

Story Cards

Brief Description

On each card there is a short, complete narrative text. The students read and study the texts and then try to tell the stories in their own words without looking at the cards.

Purpose

To give the students practice in giving various types of short narrations. The card contains the basic text from which the students get the information and to which they can later refer, comparing their version to the original. The narration also provides practice in extended discourse and discourse markers such as *then*, *next*, and *finally*.

Preparation

There are several different kinds of potential narrations, from telling folktales to reciting encyclopedic information. After choosing the type you wish to work on (see Suggestions), and after finding the material, you may need to abridge and edit the text. If so, keep the following in mind:

1. For beginning level students, sentence length can be critical. Sentences of 8-10 words are sufficiently challenging. Intermediate students can cope with sentences of up to 20 words, and advanced students can work with sentences of more than 20 words.
2. Grammatical constructions also need to be controlled. Consult a pedagogical grammar for ideas. In general, simple sentences with single subjects, short, active voice verb phrases, and single objects will be necessary at the beginning level. Compound sentences, sentences joined by *and* or *but* are possible at the intermediate level, along with short noun phrases (*my dear old friend*) and clauses (I know *(that)* *my friend will help you*). Complex sentences with subordinate adverbial clauses introduced by *because*, *although*, *if*, or *after* can be introduced at the intermediate level. Relative clauses can also be tricky.
3. The vocabulary may need to be edited. Consult a word frequency list to get an idea of which words can and should be dealt with at the beginning level. Also keep in mind your own knowledge of your students' vocabulary level and try to choose and prepare texts that have only a few new or unusual words. The purpose of this activity is not vocabulary expansion, but rather, discourse fluency.

Procedure

1. Give each student a different card. Ask them to read and study their cards. Tell them to note vocabulary that is both unfamiliar and central to the narration.
2. Collect the vocabulary from the students and go over definitions with the whole class. One effective way of doing this is to have the students put their words on the board after they have finished studying their cards. You can leave the words on the board throughout steps 3 and 4.
3. Pair off the students. Have them try to tell each other the texts of their cards without looking at them. After they have shared their stories, they should look again at their cards to compare what they have just said with what is on the card.
4. The pairs split up and find new partners to share their stories with. One purpose of the repetition is for the students to improve their performance with each telling, so that they become fluent and accurate. This step can be repeated several times, probably for a maximum of 6 times. Although it is repetitive for the tellers, they also get to hear several different stories.

Variations

1. After exchanging stories, the students can also exchange cards, split up, practice a bit, and tell the story they just heard to another person.
2. The students can also work in groups of three to six, so that they have practice telling stories to more than one person at a time.
3. The students can also tell their stories to the entire class. You could do this as a one-a-day activity.
4. You or a student can read the story as a listening/dictation exercise.
5. You can tell the story deliberately once through as the students take notes. They then write the story and compare it with the original, which you can post, read again, or hand out.

Suggestions

- *1. Folktales and fables.
- *2. Jokes or anecdotes.
- 3. Movie reviews. Video guidebooks have thousands of short summaries.
- *4. Brief bio-sketches.
- 5. Famous events such as the Wright Brothers' flight, or the sinking of the *Titanic*.
- 6. Short news articles.
- 7. Weather reports from around the world, or local ones from different times of the year.
- 8. Mother Goose rhymes.
- *9. Limericks.
- 10. Plots of famous stories from Shakespeare, the Brothers Grimm, Hans Christian Andersen, Greek mythology.
- 11. Horoscopes.
- 12. Holidays.

* *See sample games on the following pages.*

The Fox and the Boar

The fox passed by the boar, who was busily sharpening his tusks on a tree. “Why are you doing that now?” asked the fox. “There is no enemy anywhere near here.” The boar answered, “You are right, my friend, but when the enemy is near, it will be too late.”

The Fox and the Grapes

One day a hungry fox saw some beautiful grapes. They were hanging in great bunches from the vine. But they were high above the ground. The fox jumped and jumped to reach them, but he could not. Angrily he walked away and said, “They may look beautiful, but I am sure that inside they are sour.”

The Hare and the Hound

A hunting dog found a nice hare in the field. Immediately he began to chase the hare. But the hare was an excellent runner, and in a short time the hound gave up, breathless. The hound’s master came up to the hound and teased the tired dog because he had failed. “Master,” said the hound, “you may laugh, but consider that he was running for his life, while I was running only for your dinner.”

The Crow and the Pitcher

A thirsty crow found a pitcher with water in it. But the pitcher’s neck was narrow and the crow’s beak could not reach the water. He tried to turn the pitcher over, but it was too heavy. So he patiently gathered pebbles from the ground and dropped them one by one into the pitcher. This caused the water to reach the top, and so he got his drink.



José de San Martín

José de San Martín was born in 1778. He was a South American revolutionary. In 1812 he took part in Argentina's revolution against Spain. Then he led the army across the Andes Mountains into Chile, where he brought the Chilean revolution to a successful conclusion. He next entered Peru, but after meeting with Simón Bolívar, who had entered Peru from the north, he left Peru and retired to private life. He died in 1850.

David Ben-Gurion

David Ben-Gurion was born in Poland in 1886. He settled in Palestine in 1906. He became an active Zionist, but during World War I, he supported the British. During World War II, he again cooperated with the British, but after the war he turned against them to lead the Israeli fight for nationhood. He became the first prime minister of Israel in 1948. He was in and out of office until 1963, when, as prime minister, he retired. However, he remained active in politics until his death in 1973.

Gamal Abdel Nasser

Gamal Abdel Nasser was born in 1918 in Alexandria, Egypt. As a young student, he was expelled from school for protests against the British. He graduated from the Egyptian Royal Military Academy in 1938. Ten years later he founded the secret Society of Free Officers. In 1952 he led a coup that deposed King Farouk, and in 1956 he became president of Egypt. Despite a military defeat in 1967 at the hands of Israel, he was a very popular leader. He died in 1970.



Cue Cards

Brief Description

Each student has a card containing factual information that is not in sentence form. The student must carry on a conversation with a partner using the information on the card.

Purpose

To provide a limited context/situation/topic within which two learners can practice giving and receiving information in sentences, i.e. semi-controlled conversation practice.

Preparation

Choose a topic that lends itself to building a collection of similar cards. See the list of *Suggestions* for ideas. Then conduct some research to collect information that can be put on the cards. The amount and kind of information will be influenced by the proficiency level of the students. It would be possible to make up to three sets of cards (easy, intermediate, difficult) in one topical area. Obviously, easy cards would have only a few pieces of information that would require simple questions and answers, for example, *What is the population of your country?* The number of different cards would depend on how many students you have in your class. The bare minimum would be one different card for each student. You could also build a number of different sets all at the same proficiency level and in the same topical area.

Procedure

1. Go over the types of information on the cards and the names for the various categories. For example, the students should understand the meaning of “literacy” before they begin the information exchange on “Nations of the World.”
2. You may want to go over and put on the board, or poster paper, the types of questions and answers that would normally be used in giving and getting information. You could say, for example, “How do I find out about a country’s location?” and as the students contribute questions you write them down. In this case a legitimate question would be *Where is your country located?* And a typical answer would be *My country is located _____.*
3. Give each student a card and allow them to study it for a few minutes. Circulate and be available for questions. If everybody is asking you the same question, you may need to interrupt and go over the question with the group.
4. Pair off the students. If there is an odd number, you can work with one student or you can set up a trio. The students ask and answer questions, or simply tell each other the information on the card. Intermediate or advanced students can discuss the information on the card.

5. Similar to the *Story Cards* procedure, when a pair has successfully completed their exchange, they break up and find new partners and do another information exchange. Each student keeps their own card, thus repeating the information with the new partner (and doing it more fluently), and hearing new information.


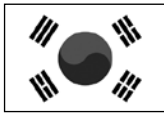


Variations

1. Groups of three, four, five, or even larger can be formed to give and take information.
2. Students can carry on conversations based on the information on the cards, rather than simple information questions (WH questions). For example, a student might say, *Oh, I've been in your country.*
3. Using the basic information on the card, the students can do additional research and give oral reports to the entire class. The reports can be spaced out, one a day over several days.
4. The information can be used as the basis for a short writing assignment.
5. You, or a student, can give a brief dictation with the information on the card.

Suggestions

- *1. Nations of the world (*Sources: Infoplease, World Bank*)
 2. Cities of the world
 3. States of the U.S.; provinces of Canada
- *4. Presidents of the U.S.
 5. Bio-sketches (facts only; not in paragraph form as in *Story Cards*)
 6. Personal résumés
 7. Timelines of various kinds
- *8. Real estate listings
 9. Classified ads
10. Animal facts
11. This day in history
12. Types of automobiles, planes, ships
13. Baseball or other trading cards

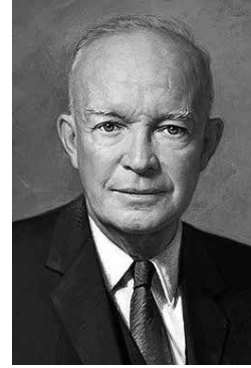
* *Included on the following pages*

<p>Saudi Arabia </p> <p>Capital: Riyadh Area: 829,995 sq mi Population: 29,369,400 (44^{th*}) Largest Cities: Riyadh 5,451,000; Jeddah 3,578,000; Makkah 1,591,000 Life Expectancy: 74.4 yrs Languages: Arabic Ethnicity: Arab 90%, Afro-Asian 10% Religions: Muslim 100% Literacy Rate: 78.8% % Currency: Riyal</p>	<p>South Korea </p> <p>Capital: Seoul Area: 37,421 sq mi Population: 49,750,230 (27^{th*}) Largest Cities: Seoul 9,736,000; Busan 3,372,000; Incheon 2,622,000 Life Expectancy: 79.3 yrs Languages: Korean Ethnicity: Korean 99.99 % Religions: None 49.3%, Christian 26.3% (Protestant 19.7%, Catholic 6.6%), Buddhists 23.2% Literacy Rate: 98 % Currency: Won</p>
<p>Senegal </p> <p>Capital: Dakar Area: 74,131 sq mi Population: 14,967,450 (72^{nd*}) Largest Cities: Dakar 3,035,000 Life Expectancy: 60.2 yrs Languages: French (official), Wolof, Pulaar, Jola, Mandika Ethnicity: Wolof 43.3%, Fulani 23.8%, Serer 14.7%, Diola 3.7% Religions: Islam 94%, Christian 5% Literacy Rate: 40 % Currency: CFA Franc</p>	<p>Thailand </p> <p>Capital: Bangkok Area: 197,595 sq mi Population: 67,400,750 (20^{th*}) Largest Cities: Bangkok 8,426,000 Life Expectancy: 73.8 yrs Languages: Thai Ethnicity: Thai 75%, Chinese 14% Religions: Buddhists 94.6%, Muslim 4.8% Literacy Rate: 96 % Currency: Baht</p>

* World ranking by population



Harry S Truman (1884-1972)
Party: Democratic ★ Term: 1945-1953
Birthplace: Missouri



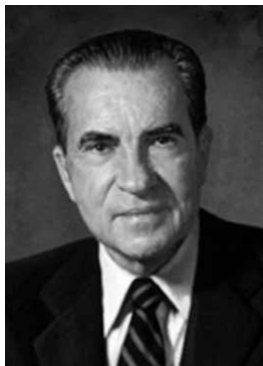
Dwight D. Eisenhower (1890-1969)
Party: Republican ★ Term: 1953-1961
Birthplace: Texas



John F. Kennedy (1917-1963)
Party: Democratic ★ Term: 1961-1963
Birthplace: Massachusetts



Lyndon B. Johnson (1908-1973)
Party: Democratic ★ Term: 1963-1969
Birthplace: Texas



Richard Nixon (1913-1994)
Party: Republican ★ Term: 1969-1974
Birthplace: California



Gerald Ford (1913-2006)
Party: Republican ★ Term: 1974-1977
Birthplace: Nebraska



RIVER FRONTAGE. Economical home in good condition just a mile from downtown. Features a covered patio, new combination oil/wood furnace, eat-in kitchen, 2 bedrooms, and a detached 1-car garage. Vinyl siding and a metal roof make the exterior nearly maintenance free. \$98,000.



BEAUTIFUL MOUNTAIN VIEW HOME. Conveniently located just outside the village on 10 acres, this home offers 9 bedrooms, 4 full baths, and 2 kitchens. In recent years it has been a licensed group home, complete with sprinkler and fire alarm systems. \$259,000.



OVER 55 PARK. Very well maintained home in "over 55" park. Great location within the park on a dead end road. The back yard has many perennials and trees. Screened porch offers total privacy. Park rent is \$260 per month. \$33,000.



WELL MAINTAINED HOME. Located in a private setting with landscaped stone walls & views of the White Mountains. Features a 3-car garage, woodstove, deck off the dining room as well as a guest room & kitchenette over the garage with private entrance. \$235,000.



SPACIOUS HOME. Situated on 14+/- acres with beautiful pastoral views. It features large new windows, attached 2-car garage, outdoor oil or wood boiler, large barn and a brook running through the property. Your choice of local schools. \$289,000.



COMPLETE PRIVACY. Timber frame home surrounded by 10 acres with beautiful White Mountain views. Built with 5 star energy rating. Features an open floor plan and a 2-car garage. Convenient to employment in VT and NH and offers choice of high school for your teens. \$249,000.

Sort 'n' Stack

Brief Description

The students separate 40 – 60 words into categories. The activity may focus on a phonological feature, such as the number of syllables in a word, the pronunciation of a past tense suffix, transitive and/or intransitive verbs, irregular verb families, parts of speech, etc.

Purpose

This activity is probably best done as a review. For example, it can be used to review specific features of the language where the words in question may fall into different categories, such as words that take negative prefixes (un-, in-, im-, a-, dis-). It can be used to introduce a linguistic feature, such as phrasal verb categories (transitive – separable and inseparable, and intransitive).

Preparation

Divide 5" x 7" index cards into 15 rectangles as below.

If you are copying and cutting up one of the pages in this book and you are making more than one game, it is a good idea to use colored paper to keep the sets separate. In other words, if you

need to make 5 games, use 5 different colored sheets of paper or different colored index cards. (They often come in packs of 4 different colors. Use rubber bands or large envelopes to keep the sets separate.)

Procedure

1. Describe the nature of the problem to the students. For example, *Today we're going to review regular and irregular verbs.*

2. Put the students into groups. Although this game can be done by individuals playing against each other, part of the value of the activity comes from the linguistic interaction that happens when students decide collectively on which words go in which stack. For that reason, three or four students working together will usually produce more differences of opinion, and hence more discussion. It also works better if everyone in each group is about the same proficiency level so that one strong student doesn't dominate the activity.
3. Give each group a stack of mixed cards and let them work together. At this point, do not interfere or coach. Tell them that when they have finished you will check their results.
4. As each group finishes, check their stacks. Alternatively, after everyone has finished, check the solution together.

Variations

1. Put a time limit on the activity. As a rule of thumb, a maximum of 5 seconds per card requires a quick decision. In more challenging games, 10 seconds per card allows for some discussion.
2. Make it competitive. Give one negative point for every wrong answer.
3. Do it as a circle activity. The students sit in a circle. Tell them the categories, for example regular and irregular verbs, and have them write these headings at the top of a sheet of paper as column headings. Give them each an equal number of cards and tell them to write each word under the correct column. After an appropriate period of time, say "pass," and they pass the cards to the student on their right. When the cards have made a complete circle, compare the results.

Suggestions

1. Regular and irregular verbs
- *2. Irregular verbs by past participle endings
 - *d* ending: *make* > *made*
 - *t* ending: *bring* > *brought*
 - (*e*)*n* ending: *bite* > *bitten*
- *3. Phrasal verbs, separable and inseparable
- *4. Transitive and intransitive verbs
- *5. Verbs followed by infinitives, gerunds, or either
- *6. Adjective – preposition collocations
7. Derivational Endings
 - adjectives: *-ous*, *-ic*, *-ive*, *-al*
 - "doer" nouns: *-er*, *-or*, *-ar*, *-ist*, *-ian*
 - verbs: *-ate*, *-ify*, *-ize*
8. Number of syllables
- *9. Placement of stress (on which syllable)

* See sample games on the following pages.

Sort 'n' Stack, 1 Past Participles

The past participles of these words have three different ending sounds, /en/n/, /t/, and /d/. After making the cards, mix them up and have the students make three stacks according to the ending sounds. Some of the verbs in this list are uncommon. Therefore, to use the game with lower-level students, use only the verbs they may be familiar with and perhaps a few new ones.

/en/n/	/en/n/	/t/
BEAT	FLY	BEND
BITE	FREEZE	BRING
BLOW	HIDE	BUILD
BREAK	SEE	BUY
CHOOSE	SHAKE	CATCH
DRAW	SHOW	CREEP
DRIVE	THROW	DEAL
FALL	WEAVE	LEAVE



Line Up

Brief Description

Each student is given a different piece of information. Each piece is part of a list that needs to be arranged in a specific order. The students line up, trying to put themselves in the specified order.

Purpose

Conversation practice. To have the students talk with each other to find the solution, and afterwards discuss the results.

Preparation

First prepare a master list that is the list of each item (card) in the correct order. Also give the instructions on the master list. For example:

Animal Speeds

How fast can animals go at top speed for a short distance?

Each of you has a card with an animal's name on it. Line up from fastest to slowest, with the fastest here and the slowest there.

Falcon	200+ mph
Cheetah	70
Pronghorn antelope	61
Lion	50
Horse	47.5
Coyote	43

Etc. See Sample Game #1 for complete game.

Source: *Natural History Magazine*, 1974, and <http://www.factmonster.com>

Then prepare a series of cards. For most games 16 different cards is about maximum. More than that can become confusing.

Procedure

1. Copy the master list for yourself, and make one copy for each student, to be used in step 8.
2. Give each student a card. Check to be sure that the students know the vocabulary of the items that will be arranged. Ten to twelve items seem to work best, but with some groups, up to 16 different items is possible. Make sure the cards are distributed in random order. You may want to appoint a “line captain” – see step 5. Then give the instructions on the master list.
3. Have each student announce the name on their card.
4. Have the students stand up and begin moving into place as they talk to each other. Caution: If the students all have the same native language, be sure they don’t start using their native language. Make this prohibition clear before you begin.
5. If the number of students exceeds the number of cards, some students can be a pair. If there are not many students, some students can have two cards. If you have a “line captain”: when the group seems to be nearing a solution, the captain can step outside the line and urge the group to reach their solution, perhaps offering comments.
6. Have the students say their cards in order. Depending on the proficiency of the group, they can also explain their reasons for their placement.
7. Read the answers and have them move if necessary.
8. If there is additional information (such as actual animal speeds in the sample), they can try to guess the additional information.
9. Hand out the master list and have the students return to their places for a general discussion, if relevant, starting off with “What surprised you?”

Variations

1. With a large class, have two groups of students make two lines (You need to prepare a duplicate set of cards). When they are ready, have them compare their lines and discuss differences. Finally, supply the answers.
2. With a small class, the students can lay their cards out in a line on a table top or in the whiteboard marker tray, or write them on the board.

Suggestions

1. The cost of things
 - cars
 - TVs
 - computers
 - phones
 - houses (real estate ads without prices – see Cue Cards)
 - food, per pound (unit pricing)

2. Distances of places from the classroom
 - in the town/city
 - in the state
 - in the country
 - in the world

3. Population figures
 - towns/cities in the state
 - states in the country
 - countries in the world
 - population density

4. Nutritional value of foods
 - protein
 - fiber
 - vitamin content
 - sugar content
 - carbohydrate content

5. Geographical information
 - lengths of rivers
 - heights of mountains
 - land area of countries
 - sizes of bodies of water

6. Historical information
 - sequence of events
 - size of disasters

Notes

1. This activity lends itself to practicing comparative and superlative constructions.
2. Line ups are often used as ice breakers or warm ups.

Animal Speeds

How fast can animals go at top speed for a short distance?

Each of you has a card with an animal's name on it. Line up from fastest to slowest, with the fastest here and the slowest there. First, tell everybody what animal you have.

Animal	MPH
Peregrine Falcon	200+
Cheetah	70
Pronghorn Antelope	61
Lion	50
Horse	47.5
Coyote	43
Ostrich	40
Greyhound	37.5
House Cat	35
Rabbit (Domestic)	35
Giraffe	32
Kangaroo	30
Grizzly Bear	30
White-tailed Deer	30
Human	27.89
Elephant	25
Black Mamba Snake	20
Six-lined Race Runner Lizard	18
Squirrel	12
Chicken	9
House Mouse	8
Giant Tortoise	0.17
Three-toed Sloth	0.15

Note: There are 23 cards in this list, but on the following pages the cards are divided into two lists of 12 each, and "Human" is included in each list. Therefore you can play two games of 12 cards each or select up to 16 (the recommended maximum number) from the two lists.

Source: *Natural History Magazine*, 1974 and [Http://WWW.factmonster.co](http://www.factmonster.co)








Selected World Cities by Population

Each of you has a card with a name of a city on it. Arrange yourself in a line according to the size of the city proper's population. "Proper" means only the city, not the metropolitan area. These are selected cities, not the 16 largest. Now arrange yourselves according to the highest population, with the highest here, and the lowest there. First tell everybody what city you have.

Selected Cities (not top 16), in Millions

Shanghai	24,500
Karachi	23,500
Beijing	21,516
Delhi	17,839
Lagos	17,060
Istanbul	14,160
Mumbai	12,655
Moscow	12,111
Dhaka	12,044
Sao Paulo	11,986
Cairo	11,923
Seoul	10,388
Tokyo	9,071
Mexico City	8,875
London	8,416
New York	8,405

Source: Wikipedia. United Nations City Proper List

<p>Shanghai</p> 	<p>Karachi</p> 
<p>Beijing</p> 	<p>Delhi</p> 
<p>Lagos</p> 	<p>Istanbul</p> 
<p>Mumbai</p> 	<p>Moscow</p> 