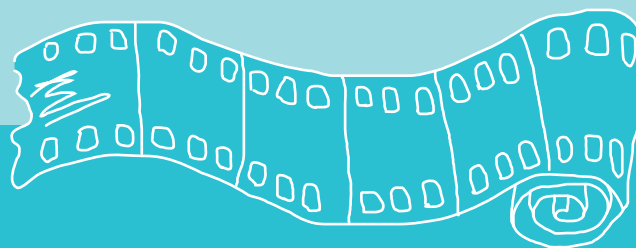


The Silent Film "Cesta" ("The Journey") as a Springboard to Creative Writing Activities in the ESL Classroom

CLASSROOM MATERIAL



Subject: English

Subjects included: Creative Writing, History, Civics, Psychology

Age group: secondary school students

Level: B1

Language aims: practise present, present perfect and past tenses, extend vocabulary (the field of literary and film terms, the topic of war, emotions and personal characteristics)

Creative writing aims: support imagination, develop creative writing skills, introduce students to writing a diary entry and a dialogue

Key words: blog, creative writing, dialogue, diary entry, character, line, plot, story

Aids and materials: the film "Cesta" and technical equipment for showing the film, students' worksheets, the following words in a bag: fear, explain, remember, family, thoughts, die, fault, war, conscience, guilty, punishment, sleep, escape, why, children, freedom

Time guide: 3 x 45 minutes

1) A Diary Entry



2) A Dialogue



3) Revision



Erasmus+

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PART 1 - “A Diary Entry”



Lead-in (3 mins)

Ask the students if they like watching films and why.

Preview activity (5)

Introduce the film to the students.

Now, we are going to watch a short film. The name of the film is “Cesta” and there is one interesting thing about the film I will tell you before we watch it. A key element of film is missing. Can you guess what it is?

...

There are no words, nobody is speaking! Is it a good idea to watch a film without a dialogue in an English class? Why?/Why not?

...

Viewing activity – interpreting (10)

What is the topic of the film?

Which time period is it set in?

Can you tell me the plot of the film? Why did the man shoot the unarmed ones?

Follow-up activity

1. Discussion starting with the question above (5)

There are a lot of difficult situations we have to deal with every day. I hope they are not as serious as the one in the film. But what helps people to get over their problems, bad experience and so on?

...

If no student says “a diary”, suggest it and put up it on the board and ask them if they keep a diary. Give the students the worksheet “A Diary Entry”.

2. Creative writing focus - WORKSHEET “A Diary Entry”

A) Do you have a friend who always shares your joys and sorrows? (10)

B) You cannot stop evolution! A new type of a diary was born! (8)

C) Homework (4)

Read the instructions from the worksheet and tell the students that besides a description of what happened there should also be something about the writer's feelings. Maybe he wants to defend his behaviour...

A Diary Entry Teachers' Sheet



A personal diary is a notebook in which people write down what has happened to them, record their private thoughts and feelings or comment on current events outside their direct experience. A personal diary is usually written just for its author and it helps them to put up with their everyday worries and to understand their feelings.

It can also be used as a guide to one's past life. If you open your diary after a few years, it will give you information about your previous experience, thoughts, feelings and opinions. You can see how your life and personality have changed. A diary is your silent friend who never lets you get bored. "I never travel without my diary. One should always have something sensational to read in the train." - Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895)

A personal diary can serve other people as a source of information about the time period or the place the author lived in. The most popular example is the diary of Anne Frank, which chronicles the daily life of a Jewish family in hiding during the Second World War. Anna died in a concentration camp and her diary was published two years later, in 1947. The question if the diary was really written by a teenage girl has been discussed and also if it is moral to publish someone's private diary without their permission.

A Diary as a Literary Genre

Besides the fact that some famous people's diaries have been published, e.g. *The Diaries of Franz Kafka*, a diary also exists as a literary genre or form. For instance, the appeal of the diary form led Bram Stoker to write Dracula's story in this style. Young readers know *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* or *The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole, Aged 13¾*.

Typical Features of Diary Writing

It does not matter if the diary is real or fictional, there are some less or more important essentials of diary writing which should be followed.

- There is a date at the top.
- Since a diary is something as a good friend, an entry can start with "Dear Diary".
- It is written in the first person and everything is seen from the writer's point of view.
- The entries are usually written in chronological order, e.g. day-to-day basis or less frequently.
- A diary tells how the writer feels about what is happening and what has happened.
- Time connectives are often used, e.g. first, at first, afterwards, finally, earlier, later that day...).

When using a diary entry in an English class, it is also important to focus on tenses which can be used. For recording experiences we use both past simple and past continuous. For our statements we use present simple. For telling what we are doing right now or currently in these days we use present continuous. For actions which have been happening till now we use present perfect continuous.

Teachers' Worksheet 1: "A Diary Entry"



A) Do you have a friend who always shares your joys and sorrows?

According to your opinion, should a diary include the following?

- your experiences
- thoughts
- feelings
- comment on current events outside your direct experience

Which tenses can you use?

Past tenses – experiences, what happened.

e.g. While I was standing in a queue feeling bored, I noticed him with another girl.

Present simple – statements.

e.g. I don't think that anybody has the right to behave like that.

Present continuous – what I am doing right now or currently in these days.

e.g. I am sitting here in my room and thinking about the situation.

Present perfect continuous - what has been happening till now.

e.g. I have been working hard on the matter.



Brainstorm your other ideas about what you know about a diary.

Use the TS „A Diary Entry“.

B) You cannot stop evolution! A new type of a diary was born!

Start with the crosswords.

1. If you keep a private diary nobody else _____ it because there are some secrets you do not want to share with anyone, except your silent friend.
2. The part which is written on a single day is called _____.
3. A diary can be a useful _____ to your past life. If you open it after a few years, it will give you information about your previous experience, thoughts, feelings and opinions. You can see how your personality has changed.
4. A diary does not just have to be written for its author, it is also a literary _____. (Have you read Diary of a Wimpy Kid, The Secret Diary of Adrian Mole, Aged 13¾ or The Diary of Anne Frank?)
5. Diary records are usually written in chronological _____.
6. The word diary comes from the _____ "diarium". The synonym for the word diary is journal but this one has its roots in French.
7. If a diarist has their diary with them all the time, they will never get _____ because they can enjoy reading or writing in it.



R	E	A	D	S
E	N	T	R	Y
G	U	I	D	E
G	E	N	R	E
O	R	D	E	R
L	A	T	I	N
B	O	R	E	D

There is a hidden word in the table. Can you find it? It is related to the topic we have been dealing with.

What does the word mean? Who is a blogger?
What is the main difference between a diarist and a blogger?
Do you know any famous bloggers? Do you read their blogs? Why?/Why not?

C) Homework

Let's go back to the film. Imagine that the man who shot the unarmed ones keeps a diary. Write a diary entry of that day between **80 – 100 words long**.

Students' Worksheet 1: "A Diary Entry"



A) Do you have a friend who always shares your joys and sorrows?

According to your opinion, should a diary include the following?

- your experiences
- thoughts
- feelings
- comment on current events outside your direct experience

Which tenses can you use?



Brainstorm your other ideas about what you know about a diary.

B) You cannot stop evolution! A new type of a diary was born!

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		A		
		T		
		I		
		N		
		D		
		T		
		R		

There is a hidden word in the table. Can you find it? It is related to the topic we have been dealing with. The word is _____.

C) Homework

Let's go back to the film. Imagine that the man who shot the unarmed ones keeps a diary. Write a diary entry of that day between **80 – 100 words long**.

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PART 2 - “A Dialogue”



Warm-up – think about an alternative title for the film (5 mins)

Ask the class if they have their homework and ask them whose point of view they had to look at what had happened in the film. Then get them to think of an alternative title for the film according to the diary they have written. The new title should reflect what the killer thinks about the day. Discuss their ideas.

Check HW - reading a diary entry (10)

Put all the diary entries together and pull out just one to be read. Ask the author to read it aloud. Discuss both the idea and the way the diary entry is written. Do the students miss anything there?

Creative writing focus – speaking task (5)

Write the word dialogue on the board and ask the students why there was no need to use it in the film. Discuss which films are understandable without words.

e.g. Tom and Jerry and other cartoons, grotesques – action – it is about what it is happening, nothing needs to be explained in words

On the other hand, what types of film need a dialogue?

All films and series based on word humour.

e.g. sitcoms – the word sitcom comes from “sitting comedy”

- in most of them there is a place with a large sofa where the characters meet and talk

- if there were no words in sitcoms, they would not even exist

- try to imagine if there were not any words in Friends, The Big Bang Theory, The Simpsons

Can you imagine your favourite film without a dialogue? What would it be like?

Creative writing focus – WORKSHEET “A Dialogue”

A) **Characters do not speak like our textbooks! (10)**

B) **Who is speaking? (10)**

C) **Homework (5)**

Read the instructions from the worksheet and point out the most important elements of a dialogue.

A Dialogue Teachers' Sheet



The simplest definition of a dialogue is that it is a written or spoken conversational exchange between two or more people. Our students know it well because they have come across many examples of it in their textbooks, and we also want them to make up dialogues themselves. They both learn and practise grammar through them.

A Dialogue and Learning Foreign Languages

We all know that a dialogue is the main reason why we learn foreign languages: learner's long-term aim is to be able to have a conversation with someone who does not speak their mother tongue. In order to prepare our students for the shock that the language of native speakers is quite different from the one our "textbook heroes" use, it is good to devote some time to these differences. It does not matter which level of English our students are, there is always some space for showing them how to make their sentences more real-life. In this effort, a characters conversation as a creative writing activity may be helpful.

A Real-life Dialogue

If we write a dialogue intended to be like a real-life one, we should respect the following essentials.

- We do not speak in perfectly structured sentences made of five clauses or so and we do not put so much information into them.
 - ☹️ *"I've finally decided to enroll in the special English course in order to improve my writing skills because I want to get to university and study English when I'm back in the Czech Republic."*
 - 😊 *"I really wanna get better at my writing, you know. So I will join the English course we've talked about. It will help me get to uni. I mean when back home."*
- We do not repeat what the other side has said. We just respond to it.
 - ☹️ *"What do you think about her new boyfriend?"*
"I don't think anything about her new boyfriend."
 - 😊 *"What do you think about her new boyfriend?"*
"Nothing."
- We do not mention what the other side knows. If you need to put a piece of information into the dialogue, do it naturally.
 - ☹️ *"I'm looking forward to your 18th birthday party!"*
 - 😊 *"I'm looking forward to the party! You will be 18! It is so exciting!"*
- We do not use formal language.
 - ☹️ *"I am so surprised that our grandmother has won the lottery!"*
 - 😊 *"Oh, my God! Our granny's won the lottery!"*
- We do not use the name of the second speaker very often.
 - ☹️ *"Hi, Lucy!" "Hi, Peter!" "How're you, Lucy?"...*

Teachers' Worksheet 2: "A Dialogue"



A) Characters do not speak like our textbooks!

Look at the two dialogues and think about the main differences between them.

"I am afraid that the woman who lived above us and robbed the bank ten years ago has been released from the prison. I saw her in the supermarket when I was shopping and I must admit that she has not changed at all."

"Really?"

"Oh, my God! Listen! She's back from prison."

"Who?"

"The woman who robbed the bank ten years ago!"

"Do you mean the one who lived above us?"

"Yeah!"

"Who told you?"

"No one... I saw her in Lidl! It must have been her! She hasn't changed at all."

"Oh, really?"

- spoken English (Oh, my God!, Yeah!)
- interaction
- less general terms (Lidl instead supermarket)



What should a real-life dialogue be like?

Use the TS „A Diary Entry“.

B) Who is speaking?

Dialogues can tell us a lot about the personalities of the characters, no matter what they are talking about. Imagine that these schoolmates are having lunch in a school canteen. They are talking about their school-leaving exam. Think about four different sentences according to their personalities (follow the adjectives).

What would they say?

Before writing the sentences repeat to the students that it is not good to put in too much information into a line. Dialog should be lively!

e.g. I am so afraid of the final exam which we are taking next month. I am sure it will be very difficult to pass. X Just one month to go! I won't pass.

self-confident
and easy-going

hard-working
and modest



gifted and optimistic

always nervous
and doubtful

C) Homework (5)

Let's go back to the film we saw last time. Imagine the killer meets one of his victims after his death. He lived a long life and passed away in his eighties. Before he died he had been afraid of meeting his victims. Now it is happening. What would their dialogue look like?

Write **at least 20 lines**. If you have no idea what to write, draw two words from a bag which could help you.

Students' Worksheet 2: "A Dialogue"



A) Characters do not speak like our textbooks!

Look at the two dialogues and think about the main differences between them.

"I am afraid that the woman who lived above us and robbed the bank ten years ago has been released from the prison. I saw her in the supermarket when I was shopping and I must admit that she has not changed at all."

"Really?"

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"Do you mean the one who lived above us?"

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What would they say?



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PART 3 - “Revision”



Warm-up (5 mins)

Write up the word dialogue on the board and letters a, b, c, d, e etc. under each other. Tell students to write varied adjectives describing a dialogue step by step starting with the letter a. Who gets the furthest, is the winner. Give them 2 minutes.

Dialog a _____ (aggressive, anonymous)
b _____ (boring, bilingual, beautiful, bad)
c _____ (catchy, Czech, creative)
d _____ (difficult, dramatic, dull)
e _____ (English, embarrassing)
f _____ (fantastic, funny, fictional, formal)

...

WORKSHEET activities

- A) Check HW - Does the dialogue work as it should do? (15)**
- B) Vocabulary review - Can you remember them? (5)**
- C) Point out the most important things in creative writing (5)**

Closing discussion on creative writing, evaluation of the classes, self-evaluation (15)

What do you find enjoyable about creative writing?

Which activity did you like the most? Which one was the most demanding?

What have you learnt? What were you good at?

Teachers' Worksheet 3: Revision



A) Does the dialog work as it should do?

Collect the dialogues and let each student draw one. After that let students read them to themselves and answer the question.

Read the dialogue you have been given. Tick Yes or No according to the dialogue and your opinion about it.

- Is the language too formal? Do the characters talk like textbooks? Yes/No
- Are the sentences too long? Yes/No
- Do the lines follow up from each other? Yes/No
- According to the lines, can you imagine how the characters are feeling? Yes/No
- As a reader, are you confused about anything? Yes/No

(1 point for each underlined answer!)

Read the dialogue with the highest score aloud and discuss both the idea and how the dialog is created. You can follow the questions above.

B) Can you remember them?

The series of events which form the story of a novel, play, film. Without it, the characters would have nothing to do.

plot

The words spoken by an actor in a play or film. Two and more of them together are a dialogue.

line

A personal record that somebody puts on their website giving an account of their activities and their opinions, and discussing.

blog

A single unit of language which means something and can be spoken or written.

word

A series of moving pictures shown on television or at the cinema.

film



What do all the words above have in common?



Four-letter words, one-syllable words, nouns, relating to creative writing

C) It is all about a good plot!

It does not matter if you want to become a famous novelist, scriptwriter or playwright, the thing which you will always have to deal with is the plot! There is no story without it. Try to find a connection between this idea and the picture.

- 1) Each plot must evolve step by step like the carpet you can see.
- 2) If you write a good piece of writing, there is an award waiting at the end of the red

Could the short film Cesta be developed into a feature film? Why?/Why not?
Would it be possible to use "a diary entry" and "a dialogue" in the feature film version?
Choose one part of the film and think about how to extend it. Would there be any new characters?

Students' Worksheet 3: Revision



A) Does the dialogue work as it should do?

Read the dialogue you have been given. Tick Yes or No according to the dialogue and your opinion about it.

- Is the language too formal? Do the characters talk like textbooks? Yes/No
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- Do the lines follow up from each other? Yes/No
- According to the lines, can you imagine how the characters are feeling? Yes/No
- As a reader, are you confused about anything? Yes/No

B) Can you remember them?

The series of events which form the story of a novel, play, film. Without it, the characters would have nothing to do.

The words spoken by an actor in a play or film. Two and more of them together are a dialogue.

A personal record that somebody puts on their website giving an account of their activities and their opinions, and discussing.

A single unit of language which means something and can be spoken or written.

A series of moving pictures shown on television or at the cinema.



What all the words above have in common?



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fear explain remember family

thoughts die fault war

conscience guilty punishment sleep

escape why children freedom