



STORIES BY ASSOCIATION

V-3

Unit V / READING AND WRITING / Level: Intermediate to advanced /
Time: Two 20–30 minute sessions

Language Function(s): Making associations, narrating

Materials: None

In Class

1. Elicit any six words from the class, for example: *sun, leather, woman, mother, office, dog*. Write the words on the board.
2. Divide the class into six groups. Each group should work on one of the six words. No two groups should be assigned the same word. Tell the groups to concentrate on their respective words and to think of as many associations as they can with their words. The associations need not be direct. In fact, the more spontaneous and imaginative the associations, the better. Ask the groups to delegate students to come and write their lists on the board. From the set of words listed in step 1, the groups might produce sets of words such as the following:

SUN

moon, stars,
planets, hot,
astronomy,
telescope,
lens, bright

LEATHER

plastic, silk,
cloth, material,
rubber,
cowhide, whip,
imitation

WOMAN

man, animal,
child,
attractive
ugly, sexy,
kind

MOTHER

father, warm,
family, pregnant,
baby,
busy,
unappreciated

OFFICE

typewriter,
stapler, desk,
calculator,
chair,
boss, prison

DOG

cat, mouse,
rat, kennel,
bark, bite,
friend,
bone

3. Tell the students to copy down all six lists of words. Check that they understand the meanings of any new words. Then ask the students to write a story *using at least one word from each of the six sets of words*. You may wish to assign this for homework and offer a small prize for the story including the most words from the six lists.
4. At the second session, once you have collected and corrected the stories, ask the students to reassemble in the same groups they were in before. Each group should nominate a spokesperson to read its story to the whole class. As the stories are read out, the class should pay careful attention in listening for the words from the six lists as they occur.

Bryan Robinson

Editor's Note

The initial brainstorming phase serves as a valuable creative stimulus. Many teachers probably feel that attempts at creative writing with their classes are doomed to failure, when all that is really needed is a simple warm-up activity to spark off the students' imaginations.



V-7



COMPOSITION BY CARDS

Unit V / READING AND WRITING / Level: Elementary to intermediate / Time: 30–45 minutes

Language Function(s): Writing sentences, narrating

Materials: Small cards, one per student

Before Class

Select a number of words you want to review with the class. Base your selection on words which you are sure your students will be able to combine in sentences. Write one word clearly on each of the cards. You need one card per student.

In Class

1. Give one card to each student. Then ask each student to make one sentence using the word on the card. Check that they all understand the words on their cards.
2. Ask one student to read out his or her word. The others should try to combine this word with the word on their own cards in a sentence. For example, Anita reads out her word: *director*. Magda has *shoot*, and makes the sentence: "Sometimes I would like to shoot the director." Ramon's word is *cold*, so he makes the sentence: "The director doesn't like the winter because it's cold."
3. Divide the students into groups of three or four. Tell the groups to make as many different combinations

of their words as they can. Minor transformations of the words are permissible; for instance, verbs may be changed into the past tense form, plurals of nouns may be used, and adjectives may be in the comparative or superlative forms. Imagine a group with the words *shoot, dislike, communist, teacher*. They may produce sentences such as: "The communists shot the teacher because they disliked her," "The teacher was a communist who disliked shooting animals as a hobby," or "The teacher disliked living in a communist country so much that he shot himself." The more combinations the students make and the more inventive they are, the better.

4. Bring the whole class together again. Tell the groups to appoint a spokesperson to read their best sentences to the class. Then tell the class you want to write a story combining all the words. Encourage as much discussion as possible about the form the story should take. Once the story line is clear, write the final version on the board and allow time for the students to write it down if they wish to.

Author's Note

This idea was inspired by a workshop on creative writing at Pilgrims Language Courses Summer School in Canterbury, England.

Bryan Robinson





CREATIVE WRITING

1. Write the name, nationality, and occupation that are most unlike your own. Explain your choices.

Peter Grundy

2. Write comprehension questions referring to picture stories on cards. Students match questions and stories and find answers.

Pat Charalambides

3. Write sentences from the letters of your home town: Victor And Lola Eat National Cooking In America

Bryan Robinson

4. How many English words can you make from the letters of your name?

Jean-Paul Creton

5. Write your own epitaph or obituary.

Martin Worth

6. A day after a role-play, present class with a "news-paper report" of that role-play.

Patrick Gibben

7. Students suggest their own examination paper. Which questions would they want to answer? And which not? Why?

Kathleen Schlusmans

8. For "student-centered feedback" have your class write their own progress reports.

Christopher Sion

9. Elementary students write as many English words as they can in five minutes. They compare in pairs.

Mike Lavery

10. Write descriptions of pictures from picture stories on cards. Students to match pictures.

Pat Charalambides

11. Students to make six to ten changes in a text without altering the main sense.

Mike Lavery

12. Have the students write an entry, real or imaginary, for themselves in "Who's Who."

Kathleen Schlusmans

13. Distribute large sheets of paper. The students write/draw whatever they want on them and then discuss.

Katya Benjamin

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FACTS AND EXPLANATIONS

1. Explain why there are 24 hours in a day. Devise an alternative time scale.

Bryan Robinson

2. "Winter is caused by cold weather." What is winter caused by?

Christopher Sion

3. Why is London, New York, Peking (or any other city) where it is?

Alison Baxter

4. What makes classical music classical?

Kathleen Schlusmans

5. What is creativity and what would the world be without it?

Denny Packard

6. Explain the rules of a game or sport. Which rules would you like to change? Why?

Martin Worth

7. How do you iron a shirt?

Peter Grundy

8. Recommend ways governments could economize and become more efficiently run.

Denny Packard

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