on British Council initiatives in English language teaching. Practical show notes, classroom activities and transcripts are available to download for each episode.

Episode overview

Wherever you are in the world, and whatever your context, story will almost certainly be an important part of the teaching and learning context. However, what is meant by the word 'story' may differ from place to place, ranging from the type of traditional tale found in coursebooks, to oral narratives created by students themselves, to digital creations found online. To develop our understanding of these different contexts we first speak to Jamie Keddie, an expert in the way we can use different forms of 'story' to teach English. His passion and knowledge of the subject will be sure to stimulate your own classroom practice. After this, we visit the Oasis Centre in Cardiff to learn more about their novel approach to using storytelling to develop their students' English language skills.

In this episode



Storytelling is something that can really come up anytime in a lesson.

Storytelling is the thing and story is the thing that we do, the activity and story is the software

If you've got 15 students in your class, you've got 15 different narratives taking place at once there. 16, if you include the teacher.

The stories are complex enough to mean that people can relate in different ways and I think it's effective as well because the emotional identification of the story helps.

... that element also of curiosity, what's going to happen next, what should I say?"



Detailed notes

Additional information about particularly interesting, relevant, or challenging terms are given in the table below.

Phrase used	Explanation and further information
Introduction	
The very hungry caterpillar	The Very Hungry Caterpillar is a 1969 children's picture book designed, illustrated, and written by Eric Carle. The book features a hungry caterpillar that eats a variety of foods before pupating and emerging as a butterfly.
Jamie Keddie	Jamie is a teacher trainer, storyteller, and Oxford University Press author, as well as the founder of LessonStream.
LessonStream	According to the Lessonstream website , it is "a community of teachers and educators. Together, we explore possibilities for using story to engage students, get them thinking creatively and communicating in English."
Interview with Jamie Keddie	
Folk tales	Folktales (or folk tales) are stories passed down through generations, often by oral sharing. An amazing free resource of fairy tales from around the world, called "World of Tales", can be accessed here .
Authentic materials	Click here for an interesting discussion about authentic materials on the British Council Teaching English site. Click here for an interesting blog about authentic materials by Lewis Lansford.
Graded reader	A graded reader is a book which has been written for students with a particular language level. The students' level is reflected in the vocabulary and grammatical choices made. Graded readers can be original stories, or they may be adapted versions of well-known books.
Adverbs of frequency	Adverbs of frequency (e.g. sometimes, often, usually) say how often we do things, or how often things happen.

Multilingual strategies in specific, that you use with stories or using story in the classroom

An example of an activity which uses a multilingual approach is given below:

1. Tell the whole class that you are going to create a story. Ask students to come up with a title for the story. Alternatively, you could give a title (e.g. *The naughty monkey, Two sisters, The longest journey*).
2. Students (whose L1s are different) work in groups and brainstorm ideas for the story.
3. Take ideas from different groups, and together create the story in the dominant language of the class.
4. Students (whose L1s are the same) now write this story in their own L1.
5. Students read the story to the rest of the class in their L1.

Field report

Episode 3

The focus of Episode 3 was on how can we teach difficult or taboo subjects. You can download the episode [here](#).

Oasis Centre in Cardiff

The Oasis Centres helps refugees and asylum seekers integrate into their local community through a range of different activities, including the teaching and learning of English. You can find out more about their work [here](#).

Using this podcast for lessons or training

- You can download a transcript of the episode from the podcast homepage. To help you and your learners with preparation and language analysis, all words at the B2, C1 and C2 CEFR level have been highlighted.
- The British Council have produced an 'activity pack' for this episode, which contains activities which you can use in your classroom. The activities focus on speaking, listening, grammar and language. They are available in both pdf and in editable PowerPoint format, in case you wish to edit them to make them more relevant for your specific classroom.





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