

## Lesson description

In this lesson you will prepare and tell a funny story to your classmates. You will also listen to an example of a funny story and look at some idiomatic expressions for talking about emotions and sequencing a story.

## Aim

Telling a story

## Language

- idiomatic expressions for describing emotions
- phrases for sequencing a story

## Task

The task in this lesson is to tell a funny story.

## Materials

Student handout  
Audio U049CEU-1.mp3  
Photocopiable material  
(cards for lead in and audioscript  
for language focus)

## Self-study activities

(available on platform)

Handout activity number:

Vocabulary  
Listening  
Listening  
Vocabulary

Input 1  
Input 2  
Input 3  
Language focus 3

## Suggested running order

Lead In	discussion of storytelling and what makes a good story; students choose good/bad advice for telling a funny story
Input	matching exercise for idiomatic expressions to describe emotions; listening to a funny story with comprehension check questions
Language Focus	pick out expressions for sequencing a story from the text and add to a table; gapfill a second story with expressions from the table
Task	plan and tell a funny story to your group

## Lead-in

- 1 In groups, students discuss what makes a good funny story.
- 2 Explain you want students to think about what is important when telling a funny story. Give each group a set of cards from the photocopiable materials. Students decide which they agree with and why. Feed back to class.

### Suggested answers:

- 1 *Explain the background to the story - where it happened, when it happened*  
*Good advice – this sets the scene for the story*
- 2 *Give lots of details so the story is very complicated*  
*Bad advice - listeners will get confused and lose interest if the story is too long*
- 3 *Use sequencing words like at first, then, later on, in the end*  
*Good advice – this helps the listener to understand what order the events happened*
- 4 *Explain your feeling to make your story sound more interesting*  
*Good advice - this helps the listener feel more involved with the story and it makes it more exciting*
- 5 *Take long pauses, so the listener can think about the story*  
*Bad advice – the listeners will lose interest if the story is too slow*
- 6 *Make sure you have an exciting or funny climax to the story*  
*Good advice – this is the main reason for telling the story*
- 7 *Link the different events in the story (because of that, therefore, that's why)*  
*Good advice – this helps the listener to understand how the events in the story fit together*
- 8 *Give your story a conclusion (in the end, since that day)*  
*Good advice – this brings your story to an end*


- 3 Students note down the good advice on telling a funny story on their handout.

## Input

- 1 In pairs, students look at the idiomatic expressions to describe emotions and match them to their meaning.

### Answers:

- |                                 |                                 |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1 <i>have a screw loose</i>     | 6 <i>(my) heart sank</i>        |
| 2 <i>hit the roof</i>           | 7 <i>be out of (your) depth</i> |
| 3 <i>get mixed up</i>           | 8 <i>be down in the dumps</i>   |
| 4 <i>be as pleased as Punch</i> | 9 <i>be a pain in the neck</i>  |
| 5 <i>laugh your head off</i>    | 10 <i>be taken by surprise</i>  |

- 2  Students listen to audio and answer the comprehension check questions. Check in pairs.

### Answers:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 <i>She got a new job in Italy about 10 years ago.</i>   | 4 <i>She'd forgotten which car was hers.</i> |
| 2 <i>She borrowed one from work.</i>                      | 5 <i>She was very angry.</i>                 |
| 3 <i>She wanted to buy something to cheer herself up.</i> | 6 <i>They thought it was very funny.</i>     |

- 3 ▶ Students listen to the story again and identify which idiomatic expressions from part 1 are not used. In fact, they are all used except 'taken by surprise'. They make the story more interesting and exciting.

## Language Focus

- 1 Give the students a copy of the audioscript from the photocopiable materials. In pairs, get them to look for expressions they can use to add to the table.

### Suggested answers:

Starting the story/background information	<i>It all started when I was living in I was working for I must have been living there for about three months</i>
Sequencing the story	<i>Before Afterwards After a while I'd been doing this for about 10 minutes When</i>
Adding an exciting or funny climax	<i>Suddenly Without any warning</i>
Linking events	<i>In order to That's why As long as Otherwise Because</i>
Concluding the story	<i>In the end Eventually</i>

- 2 Again in pairs, students add more expressions to their table.

### Suggested answers:

*Starting the story: The story began when, it was raining heavily*

*Sequencing the story: The next day, meanwhile, a few moments later, before long*

*Adding an exciting or funny climax: all of a sudden, out of nowhere, to my horror*

*Linking events: as a result, because of that*

*Concluding the story: at long last*

- 3 In pairs, students gap fill the story using expressions from their table.

### Suggested answers:

1 *It all started when*

4 *that's why*

7 *in the end*

2 *I must have been living there*

5 *because*

3 *After a while*

6 *all of a sudden*

## Task

- 1 Students work in groups of four. Allow them time to prepare their story individually. Circulate to help them with any vocabulary they might need. Encourage them to sequence their story and to describe the emotions of the people in the story. They should make some notes to help them but they must not write out the whole story.

- 2 In their groups, students take it in turn to tell their story. Make sure they are telling the story and not reading it.
- 3 Ask each group to tell the class one or more of their stories.

## Review

Feedback on language and review of learning objectives. Highlight any common errors noted during the task, highlight good examples of language use, and point out some alternatives to common overused phrases.

## Audio script

It all started when I was living in Italy about 10 years ago and er ... I got this job in Southern Italy and ... I was really excited, you know, I was as pleased as Punch. I was working for a big company, um ... and I didn't speak much Italian, which was a bit difficult. I was a bit out of my depth really.

Well, I had to travel around quite a lot, so I needed a ... a car, you know, in order to get around. But, the company was too mean to let me have my own car. They just ... they just wanted to save money, I suppose, so every day I had to go to the office to collect the car and then take it back to the office at the end of the day. It was a bit of a pain in the neck really. And it was always a different car, did I mention that? You never ... that's why you never knew which car you were going to get.

Anyway, there was this one day when, I must have been living there for about three months or something and ... and on this particular day I finished work and I thought, ... er ..., I was feeling a bit down in the dumps, so I thought, you know, I'll just do my shopping before I take the car back, buy myself something nice for dinner, or something. The company didn't mind as long as the car was back by the evening.

So, I did my shopping but afterwards, when I got into the car park, I couldn't remember where on earth I'd parked the car! I got all mixed up. I couldn't remember where the car was and I couldn't even remember what sort of car it was! ... and I ... my heart sank, you know. It was awful!

So, after a while, I decided to try my key in a few cars to see if any of them fitted and ... otherwise I'd have been there all night! ... and I'd been doing this for about 10 minutes when suddenly, this woman came up to me and ... and she really hit the roof. She was shouting and she kept saying, 'Why are you trying to get into my car?'

So I ... well ... I just wasn't sure what to do and all I managed to say was, 'I'm really sorry. I'm English', as if that was an excuse for trying to steal her car! And she, ... . She must have thought I had a screw loose because she just ... just stared at me! And then, in the end, she got into her car and drove off. Well, eventually I found my car of course, but my colleagues ... they just laughed their heads off when I told them what had happened.