

# Story-based approach to teaching EAL in an adult classroom

Session 1 of 2

**4 June 2026**

**Presenter:** Tanja Rykovska

- This session will be recorded and made available on the VicTESOL website.
- If you have any questions, please place them in the chat. They will be answered by the presenter after the presentation.
- If you have any technical difficulties, please use the chat function to talk to VicTESOL staff or email [plcoordinator@victesol.vic.edu.au](mailto:plcoordinator@victesol.vic.edu.au)

*Chisholm*

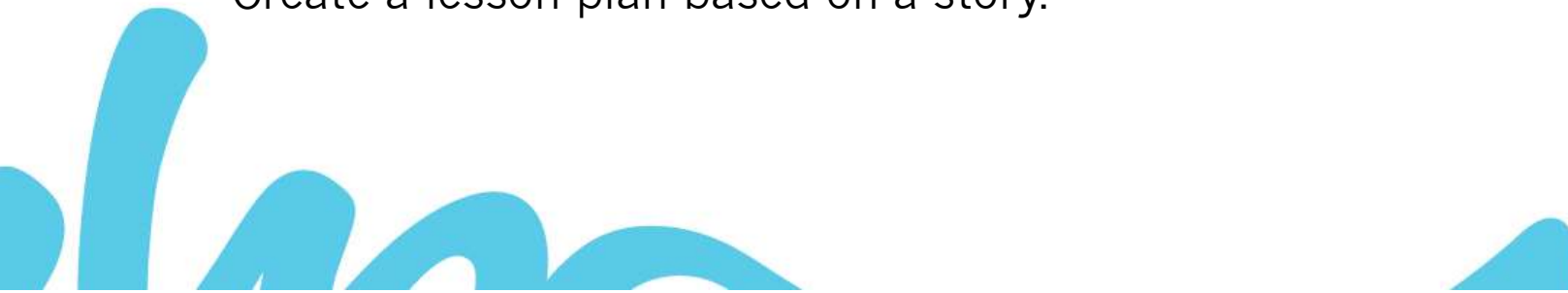
# The Story-based Approach to Teaching EAL

*Create a lesson plan based on a story*

## Presentation

Tanja Rykovska  
VicTESOL PD  
June 2026

## What can you expect from the two afternoons?

- Learn about an approach to organise teaching and learning English as an Additional Language in an adult classroom based on a story (*not just a text*).
  - Get an overview of a session based on a story.
  - Receive and share resources to support teaching and learning EAL using the story-based approach.
  - Create a lesson plan based on a story.
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## Acknowledging that...

- has been a long day
- there is nothing new in what I am going to share for many of you, may be an inspiration



## What do I bring to the table?

- 20, 15
- curriculum
- syllabus
- content development
- research



International  
Specialised  
Skills  
Institute



est. 1991

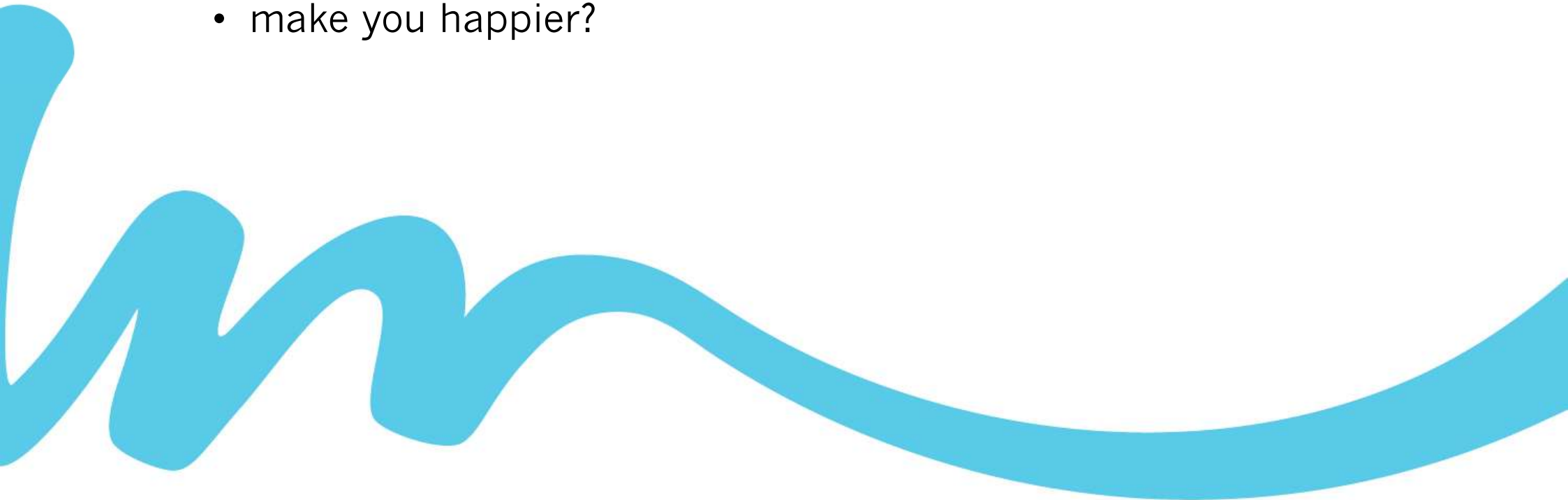
## Why is it important for me?

- young and uninhibited
- storyteller (and “story listener”)
- values

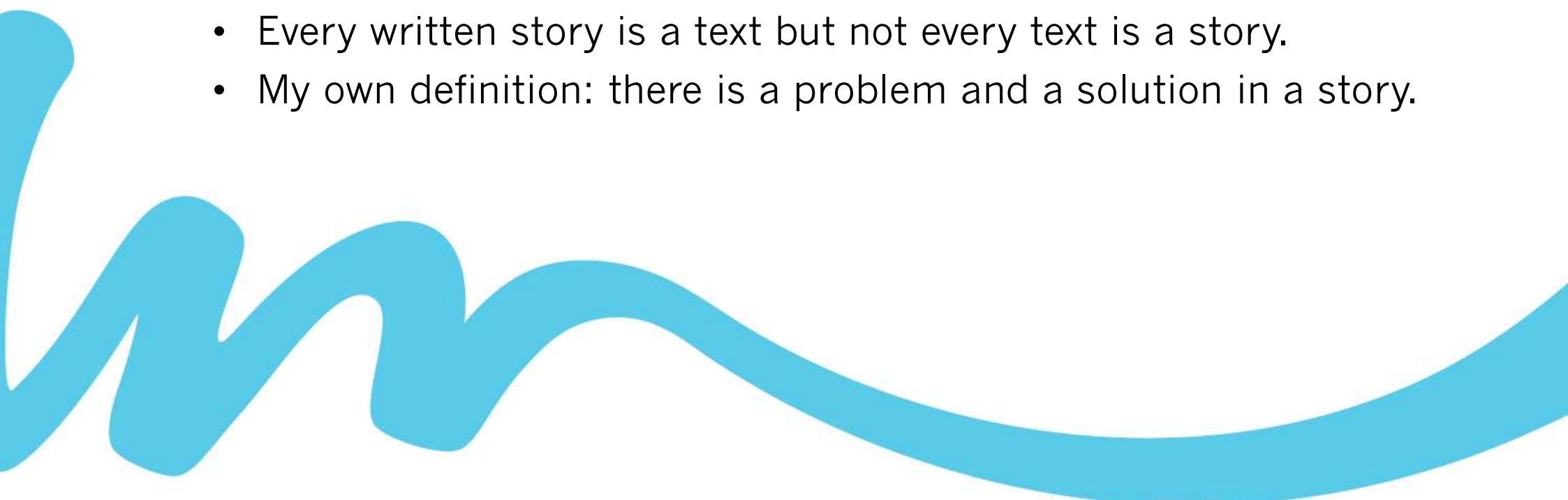


# “Enough about you. What is in it for me?”

- save time
- make you happier?



## Story versus text

- Type your answers in the comments...
  - Every written story is a text but not every text is a story.
  - My own definition: there is a problem and a solution in a story.
- 

## Why a story?



## A story...

- ...increases motivation, focus and memory (released dopamine)
- ...makes us more human – more loving, open, trusting (released oxytocin)
- ...makes us “feel good” (released endorphins)
- ...makes \$\$\$\$

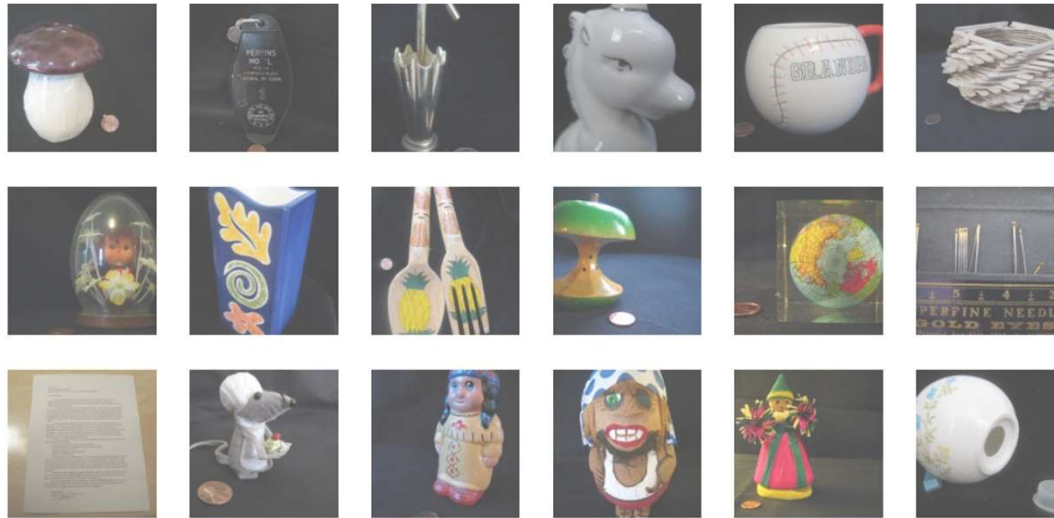
[Source: The magical science of storytelling | David JP Phillips | TEDxStockholm](#)



# “Significant Object Study”



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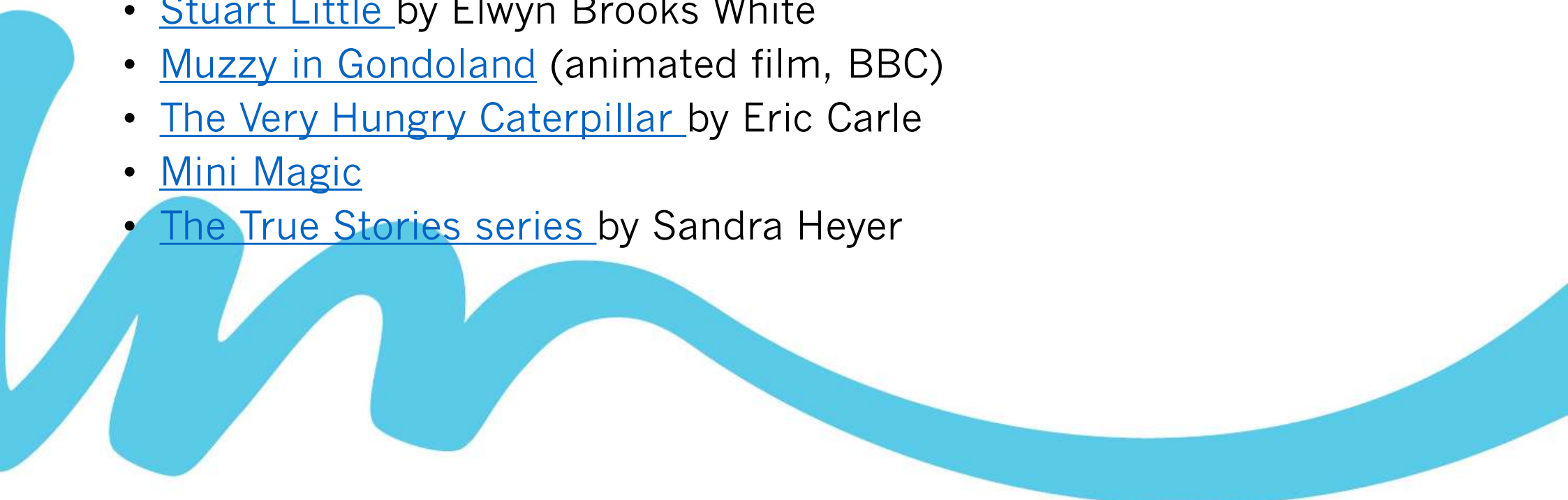
“Significant Object Study”

## Storytelling in teaching EAL

Would you like your students to feel more focused, remember more, be empathetic, responsive and feel good in your class?



## Our Stories (in English)

- What books/stories (in English) shaped your (English-speaking) world and your teaching? Type in comments.
  - [Stuart Little](#) by Elwyn Brooks White
  - [Muzzy in Gondoland](#) (animated film, BBC)
  - [The Very Hungry Caterpillar](#) by Eric Carle
  - [Mini Magic](#)
  - [The True Stories series](#) by Sandra Heyer
- 

## Where it took me...

[English Down Under](#)

English for Beginners

- a collection of readers and interactive activities for adults learning to read in English.



# An outline for a story-based learning session

## Stages:

- Setting context
- Predicting content
- Pre-teaching vocabulary
- Reading the text
- Comprehension tasks
- Extension activities
- Discussion



# Before reading

## ❑ **Setting context**

Asking questions to make the context personally relevant

## ❑ **Predicting content**

ACSF PLB Using pictures, elicit vocabulary items and highlight connections (or the lack thereof) between them.

ACSF 1 and 2 Using pictures and/or textual cues

ACSF 3 Using the title of the story and a short introduction students pose questions the text might answer.

# Before reading

## ❑ Pre-teaching vocabulary

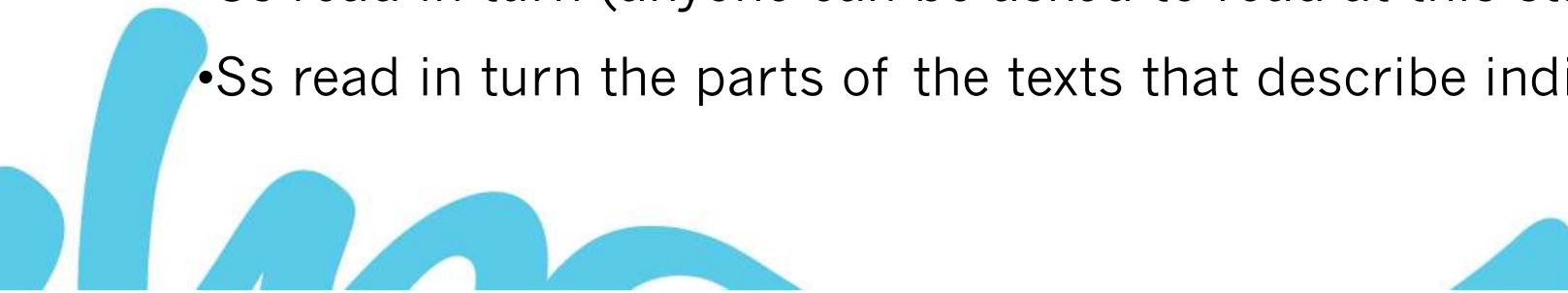
Eliciting or presenting vocabulary items

Practising the vocabulary items orally


Practising spelling of the vocabulary items (copy, find correct spelling, fill in letters, unscramble, word search)

At ACSF3 level students are expected to recognise what unknown words are essential for understanding and have strategies to derive meaning for them.


## Reading ACSF PLB

- Students listen to the text read by the teacher and check their prediction (the text is not available visually)
  - Ss listen to the text read by the teacher and follow the text
  - Ss listen, follow and repeat
  - Ss read in turn – only Ss who volunteer to read
  - Ss read in pairs
  - Ss read in turn (anyone can be asked to read at this stage)
  - Ss read in turn the parts of the texts that describe individual pictures
- 

## Reading ACSF 1

- Students listen to the text read by the teacher and check their prediction (the text is not available visually)
  - Ss listen to the text read by the teacher and follow the text
  - Ss read in pairs
  - Ss read in turn
  - Ss read in turn the parts of the texts that describe individual pictures
- 

## Reading ACSF 2 & 3

- Students are asked to scan the text and find proof for their preferred prediction. If no proof, elicit the overall idea of the text.
  - Ss are asked to find and read out loud passages in the text to support their ideas and predictions.
  - Ss read for details incorporating comprehension tasks and/or their own questions into reading.
  - Ss are asked to find and read out loud passages in the text to support their answers.
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# Comprehension tasks

Examples of tasks:

True/False

Choose the correct statement

Correct statements

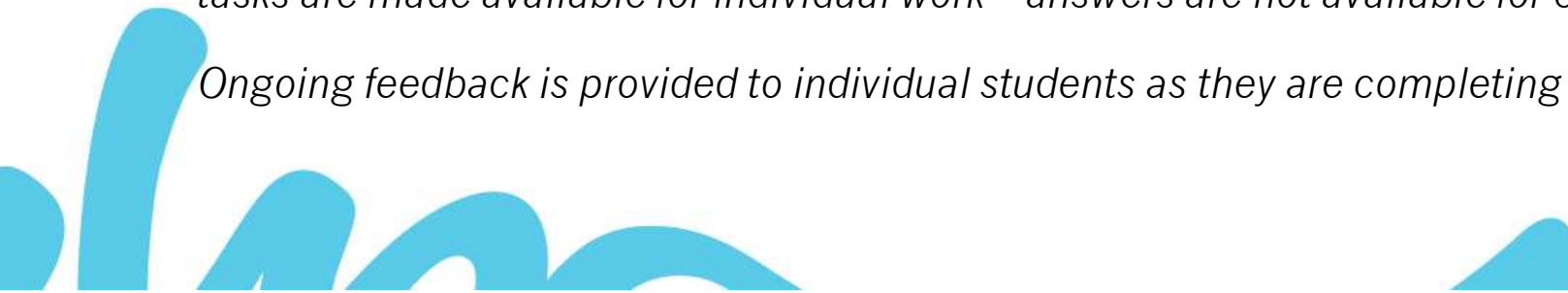
Questions to elicit information

Fill in the gaps

ASCF 2 and 3 include tasks to interpret the text.


*Comprehension tasks are done in a group setting first, then worksheets/online comprehension tasks are made available for individual work – answers are not available for copying.*

*Ongoing feedback is provided to individual students as they are completing tasks.*



## Extension activities

may include:

- practising a grammatical structure orally, in writing or online - any level
  - practising additional vocabulary items online (extending vocabulary on a particular topic) – any level
  - a dictation with target vocabulary items and grammatical structures from the text – any level
  - re-writing a summary of the text adding full stops and capital letters – ACSFPLB and 1
  - re-telling the story using pictures as cues: orally – any level, in writing – ACSF2 and 3
  - writing an opinion text – ACSF 2 and 3
- 

## Extension activities

A story may provide context for further language learning activities: conversation practice, filling out forms related to the topic etc.



# Discussion

Elicit thoughts and feelings on the topic.

Share experiences or advice how to deal with real life problems related to the topic.

Allows to activate passive skills and knowledge.

Allows to get to know your students and for students to get to know each other.

*It is important to withdraw judgement at this stage.*



## An example of a story-based learning session

<b>Context</b>	Health (body parts)
<b>Text (a story)</b>	No More Space! (Easy True Stories)
<b>Unit/Project</b>	Course in EAL Health and Safety EAL1 Health



<b>Stage</b>	<b>How</b>	<b>Comments</b>
<b>Building context</b>	You have \$45. What can you do for fun? Elicit answers.	<i>Focus on fun for individuals, not spending money on family or buying presents</i>
<b>Predicting the content</b>	Display the first row of pictures and elicit: 1. sad, may be a little money 2. happy, an idea, a tattoo 3. has a tattoo, a horse	
<b>Pre-teaching vocabulary</b>	Continue displaying the pictures and elicit or demonstrate: neck, back, face, chest, extra, nothing, nowhere, everywhere, body, space, hundred Type some of the words on the pictures – the students copy the vocabulary items. Spelling: copy, find correct spelling, fill in letters, unscramble, word search	<i>Spelling worksheets made using an online spelling worksheet maker – see the attached worksheets</i>
<b>Reading the text</b>	<u>STEPS for ACSF PLB</u> Students listen to the text read by the teacher and check their prediction (the text is not available visually) Ss listen to the text read by the teacher and follow the text Ss listen, follow and repeat Ss read in turn – only the Ss who volunteer to read Ss read in pairs Ss read in turn (anyone can be asked to read at this stage)	
<b>Comprehension tasks</b>	<i>See the attached worksheets</i>	
<b>Extension activities</b>	Draw a body on the board and ask the students to draw “tattoos” on the body Elicit body parts (to add to the items in the text) and words for the pictures Orally practise the grammatical structure “He has a ... on his ... “	<i>Extension of Task 5</i>
<b>Discussion</b>	Task 4 ( <i>see the worksheets</i> )	

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	<p>Type some of the words on the pictures – the students copy</p> <p>Spelling: copy, find correct spelling, fill in letters, unscramble, word</p>
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**Thank you for listening!**

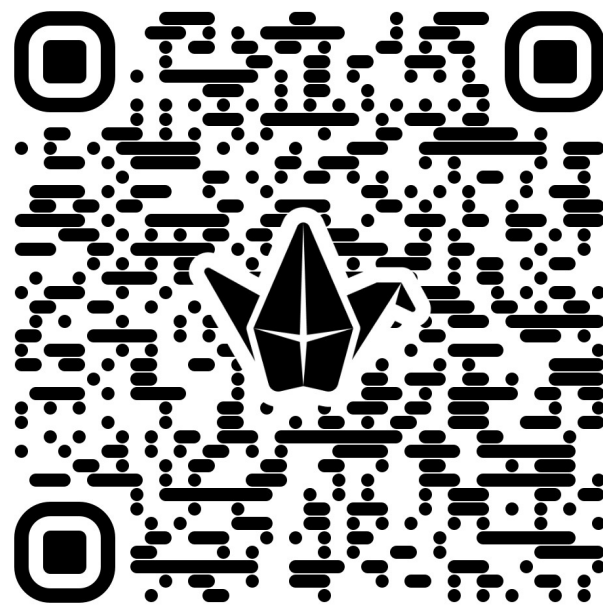
Any questions?



## Let's do it!

Choose a story.

Follow the session outline and plan a lesson.



*This code gives you access to all the materials on Padlet.*