

# Cartoon Stories

By Jessica Watson

**Level:** Elementary

**Age group:** All ages, from young learner to adult

**Provides practice of:**

Listening, speaking, reading, writing

Present tense questions

**Prepositions of place**

**Present continuous for describing what's happening now.**

**Aims:** **Students will have the opportunity to**

- write a cartoon story, firstly as a whole class, then in small groups and finally, for homework, as individuals.
- ask and answer questions about location.
- ask and answer questions using present continuous to describe what's happening now.
- practise vocabulary, spoken and written.
- retell a story they have written.
- read and/or hear about stories other students have written.

**You will need:**

An OHT of the blank cartoon story template,  
**or** six boxes drawn on the board.

Handouts of the blank cartoon story template,  
**or** six boxes drawn in their class books / on paper.

**Notes:**

**Plot:** Add the writing to the pictures backwards – from picture 6 to picture 1 – this ensures you get an ending. If you write from picture 1 to 6, the stories can peter out and have no real direction or action.

**Learner Autonomy:** Try to accept all the students' suggestions for picture and words, no matter how strange. Encouraging students to be responsible for their own stories may help them to become more autonomous and responsible learners.

**Group Roles:** Give the roles of artist and writer to stronger students in each group. The artists need to be strong speakers as they'll need to ask a lot of questions. You could appoint two writers to work together.

**Peer Correction:** You could pass finished stories to other groups and ask them to make any corrections necessary.

## Lesson Plan:

### a. Warm up / Revision:

1. Check students know **prepositions of place**, that they can both understand and use them. Ask and answer questions about objects on your desk or around the classroom.
2. Drill the pronunciation of **'Where's the...?'**, and of prepositions of place (next to, behind, between, in front of, under, above, on the left, on the right, in the middle, at the top, at the bottom, in the top left hand corner, in the bottom right hand corner etc).
3. Check students can ask and answer questions using **present continuous** to describe what's happening now. Mime an action, and ask, "What am I doing?" and ask students to do the same.
4. Check students are familiar with the concept of **a cartoon** as being a series of pictures, with some words (either underneath or in the picture), that tell a simple story.

**b. Whole Class Cartoon Story:**

1. Show the blank cartoon template – either on an OHT or on the board.  
Ask the class: “What’s in this picture?”  
When a student suggests something, ask questions:  
“Where’s the dog? Is he in the middle, on the left or on the right?”  
“Where’s the cat? Is he next to the dog?”  
“What’s the dog doing? Is the dog eating or sleeping?”  
Draw whatever the students suggest in the first box.  
Don’t write any words.
2. Move to the next empty box. Ask the class again: “What’s in this picture?”  
Again, ask questions using prepositions of place and present continuous to get plenty of detail.  
Don’t write any words.
3. Continue to complete the pictures in each of the six boxes in this way.  
  
You need to ensure that the six pictures make a story! If your first five pictures show a dog and a cat falling in love, it may be odd if a horse appears in the final frame (although not impossible of course!).  
  
Try to listen to as many class members as possible, so that this story is a real team effort.  
  
Continue to ask questions about place and what’s happening so that students hear a good model for questions.
4. You now have a story told in six pictures.  
Go to the sixth picture. Write underneath it, ‘The End’.  
Go to the fifth picture. Ask the class: “What shall I write here?”  
Take students’ suggestions, and then write the best in the space for writing.
5. Go to the fourth picture, and repeat.  
Continue with the third and second picture.  
When you arrive at the first picture, ask students: “How do the best stories start?” Your students may know, “Once upon a time...”
6. You now have a six part story written by your class, beginning ‘Once upon a time...’ and ending ‘The End’. Ask students for a title. Write the best one at the top of the page.  
Tell the story with the class, asking questions to check their understanding.  
Then cover the story and ask students to retell the story. If you are using an OHT, reveal the story picture by picture as they retell it.

**c. Small Groups Cartoon Story**

1. Ask the class: “How did we write the story?”, “What did I do to make the story?”, “What did you do to make the story?”, “What was my job?”  
Elicit from them a series of instructions and prompts.  
(You were the artist and writer, and the students were the story-tellers):

Depending on your class, students may need a script, or they may be able to work from a flow chart or diagram. If you aren't sure how much support they need, do the activity first time with lots of support – a script written on the board - then withdraw support each time you reuse this activity.

2. Divide the class into small groups.  
Within each group, identify an artist, a writer and story-tellers.  
Give the artists in each group a blank cartoon story template, or ask him/her to draw a template in his/her class book.
3. Set the groups a time limit of ten minutes to draw the story.  
Monitor students to check they are asking and answering questions successfully. Help if necessary – but try not to give them any artistic input – let the stories be their own work.
4. Once the groups have drawn the story, ask the artists to give the story to the writers.  
Writers then take instructions from the story-tellers.  
Set the groups a time limit of ten minutes to write the story.  
Remind students to start at the end of the story and work backwards.  
Monitor groups and help where necessary with spelling, vocabulary etc.
5. After ten minutes, each group should have a cartoon story!  
Ask the groups to think of a title.
6. Groups could then present their story to the rest of the class, or stick the stories around the classroom for students to look at and write a short quiz on them, or photocopy them and give each student a book of cartoons from his/her classmates.

**d. Homework**

Give students a blank template, or ask them to draw 6 boxes in their class books.  
For homework, they need to write their own story.  
Remind students to draw the pictures first, and write second.

“ \_\_\_\_\_ !”

<u>1.</u>
<u>3.</u>
<u>5.</u>

<u>2.</u>
<u>4.</u>
<u>6.</u>