

## LESSON 9: TELLING A STORY

AGE: Adult

LEVEL: Upper Intermediate

TIME: 90 minutes

LANGUAGE FOCUS: language chunks for storytelling

SKILLS: speaking and listening

MATERIALS: student worksheet for Lesson 9; audio transcript

OVERVIEW: to practice listening for meaning; to focus on how stories are structured; to enable students to relate their own experiences using the target language solutions

STUDENTS WILL:

- listen to a story and answer meaning-focused questions
- focus on language chunks for structuring a story
- reflect on their homework interviews

PREPARATION:

- for this class, students will need to bring any notes they took when conducting their homework interviews for Compass 8
- the teacher will need to prepare some images and information on Botswana to share with the students



### ACTIVITY 1

*Students share what they know about Botswana*

Hand out the worksheet and ask students if any of them can identify which country the flag comes from or the unlabeled country on the map of Africa. Give them a minute or two to speculate and tell them that all the other images are of places from that country.

**Key:** The country is Botswana

Once they have guessed (or you have told them) the answer, ask students to work in pairs and discuss whether they know anything about Botswana. To help them out, ask them if they know any of the following details: population, capital city, geography, wildlife and official language. Allow the students a minute or two to discuss in pairs and then ask them to share their answers with the class.

**Botswana fact file:**

Botswana is a landlocked \* country in central Africa. Its capital city is Gaborone. The population is a little over 2 million people and the country is dominated by the Kalahari Desert and the Okavango Delta. Its wildlife includes monkeys, water buffalo, hippos, crocodiles, rhinos and lions. The official language of the country is English.

\* landlocked = a country without open sea borders, entirely surrounded by other countries

After discussing these facts, ask students if they'd like to visit

Botswana and what else they would like to know about it if they were going to study or work there.

### ACTIVITY 2

*Students listen to a story about Botswana*

Tell students they are going to listen to a woman, Rosa, talk about her experience of moving from Botswana to the UK. Before they listen, ask students to discuss what they think are the biggest differences between the two countries and what Rosa might say was most difficult to adapt to.

When they have finished discussing, conduct class feedback and board any new or useful vocabulary. Then play the recording for the first time and ask students to note down any differences between Botswana and England and Rosa's life in both places.

**Key:**

Major differences: linguistic, cultural, cuisine, attitude, weather

Most difficult thing to get used to: going outside when it's raining.

### ACTIVITY 3

*Students identify the structural language chunks used in the story*

Ask students to work in pairs again and focus on the list of chunks in activity 3. They should tell each other which of the chunks they already know. Then tell them to listen to the recording again and tick the chunks they hear.

**Key:**

I must tell you ...

In the end ...

As I said ...

For some reason ...

It was good ...

It turns out ...

Ask students to look at the Speaking Tip. It focuses on the importance of chunks in storytelling. We use certain chunks when telling stories to structure our story clearly, making it easier to recognize its beginning, middle and ending. These chunks are helpful as they can be produced automatically and aid fluency. Tell the students they will be looking at and learning to use some useful storytelling chunks.

### ACTIVITY 4

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Students identify the function of each given chunk

Ask students to look at the list of chunks in activity 3 and put each chunk in the correct column of the table. While they are doing the activity, draw the same table on the board or IWB. Once they have finished, nominate one student to be writer. He/she has to write the answers on the board but can only write what the rest of the class tells them to write. The rest of the class must agree on what is written.



**TEACHING TIP:** Front of class board work is a very useful form of checking. Once all the language is on the board, you can make any corrections necessary and then use this as the basis for some pronunciation work. Ask students to mark the stressed words in each phrase by drawing a large circle above them. Drill the chunks of language. This will enable students to get their mouths around producing them more easily and smoothly.

Key:

Starting a story	Developing the action	Ending a story
I must tell you about ...	Next thing I knew ...	In the end ...
Did I tell you about ...?	Strangely enough ...	Eventually ...
Did I tell you what happened ...?	For some reason ...	It turns out ...
Speaking of ...	Just to make matters worse ...	It was good/great/awful.
	As I said ...	
	To my horror ...	

### ACTIVITY 5

Students compare storytelling in English with their language and culture

Ask students, in pairs again, to discuss the three questions in activity 5. The aim is to compare their language and culture with English, regarding the use of fixed phrases in storytelling, the role of storytelling and the way it works. When they have finished, bring the class together and give each pair a chance to share what they've learnt with the whole class. In a monolingual class there may be regional differences, so it is still valuable to check whether the whole class agrees on the answers to these questions.

### ACTIVITY 6

Students identify and focus on narrative tenses

Give students the transcript and ask them to highlight the chunks of language and underline all the past tenses that Rosa uses. In pairs, they should then discuss the questions on their worksheet.

Key:

- \* See transcript at the end of these teacher's notes for examples. Students should be able to identify past simple, past continuous and past perfect.
- \* Rosa uses the present tense to quote her thoughts and people's words in direct speech. This is to add emphasis and make the action more immediate.
- \* 'I had expected it to be much more similar', i.e. the expectation happens first. It is in the past perfect.
- \* We use the past perfect to show the sequence of events in the past. The event in the past perfect occurs before the event in the past simple.



**TEACHING TIP:** Draw learners' attention to the use of 'used to' and 'would' (also underlined below) to talk about life past habits. They are useful for 'setting the scene' for the action that will be described using the past tenses.

'Used to' is used to describe both past habits and past states

- e.g.
- ✓ When I was younger, I used to play football every day (habit)
  - ✓ When I was younger, I used to have curly hair (state)

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'Would' is only used to describe past habits

- e.g.
- ✓ When I was younger, I would play football every day (habit)
  - ✗ When I was younger, I would have curly hair (state)

### ACTIVITY 7

Students use the target language chunks and narrative tenses to tell a story

Ask students to look at the list of topics and pick one. The ideas relate to past experiences. Before students tell their story, they should take a few minutes to plan what they are going to say.



**TEACHING TIP:** Tell students NOT to write down everything they plan to say word for word. Ask them to think about their ideas and make brief bullet point notes to remind them of what to say. This will make the activity more authentic and useful.

Students should use the functional language and narrative tenses to help them tell their story to a partner. When they have finished telling their story for the first time, ask all the students to stand up and form two lines in the middle of the room, facing a new partner. Tell the students retell their story, with a two-minute time limit. After four minutes, students should find a new partner and tell their story again. Or, if they found their previous partner's story more interesting, they can tell that story.



**TEACHING TIP:** While they are speaking, monitor and note down any errors students make using the chunks, and do some delayed error correction at the end of the activity.

### ACTIVITY 8

Students reflect on and discuss the experiences shared in activity 7

Students should sit down again after the speaking activity. Ask them to discuss the questions in activity 7. When they have finished, conduct a whole class feedback session to give students the opportunity to share personal responses to the stories, and any advice that they would give, with all their classmates.



**TEACHING TIP:** Reflecting on the interview process in this way helps students become more aware of what they have learnt. This is a good opportunity for a metacognitive discussion. Ask students to think about why they have been asked to do activity 7 and how it could help them in the future. Guide them to recognize that they themselves could follow the advice they have come up with whenever they next use cultural interviews to learn more about another English-speaking country.

### ACTIVITY 9

Students reflect on and discuss the content of their homework interviews and the language they used to conduct these

Put students into small groups. Students have two content-related questions and two process-related questions to discuss in their groups. Monitor while they discuss and spend a little time with each group. Once they have finished discussing the questions, bring the class back together and give each group a chance to summarize the content of their discussion. As a whole class, finish by voting on the most interesting and the most surprising piece of information shared.

### Interview transcript

**ROSA:** I must tell you about my experience of moving country when I was a young girl. Well, I was born in Botswana and lived there until I was 17. Botswana is a beautiful hot, desert country in Southern Africa. I moved from there to the UK, which is a rather chilly little island up in the North Sea, to go to boarding school. There are obviously many differences you experience when you change countries, linguistically, culturally, in terms of cuisine, of attitude. As I said, Botswana is a desert, so for us the rain there was very rare and very welcome when it arrived. We would tend to watch the clouds gathering, listen to the thunder getting closer after a hot day and the rain would come in bucket sized raindrops. We would welcome it with dancing in the garden. It was good fun.

**Did I mention** my horse riding experience? Well, in Botswana I used to go horse-riding on quite a regular basis. We would go out very early in the morning because it was too hot in the middle of the day. In England it was a case of riding in the late afternoon when school had finished. And the first time I went riding after I had arrived in the UK, I was preparing myself for the ride and I noticed that it was raining outside. It was a bit different from the Botswana rain. This

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rain looked a little more constant and I thought, 'OK, we're going to spend the day inside then, wait until tomorrow or something'. Well, my classmates looked at me with pity and said, 'Rosa, if you don't go out in the rain, you will never get anything done in this country!' I soon found out that it rains at least 300 days a year in the UK. **For some reason** when I first moved to the UK I had expected it to be much more similar than it really was. I assumed that much like back home, if it rained we would stay inside, wait for things to dry out and get on with our day. But no, **it turns out** that if you want to live like that you might never leave the house, so **in the end** I became accustomed to getting wet on a regular basis to the extent that now I actually quite enjoy it!

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### INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

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### ACTIVITY 1

Look at the flag below. Which country does it belong to? The same country is not labelled on the map on the right. Can you guess which country it is?

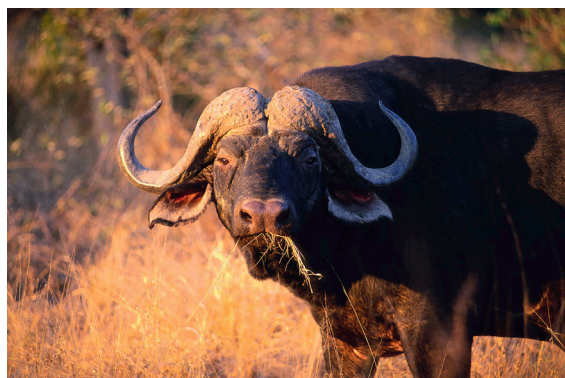
If you can't guess, ask your teacher for the answer. What do you know about this country?

See if you can guess any of the following information:

- Capital city:
- Population:
- Geographical features:
- Types of wildlife:
- Official language:

Have you ever been to a country in Africa? Do you know anything about that part of the world? Tell a partner what you know.

### ACTIVITY 2



You're going to listen to a woman, Rosa, tell a story about her experience of moving from a country in Africa to England to go to boarding school. What were the major differences between where she was born and England? What did she find most difficult to get used to? Why?

Major differences:

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Most difficult thing to get used to:

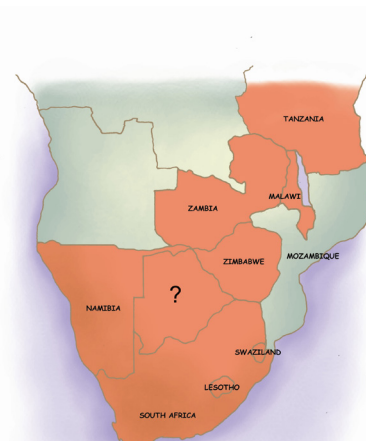
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#### SPEAKING TIP

When we talk about our experiences with friends, we often tell stories about them. In fact, storytelling is very common in casual conversation. It is useful to learn chunks of language to begin, develop and end a story. This can make storytelling easier for both the speaker and listener.

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### ACTIVITY 3

Here is a list of language chunks that we commonly use when we tell stories. Which ones do you know? Tell a partner. Now listen to Rosa again and tick the chunks that you hear.

<input type="checkbox"/> I must tell you ...	<input type="checkbox"/> Did I tell you about ...
<input type="checkbox"/> In the end ...	<input type="checkbox"/> For some reason ...
<input type="checkbox"/> Next thing I knew ...	<input type="checkbox"/> To my horror ...
<input type="checkbox"/> Did I tell you what happened ...	<input type="checkbox"/> Speaking of ...
<input type="checkbox"/> Eventually ...	<input type="checkbox"/> Strangely enough ...
<input type="checkbox"/> Just to make matters worse ...	<input type="checkbox"/> It was good/great/awful ...
<input type="checkbox"/> As I said ...	<input type="checkbox"/> It turns out ...

### ACTIVITY 4

Put each chunk from activity 3 into the correct column of the table.

Starting a story	Developing the action	Ending a story

Check your answers with a partner.

### ACTIVITY 5

Discuss the following questions:

- \* In your language, are there any phrases that you always use when you tell stories? How similar or different are they to the chunks in the table above?
- \* How important is storytelling in your culture? Is there anything that you always do when you tell stories?
- \* What is a famous children's story from your country? Tell your partner.

### ACTIVITY 6

Look at the transcript of Rosa's story. Underline all the past tenses as well as the chunks of language from activity 4.

- \* What different past tenses can you see?
- \* Look at these two sentences:  
*I thought, 'OK well we're going to spend the day inside then, wait until tomorrow or something'*  
*Well they looked at me with a bit of pity and said, 'If you don't go out in the rain, you will never get anything done in this country!'*  
Why does Rosa use present tenses for the language in the speech marks? What effect does it have?
- \* Look at this example:  
*For some reason when I first moved to the UK I had expected there to be much more similarity than there really was*  
Which action happens first? What tense is used for it?
- \* When do we use the past perfect?

### ACTIVITY 7

Work with a partner. Follow the steps below and tell them a story about something that has happened to you:

- \* Choose a topic from the list below.
- \* Plan what you are going to say.
- \* Use the chunks of language from the table in activity 4 and some narrative tenses from activity 6 to help you tell your story.

### Topics

- \* What is the most interesting thing you learned while you were doing your homework interview?

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- \* Have you ever moved country, and if so, what was it like?
- \* Tell your partner about something eventful that happened when you were last on holiday.

If you can't think of a story to tell using the above ideas, then tell your partner about the worst or the best or the funniest thing that has happened to you this year.

### ACTIVITY 8

Work with a partner. Discuss the following questions:

- \* Which stories from Activity 7 did you enjoy the most? Why?
- \* Did you learn anything about your classmates' homework interviews from their stories?
- \* Were there any stories that reminded you of your own experiences?
- \* What advice would you give other students who wanted to do some interviews like yours?

### ACTIVITY 9

In a group, discuss the following questions about your homework interviews:

- \* What are the three most interesting things you learnt from your interviews?
- \* Were you surprised by any of the answers to your questions? Why/why not?
- \* Did any of your interviewees avoid answering any of your questions? How did they do this? (E.g. One respondent told a story instead. One answered a different question instead.)
- \* Did you and your interviewees use formal or informal language during the interviews?