

A telling tale

Language

Vocabulary connected with storytelling traditions.

Level

Pre-intermediate to intermediate (equivalent to CEF level B1–B2)

Comment

This eLesson looks at storytelling and changes in storytelling traditions.

How to use the lesson

- 1 Set the context for the reading: storytelling. You could ask students if storytelling is important in their culture. You could find out what types of stories they remember being told as children and ask for more details. You might want to ask who usually told them stories and when they were told. This could be done as a whole class activity or in pairs / small groups followed by class feedback.
- 2 Show students a few books or pictures of book covers, or simply story titles for different types of stories (adventures, fairy tales, myths, etc.). Ask them, in pairs / groups to discuss what types of stories they think each of them is. Students then read the text to see which story types are given in the text. Set a brief time limit, eg 1–2 minutes depending on students' level, to encourage fast reading. When the time limit is up, take feedback and tick the ideas mentioned in the text on the board if appropriate.
- 3 Exercise 1 gives students practice in reading for detailed comprehension. If you feel your students might have problems with any of the words, refer them to the Glossary if appropriate. Students could compare their answers in pairs. In class feedback ask students to justify their answers with reference to the text.
- 4 Exercise 2 focuses on vocabulary from the text. Students could try to complete the sentences first alone or in pairs. Take feedback. If appropriate for your students, you could highlight the fact that *function* has the stress on the first syllable, *remind*, *tradition*, *behave* and *identity* have the stress on the second and *entertainment* has the stress on the third syllable.
- 5 Exercise 3 provides practice of the words in exercise 2. If appropriate students could check answers in pairs before going through them as a class. Students then ask and answer the questions in pairs. Monitor pairs and help if needed before taking feedback.
- 6 Exercise 4 focuses on referencing words. You could give an example to demonstrate what to do: *Today the storytellers are the young and the old, and their audience is not just their community but also the rest of the world; their refers back to the storytellers (who are the young and the old).* You could ask students to scan the text quickly, find the underlined words from the exercise and circle them. They then decide which word(s) it refers back to. You could ask them to draw an arrow back to the word(s) it refers to in the text, either in pairs or as a whole class task. Take feedback.
- 7 Sound / spelling connections are particularly difficult for some students. With stronger students you could let them try and guess the odd one out without support for exercise 5. With weaker students, model the first one with them (*life* is the odd one out as it has the /aɪ/ sound). In feedback it would be useful to drill the words to help students with the pronunciation; or you could model the pronunciation using the Macmillan online dictionary by clicking on the pronunciation icon, eg for *tradition*; <http://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/tradition>
- 8 Exercise 6 gives students personalised speaking practice on the topic of storytelling. Set the discussion task for small groups if appropriate. Take feedback.

Answer key

1

- 1 F (the opposite is true; it has greater importance in cultures where speech is more important than writing).
- 2 T
- 3 F (not for the Canadian Métis but for the Australian Aborigines)
- 4 T
- 5 F (storytellers can now be of any age and their audience is also changing, sometimes it is the wider world, not just a community)

2

- 1 function
- 2 behave
- 3 remind
- 4 pass down
- 5 tradition
- 6 entertainment
- 7 identity

3

- 1 remind
- 2 entertainment
- 3 behave
- 4 passed down
- 5 traditions
- 6 identity
- 7 function

4

- 1 the (written) word
- 2 the (next) generation
- 3 a form of entertainment
- 4 stories
- 5 storytelling as a tradition within a community

5

- 1 life /aɪ/
- 2 personal /ɜː/
- 3 gain /g/
- 4 events /s/

6

Students' own ideas.

Related websites

The following websites might be useful for either you or your students.

<http://www.georgiaencyclopedia.org/articles/arts-culture/storytelling-traditions> (information on different types of stories)

http://firstpeoplesofcanada.com/fp_metis/fp_metis1.html (information on the Métis)

<http://www.mhs.mb.ca/docs/pageant/10/indiantales.shtml> (Indian tales)

<http://www.vision2lead.com/Storytelling.pdf> (storytelling and collaborative e-learning resources for teachers)