

# How to Use Stories

Stories are an essential part of language learning because they allow students to absorb information in a fun and stimulating way. Learning outside the normal boundaries of a teacher-based classroom environment creates the opportunity for students to develop their creative and communicative skills. Using stories in the classroom greatly enhances students' ability to listen and to actively respond to target language and structures in a fun and relaxed atmosphere. Stories increase motivation and encourage less confident students to contribute with their ideas and opinions, because they are not confined to the limits of a certain structure. They provide larger chunks of language in a context and provide an opportunity for students to produce language.

There's a story on the 5th page of each unit featuring the characters. These stories serve to review and reinforce the target language and structures of the unit. The artwork is visually stimulating and the audio effects ensure students listen avidly from start to finish. Below is a fourstep method for using stories in the classroom that starts with anticipation and ends with (assisted) performance. In order to gather everybody's attention when working with the stories, we suggest you use the Active Teach.

## Stage 1 – Anticipating the Story

Before listening to the audio, ask students questions or carry out a simple discussion to get them thinking about the story. This can enable students to begin forming an idea of the theme of the story and how it might develop. It also provides an opportunity to introduce any new vocabulary or to review previously learned language, allowing teachers to assess how thoroughly students have absorbed the target language of the unit. Teachers should not provide any answers at this stage, but rather allow students to think for themselves.

## Stage 2 – Hearing and Seeing the Story

At this stage, students listen to the story and work through it to find answers to your questions. If access to technology is limited or if it fails during the lesson, teachers can simply read from the book.

## Stage 3 – Checking the Story

Questions to be asked after listening to the story are provided in the teaching notes. This gives teachers the possibility to further assess the depth of students' comprehension of the story and of the language used. It also sparks students' creativity and imagination by encouraging them to visualize how the story develops.

## Stage 4 – Acting the Story

After listening to the story several times, students are ready to act it out in groups, providing them with the opportunity to say larger chunks of language. Props can be brought to class and used to make the experience even more stimulating. Teachers may play the recording, or read the audio script from the Teacher Book, while students act out, or students may recite the story from memory.

Below are some suggestions for extra work with the stories.

- While students listen to the story, they perform a specific action for target vocabulary (e.g., students clap when they hear the word purple, or stamp their feet when they hear the word blue).
- Students draw a new picture for any frame of the story.
- Students create a new ending for the story.
- Students draw their favorite character.
- Students discuss real-life situations with connotations to the story.
- Students comment on how they would feel or how they would behave if they were in a similar situation to one of the story characters.

The **DVDs** give the language of *Our Discovery Island* a new context for students to recycle language of the Student Book. Sally, Jack and Albert provide a song and there is an animated story from each Online Island.

### Song

Students watch, listen and follow the actions. As they grow more confident, they can join in with the song.

### Story

Watch the story. Ask students what happened in the story. Watch again, stopping at key points, and ask them about the language, the images or the story. Ask the students to act out the story. Assign the roles of two of the characters to confident speakers and let other students play the other parts. Encourage them to say as much of the dialogue as they can and prompt them where necessary.