

Workshop: The storyline approach in foreign-language training

The storyline method has been used internationally and almost exclusively in core subjects where the mother tongue is spoken - for example in social studies at elementary schools or in history or geography classes in middle schools. The workshop presenter has used this approach with tremendous success in foreign-language teaching for over 10 years. The "storyline" should be seen as:

- A student-oriented method for task based foreign-language learning.
- A method to facilitate the transition from the primary to secondary level

The method is based on the curriculum planned by the teacher and provides opportunities to enhance the pupils' language learning experience including their individual interests and ideas, for example: business – products – going shopping – practising sales dialogues – formulating complaints. The "key questions", posed by the teacher, enable the learners to make a significant contribution to the development of the story, consequently assuming owner ship. The learners gradually design a story based on their prior knowledge and creative ideas to try out the target language.

The storyline approach does not require the use of textbooks. The task is not to work rigidly through a chapter or the curriculum which has been prepared along didactic lines and certain methodological approaches, but rather to encourage creative designing, planning, intellectual engagement, language hypotheses and accuracy – active learning.

In Storyline it is not just the teacher who ask the questions, but rather the pupils themselves. There are questions with no right or wrong answers – but there are open questions "key questions" that require pupils to draw on a variety of sources to make an appropriate response. The pupils learn.

The learners can visualise their results in a wall frieze. Presentations, written products as well as tests provide opportunities for evaluation.

The language competence of a Storyline class should be equal to or even better than that of a class taught in a more conventional way.



Language learning is a complex process.

Food for thought

Language learning follows a certain acquisition order.

Errors are valuable.

The more restricted the input the better the output.

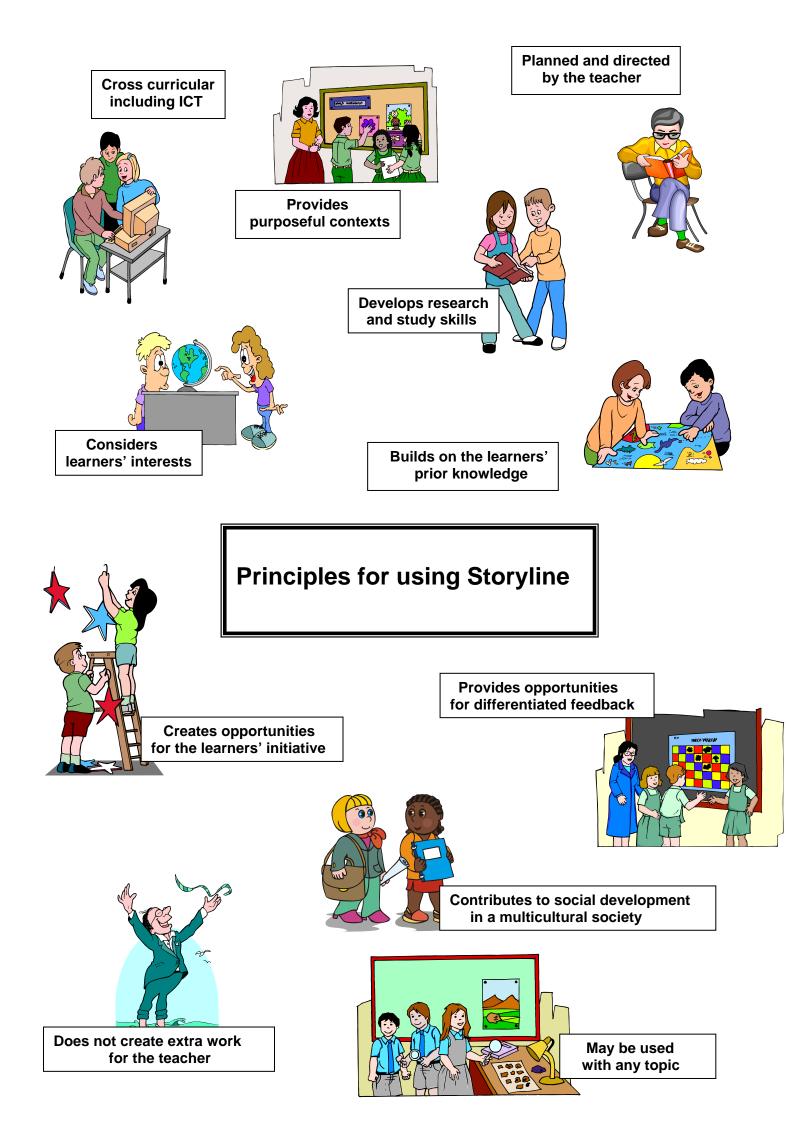
Language learning is understanding messages.

Prior knowledge hinders the learning process.

What storyline is and what it is not

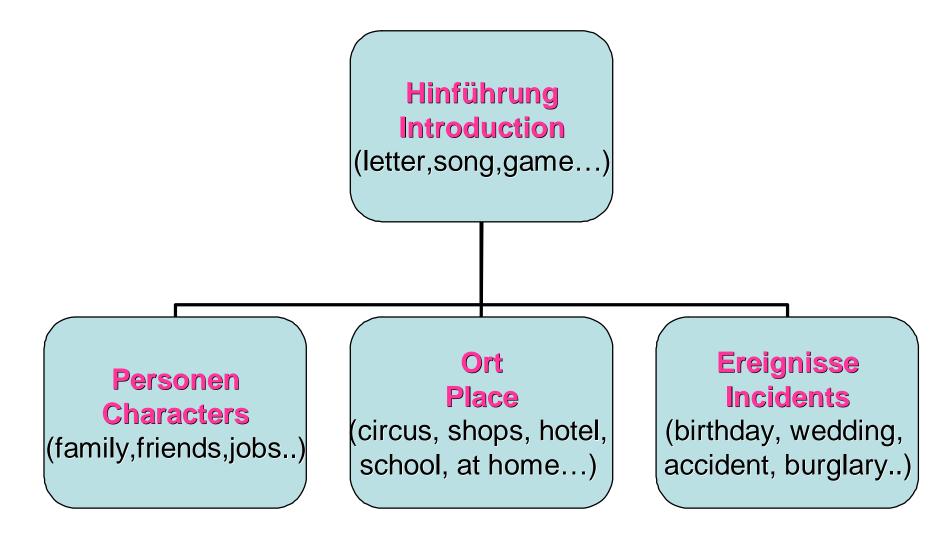
Story	ine is	Story	line is not
	Storyline is an alternative	•	Storyline is not new.
	teaching method for the language		
	classroom.		
•	Topic oriented (within the	•	Storyline is not grammar
	curriculum)		oriented.
•	Learner oriented	•	Storyline is not course book
			oriented.
	Task based	•	Storyline is not giving
			meaningless language exercises.
■	Storyline is learner-empowered	•	Storyline is not teacher-led
	story construction.		storytelling.
■	Storyline uses elements of drama	•	Storyline is not role-play and
	and role-play as integral		drama activities in the service of
	elements construing each unique		language teaching.
	storyline.		
■	Storyline uses communicative	•	Storyline is not traditional
	language teaching activities to		communicative language
	construe a storyline.		teaching.
	The teacher provides the setting	•	The teacher does not dictate the
	and introduces the episodes.		storyline;
•	Learners ask their own questions	•	There are no right or wrong
	and find their own answers.		answers.
•	The teacher provides "the red	•	The teacher does not dictate the
	thread".		storyline

Storyline is a method to solve the problematic transition form Primary - to Secondary language classes





Structure of a Storyline:



TASK:

How to plan a storyline

Choose a theme	guided by curriculum and pupils' needs and interests
Write the sequences of the storyline	beginning, middle, conclusion
Find key question / impulse	plan activities for developing the skills taking into account the range of experiences
Choose an introduction	story, TV programme, postcard/letter, game, song,
Organise resources	look for suitable material
Assess pupils' work and identify next learning steps	use their presentations, their written work and normal test papers,
Evaluate the improvement	How effective?

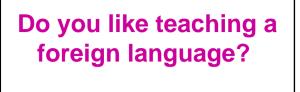
- Discuss your ideas with your partner / group.
- Have your learners in mind and decide for a storyline topic.
- Give it a first structure.
- Report in Plenum.







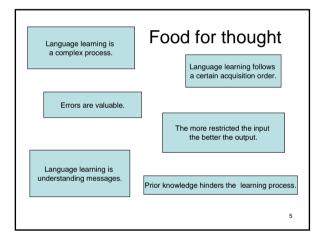




Why? -- Why not? What are your experiences?



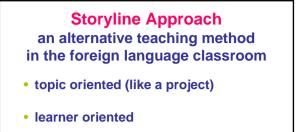
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Consider these questions before you start teaching:

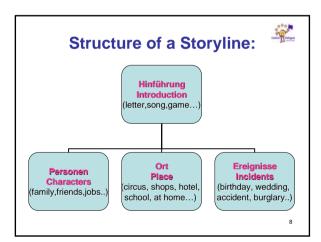
- Do I activate and build upon learners' prior knowledge?
- Do I encourage students to test their language hypotheses by questioning and research?
- Do I support /challenge learners with differentiated tasks?
- Do I use a wide range of learning activities?
- Do I foster a postitive learning atmosphere?



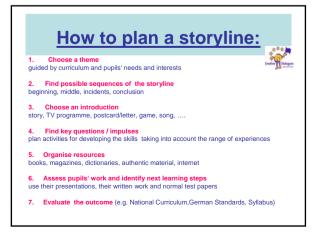
task based

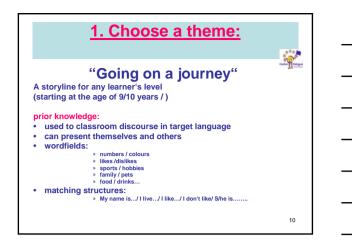
a method to solve the problematic transition from Primary- to Secondary language classes







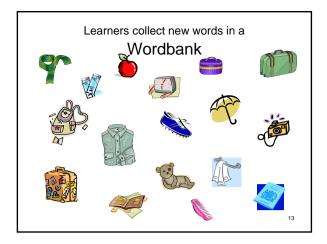


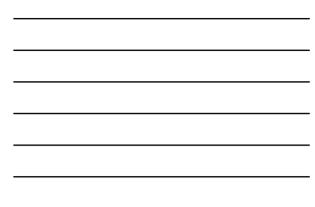




 develop individual language skills







	Μ	ind ma	p:	
		passport	sandals	
		documents	shoes	boots
		journey		
jeans	clothes			
socks	pyjamas			
				14

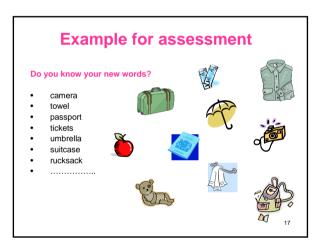


sandals	ticket	lind maj	maps	
boots		documents		
shoes	clothes	journey	more	chocolate
jacket	jeans	games	umbrella	chewing gum
socks	pyjamas	cards	camera	comics



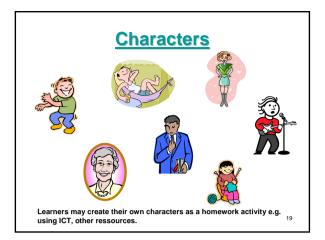
	IVI	ind ma	p.	
	Toiletries: tooth paste, shampoo	Clothes: jacket trousers	Shoes: sandals,	
student manager film star		suit case		Africa South America
Mr. Brown Patrick Mrs. Potter Lucy John	people	journey	country	Spain Italy Sweden Norway USA Canada
Grandma		transport		
		plane train ship bus car ferry motor bike bike		







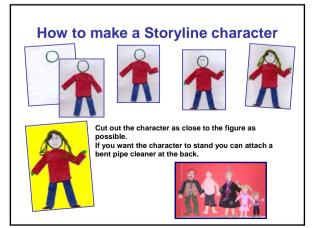


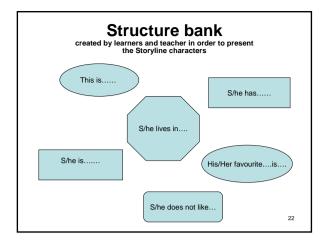




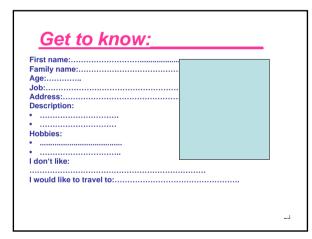












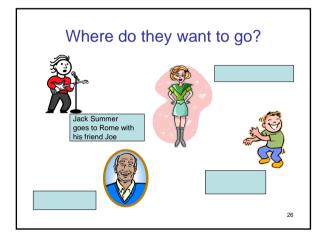
Possible Activities

• Working on a dialogue

- Creating characters (names, family, characteristics....)
- Making the characters (puppets...)
- Describing the characters
- Writing "me posters"/ poems
- · Presenting the characters to the class
- Role play (taking over the character's identity)
- Opportunities to :
- Encourage individual and independent
- learning
- Develop language, social and study skills
 Ask classmates, teacher, dictionaries for help
- · Search the internet

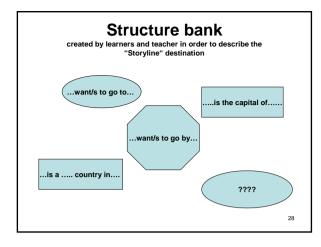


3rd step: <u>Place</u>	Teaching aims: • Find a destination (countries)
Key question: Where would you like to go?	 Say why it is your favourite (adjectives,sights) Describe your destination (Poster) Flyers, brochures Planning the journey
mapsinternetcatalogues	 Means of transport Booking the journey / selling tickets Role play Reading time tables
	• Writing a time table / using the internet Differentiated tasks for all skills Exercises: vocabulary, structures
	25















4th step: Incidents	Teaching aims:	-	
Key impulse: Eric wins a trip for 4 people!	 Creative speaking Writing letters / postcards 		
Mrs. Parker misses her train. Mr.Winter	Creating (writing) comics / picture stories	-	
	Role play		
	Planning a tour		
	30		

How to write a text

- Plan it do it check it!
- Collect ideas
- Look at a model text
- Collect vocabulary and structures (mind mapping)
- Decide the text structure
- Choose different ways to start sentences, use connectives, adjectives, adverbs.....
- Discuss the draft (assessment in groups)
- Use your dictionary, ask classmates, ask teacher...

Conclusion

Last step: culminating event to complete the story and to assess the learning outcomes

Examples:

- "End of summer-party"

Role play: characters exchange experiences from their trips.

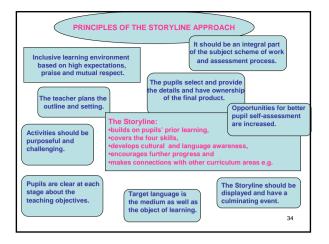
- Opening of an exhibition showing "photos" of the different trips

Photos have written and/ or oral descriptions. Learners present details from the trip (audience could be another class or parents)

32

31







Slide No.	Comments
1	Title
2,3	This is just information for the trainer, can be taken out for presentation in workshop
4	In a plenary discussion teachers talk about their experiences as a language teacher, say what works well and what doesn't work well in their classes, things they are not happy about, questions etc. This is for the trainer and the group to get to know each other, to learn about working context of other participants (if necessary); in order to take the participants' needs and experiences as a starting point
5	Participants are asked to discuss two or three (or maybe more) of these statements in small groups. Write their ideas on cards (one idea per card). Report back to the plenary, arrange cards on board. Trainer can refer to that discussion at the end of presentation when talking about the principles of Storyline
6	These questions are a direct consequence of the discussion before
7-12	Information given by the trainer
13	Collect ideas of how to work with the new words; participants share their experience (vocabulary games, written exercises etc.)
14-16	These different mind maps show how making mind maps can be trained with the children step by step; these different forms have been developed by children of different age groups; the mind maps are becoming more and more complex and structured
17	At the end of each stage in the Storyline where a particular word field is used, the teacher should assess the learning outcome. The trainer asks the groups in how many ways assessment could take place. Again the participants talk about their experiences; say in what ways they normally assess
18	Information given by the teacher
19	Trainer encourages participants to imagine what the characters' name, age, profession could be(later they will also find a suitable holiday destination for them)
20/21	Different examples of figurines and how to make them; in a long workshop the participants could (and should!) create a character, maybe choosing one of the methods presented; especially older students might prefer creating them on the computer or cutting out people from magazines
22	The structure bank is an equivalent to the word bank; the teacher asks the learners what sentence structures they could use to present their character; learners come up with sentences they already know and make suggestions (hypothesising); teacher corrects, paraphrases; structure bank should also be displayed in the classroom

Information and Comments for the Storyline PowerPoint

Slide No.	Comments
23	Depending on how familiar learners are with writing they can use this biography for their presentation
24	Participants can add their ideas to the list of possible activities; say what could work in their context, with their learners
25	Before revealing the list with teaching aims, trainer could ask participants first what activities they think could follow the key question
26	Participants imagine holiday destinations, one example given
27	One possible destination could be a castle hotel; learners can bring brochures or search the internet for holiday accommodation
28,29	Learners say where they (i.e. their character wants to go) want to go; maybe also why, what the destination looks like, what you can do there etc. Participants what structures they would like their learners to use and what activities their learners could engage in
30	Collect ideas for incidents, participants also examine what skills this would involve
31	Writing as one example
32	Information given by trainer; ask participants if they have other ideas
33	Participants discuss in groups how they would evaluate the outcome; self- assessment as well as peer and teacher assessment should play a role
34	In groups or pairs participants reflect on what the principles of Storyline are; in a final discussion the trainer refers to the opening discussion and the participants evaluate the method and say if and in what way it could help them to improve their teaching or solve some of the problems they encounter with their students



Storyline draft for learners of English as a foreign language Language level: CEF A1 - A2+/B1

Going on a Journey

Key impulse guided questions	Pupil Activity	Class organisation	Material	Outcome Assessment	Resources
Episode 1: guided in	ntroduction				
Step 1: travel equipmer	nt				
Music Flashcards/real objects	students walk around the room to look at objects	class activity	flashcards/objects (there should be	Reactivating pre- knowledge	D1/D2 (to make flashcards and any word games etc.)
spread around the room			more cards/ objects than	Getting to know new words	word games etc.)
What could be today's topic?	 guess new topic (may use mother tongue – teacher paraphrases) 		students)		
Which words do you already know? What are the new words?	 choose an object and take it into the circle learn new words word games (e.g. I pack my suitcase) 			Speaking	
Let's make a wordbank.	 categorise words with a partner match pictures and words make wordbank possible follow-up: D4 	pair work individual work	Copy of D1/D2	Reading / Writing Study skills	D1/D2 D3 Wordbank 1 D4



Key impulse guided questions	Pupil Activity	Class organisation	Material	Outcome Assessment	Resources
Step 2: holiday destinat	ions				
Key impulse: song	 listen to the song/listening for gist tell what they understood talk about details/read text 	class activity	Song, CD-player	Listening /(reading) comprehension	D5
Key question: "What do YOU think is a	a "lovely place" to go to on a	holiday?"			
	 name destinations: countries, cities find capitals of European countries 	class activity pair work	Maps Internet access atlas, reference books	Listening/ Speaking Strukturen: "Spain is a lovely place." "I'd like to go to …" Reading/Writing Cross-curricular: geography	D6 (wordbank 2) http://www.yourchildlear ns.com/europe_map.ht m http://en.wikipedia.org/w iki/Maps_of_Europe
Do you have postcards/souvenirs from your holiday trips?	 bring postcards/souvenirs from different countries and present them 	class activity		Speaking	
Let's make a chart of our favourite holiday destinations. How can we do this?	Make interviews Make class survey			Study skills: making a chart	
EXTRA task for CEF B1/B2	 Possible tasks for intermediate learners: read the text for main ideas (D7) table completion; write an e-mail about your favourite holiday destination (D8) guess first, then read and compare(D9) 	Individual, pair work, group work, class activity	Texts	Reading Study skills: table completion	D7 (CEF B1/B2) D8 D9



Key impulse guided questions	Pupil Activity	Class organisation	Material	Outcome Assessment	Resources
What's the weather like in?	 Collect weather words Find out about weather in different countries 	Group work, pair work	Internet	Intercultural learning (Celsius/Fahrenheit) Cross-curricular:	http://weather.yahoo.co m/regional/SPXX.html
	Write weather forecast for next three dayspresentation		Copy of D10 Cardboard, coloured paper etc.	physics, geography Writing Study skills (interpreting a chart)	D10
How do you get to?	Collect means of transportFill in wordbank 3	group/pair work	dictionaries copies wordbank 3	Speaking Reading / Writing Study skills: dictionary work	Wordbank 3
Episode 2: The peop	T	Croup work	D 11	Pooding	D 11
Episode 2: The peop Key impulse: postcards	Read postcardsComplete table	Group work	D 11 D12	Reading Writing	D 11 D 12
	 Imagine what writers might be like, make notes "Meet" the postcard writers Compare with own ideas 	Class activity	Dictionaries puppets	Study skills (table completion)	Puppets (D 13)
Can you think of other holiday destinations for	Make suggestions (give reasons)	class activity	puppets	Speaking	
these three people?					



Key impulse guided questions	Pupil Activity	Class organisation	Material	Outcome Assessment	Resources
Create a person that plans to go on a holiday. Decide whether you want to go on your own, with friends, family, with your sport's team, class trip	 Get into pairs or groups choose family/first name for their person (discuss principles of a biography) create biography make characters decide on holiday destination write down new words in the class word bank (on the board) 	Pair work/group work	D 14 Cardboard, scissors, colour pencils D 15 Class word bank	Reading/Writing: -principles of a biography -identity cards Class Word bank	D 14 D15
	Possible homework: learner add German meaning to the new words, compare their results in the next lesson		copy of class word bank for each learner	Writing Study skills: dictionary work	
	 write down 3 questions to be answered during their presentation oral presentation of characters stick puppets on frieze 	Class activity	Frieze: map of Europe (D6), puppets are arranged around map, pieces of string show peoples' destinations	Writing Speaking / Listening	D6
	ames, comparisons, riddles le, family, clothes, hobbies, l	ikes/dislikes, job	s,		



Key impulse guided questions	Pupil Activity	Class organisation	Material	Outcome Assessment	Resources
Episode 3: Preparing	the journey		·		
"What do you have to do before you go on your journey?"	 collect ideas (pack suitcase, buy ticket, get travel information, book hotel, find dog sitter, go to the doctor's, car check) 	Class activity		Speaking	
	 A1: Pack suitcase (drawing + writing) Buy a ticket (role-play) Presentation of role-play or suitcase 	Individual Pair work	Word bank 1	Writing Speaking / Listening	Word bank 1 D 16
	 A2/B1: write to do-list (or mind map) for <u>their</u> journey create a role-play for one of the settings present dialogue 	Group work Pair work		Writing Speaking / Listening Study skills (mind mapping)	Wordbank 4 D 17
Episode 4: Incidents					
Key question: "Imagine you are at your holiday destination. What could happen?"	Collect ideas for the last episode of your story. The pupils will bring their creative ideas of happy, sad or exciting incidents or events.	class activity			
	A1 Act out, draw, "frozen picture"	pair work group work		Creative language production	
	A2/B1 Comic, story, diary entry,	individual pair work		Creative Writing	

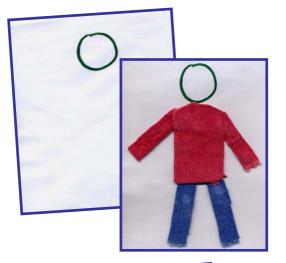


	phone call	group work		
Intercultural traps	Tell about situations and experiences		Intercultural learning	
Optional: Write a postcard home. Who would you write to?"	 write postcard 			





How to make a Storyline character







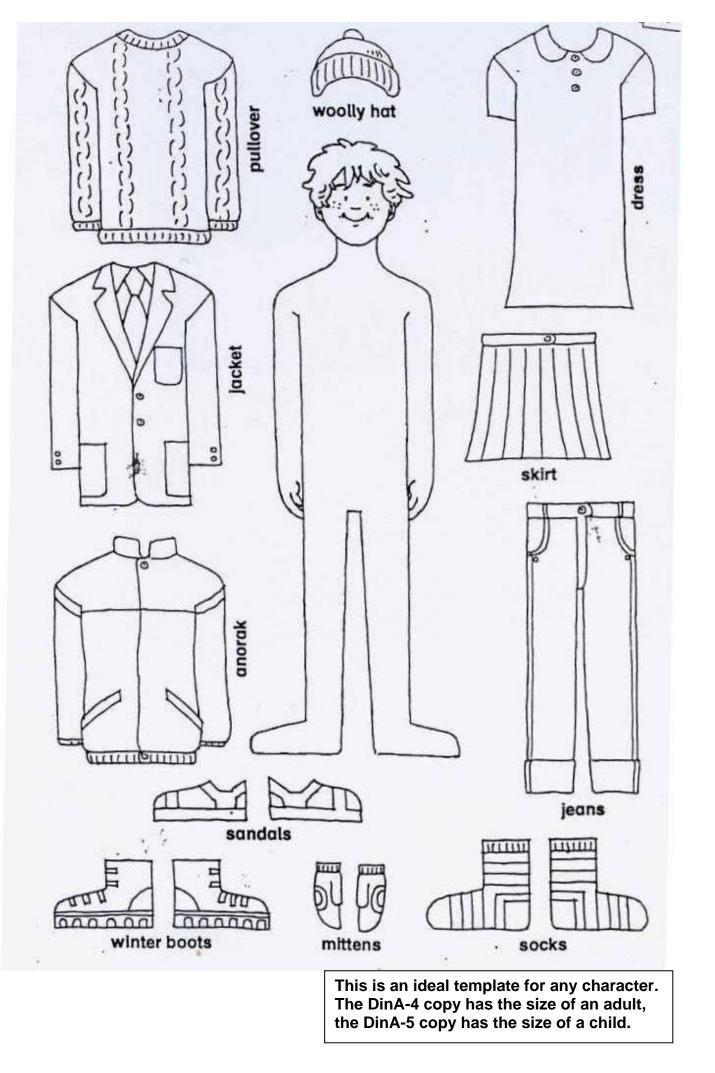




Cut out the character as close to the figure as possible.

If you want the character to stand you can attach a bent pipe cleaner at the back.





Matrix for incidents in the Storyline: Castle Hotel

	Tasks ——▶	Role play	Newspaper report	Writing a story	Creating a screen play (Storybook)	TV interview	Comic strip	Radio play (audio story)	Cooking book Menus	Brochure	Adverts/ Leaflets Flyers	Invoice
Incidents												
Birthday party												
Wedding												
Funeral												
Castle on fire												
Secretary marries film star												
Thunderstorm												
Movie												
Award for hotel												
Accident												
Music festival												
Exhibitions												
Explosion												
Case of murder												
International conference												

Experiences in foreign language classes

Teachers evaluated what worked well in their lessons:

- Comics
- Reading a story
- Games e.g. bingo, snap, Simon says
- Guided dialogues with a partner
- Songs
- Story telling with picture books
- Pupils working on their own with on-line programmes/ software
- Written exercises
- Gap fill exercises
- Vocabulary work
- Classroom phrases
- Listening comprehension
- Using puppets

Areas for improvement in their lessons:

- Mixed ability teaching
- Pupils should be more active in a big group
- Meaningful dialogues between pupils
- Revision of basic grammar problems
- Vocabulary work
- Writing
- Not enough time for each pupil to use English either talking, writing or listening
- The pupils don't want to speak
- Guided creative writing
- Allowing the pupils enough to learn the right spelling and to communicate in the target language with each other
- Memorizing lexis
- Getting the pupils to be more active i.e. speaking
- Motivating the pupils to take part in a conversation
- During group work pupils speak in German
- Practice
- Integrating weak pupils during speaking activities
- Develop resources





Veranstaltungsthema:					
Theme of the workshop:					
Ort:	Datum:				
	Date:				
	Duto.				
Fragebogen für o Questionnaire for					
So habe ich die F	ortbildung erlebt				
Reflections on	•				
	the workshop				
		**	***	**	*
		**			
Waren die Vorab-Informationen ausreichene	d und relevant?				
Was the pre-workshop information su	ufficient and relevant?				
Waren die Ziele klar?					
W	/ere the targets clear?				
War die Struktur eindeutig?					
Was	the structure explicit?				
War das Arbeitstempo angemessen?					
Was the pace appropriate?					
War die Zeiteinteilung angemessen?					
Was the time mana	agement appropriate?				
Waren die eingesetzten Materialien hilfreich	l?				
Were the mate	rials available useful?				
Unterstützten die äußeren Bedingungen die	Arbeit?				
Were the working conditions sup	oportive of your work?				
War die Veranstaltung praxisorientiert?					
Was the workshop	sufficiently practical?				
War der theoretische Hintergrund relevant?					
Was the theoretical	background relevant?				
Entsprachen die Anforderungen Ihren Erwa	0				
Did the level of challenge me					
Hatten Sie ausreichende Gelegenheiten für	eigene Aktivitäten?				
Were there sufficient opportunities for					
Glauben Sie, dass die Veranstaltung einen	Nutzen für Ihre				
praktische Arbeit haben wird?					
Was the workshop useful for your own					
War die Sprache der Referentin/ des Refere	-				
Was the spea	aker comprehensible?				

	**	***	**	*
	**			
Unterstützte die Wahl der Methoden die logische Abfolge der				
Veranstaltung?				
Did the methodology used by the speaker support the logical				
sequence of the workshop?				
Wurden Medien sinnvoll eingesetzt?				
Was the speaker's use of media meaningful?				
Konnte der/die ReferentIn einen Kontakt zu den				
TeilnehmerInnen aufbauen, sie beraten und so die Mitarbeit				
fördern?				
How did the speaker succeed in interacting with and in				
encouraging initiative from and supporting the participants?				

Wenn Sie * oder ** angekreuzt haben, erklären Sie bitte warum. If you ticked * or **, please explain why.

Was möchten Sie uns sonst noch mitteilen? *Other comments*?

Vielen Dank! Thank you!