

Using Authentic Texts in Teaching English I

I. Learning Outcomes

After the series of learning activities, the first year students are expected to perform the following with at least 80% accuracy:

1. determine the form and function of the simple past tense;
2. analyze the correctness of the tense used in the authentic text presented;
3. realize the importance of writing excuse letter by giving its advantages; and
4. use the form of the simple past tense correctly in creating travelogues and excuse letters.

II. Learning Content

A. Topic: The Simple Past Tense

B. References:

Book: Effective Communication in English for Filipinos, pp. 98-101

Author: Purification T. Reyes

Online: <http://www.englishpage.com/verbpage/simplepast.html>

C. Instructional Materials

- Authentic excuse letter
- Handouts and work sheets
- Multimedia (LCD projector with white screen)

III. Procedure

A. Activity

1. Let the students answer the following motive questions:
 - a. Has anyone of you been absent from the class?
 - b. What did you do to inform your teacher of your absence?
 - c. Have you tried writing an excuse letter?
 - d. What do you think are the basic parts of an excuse letter?

2. Present an authentic excuse letter to the students. Let the students read the sample excuse letter projected on the screen.



B. Analysis

At this point, the students will analyse the main idea of the authentic text through answering the following questions:

1. Why was the letter sender absent from her classes?
2. What did the sender feel about her condition? How did you know this?
3. In your opinion, what is wrong with the letter?
4. What verb tense should be used in the letter? Why do you think so?

C. Abstraction

Summary of the Lesson

Simple Past Tense is used in the following situations:

1. Use the Simple Past to express the idea that an action started and finished at a specific time in the past. Sometimes, the speaker may not actually mention the specific time, but they do have one specific time in mind.

Example: I **saw** a movie yesterday.

2. We use the Simple Past to list a series of completed actions in the past. These actions happen 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and so on.
Example: I **finished** work, **walked** to the beach, and **found** a nice place to swim.
3. The Simple Past can be used with a duration which starts and stops in the past. A duration is a longer action often indicated by expressions such as: for two years, for five minutes, all day, all year, etc.
Example: I **lived** in Brazil for two years.
4. The Simple Past can also be used to describe a habit which stopped in the past. It can have the same meaning as "used to." To make it clear that we are talking about a habit, we often add expressions such as: always, often, usually, never, when I was a child, when I was younger, etc.
Example: I **studied** French when I was a child.
5. The Simple Past can also be used to describe past facts or generalizations which are no longer true. As in USE 4 above, this use of the Simple Past is quite similar to the expression "used to."
Example: She **was** shy as a child, but now she is very outgoing.

D. Application

Activity 1

Students are given a news article. They will underline the seven verbs used in the past tense.



Global levels of carbon dioxide – the greenhouse gas affecting global warming – have hit their highest level in human history. Scientists are concerned by the speed of change.

Carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere have been recorded at their highest level yet. Scientists on Friday **announced** that they had measured 400 parts per million (ppm) at their monitoring station in Hawaii.

"What we see today is 100 percent due to human activity," said Pieter Tans, a senior scientist with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Scientists express concern

Reaching the 400 mark has long been anticipated and dreaded by climate experts and environmental activists. The rise, scientists say, is caused mainly by the burning of fossil fuels, such as coal and oil. The heat-trapping greenhouse gas is also emitted through natural activities, such as breathing.

Experts fear that the rate of the increase is too high for plants and animals to adapt.

"It **took** nature hundreds of millions of years to change CO₂ concentrations through natural processes such as natural carbon burial and volcanic outgassing," Pennsylvania State University climate scientist Michael Mann **said**.

"What we are doing is unburying it. But not over 100 million years. We're unburying it and burning it over a timescale of 100 years, a million times faster," he **explained**.

Tracking levels

When measurements **were** first taken in 1958, the carbon dioxide level was 315 ppm. So a rise of more than 80 ppm has taken place in 55 years.

To compare such climate change historically, Tans points to the end of the Ice Age, when it then took another 7,000 years for carbon dioxide levels to rise by 80 ppm.

He also **noted** that it was probably about two million years ago, during the Pleistocene Era, when the earth last **endured** such high levels of carbon dioxide.

The 400 mark was hit briefly last year in the Arctic. But it is Mauna Loa, Hawaii, where the recent 400-level measurements have been taken. Mauna Loa, a volcanic mountain located on the Big Island of Hawaii, is considered the world's benchmark site for such measurements.

Carbon levels usually peak worldwide in May before falling a bit, so the annual average may fall just short of the 400 mark.

Scientists and activists have said that carbon concentrations should be pushed back to or below 350 ppm in order to keep the average temperature increase below 3.6 degrees Fahrenheit (two degrees Celsius) in the 21st Century.

tm/slk (AP, AFP, Reuters)

Activity 2

Sample Travelogue

Directions: Write a travelogue about your most wonderful vacation. Use the sample travelogue as your guide.

Boracay Island - Mediterranean Vacation at Le Soleil de Boracay

I never wanted to share my Boracay Escapade here on my blog, because I wasn't a travel blogger then. But, I started posting it last time in [HERE](#). I promised myself to visit the place again, and this time I'll enjoy the place more than ever. And, out of boredom, I started to reminisce all those white sand beaches in my 2011 summer.

Among the seven of us, only Joey has been to the island. He haven't enjoyed his stay with his colleagues, so for the second time, he went with us. We didn't arrange for any package tour thinking that we would have a cheaper deal.

The moment we stepped on the island, we focused on finding Le Soleil de Boracay. We've seen this Mediterranean type of resort in the internet, and we fell in love with all those photos in its website. We called for a reservation, but even in a summer time of May, 2011, they're not fully-booked. I wonder why! Lemme you show instead.

When you walk in Boracay Island with all those big bags and stroller (my boyfriend carried it for me), you really attracts a lot of brokers. They're a lot of packages they offered to us, but we opted not to mind them. One asked where we plan to stay. Jowalsh told them, we're heading to Le Soleil de Boracay. The man simply smiled or I think he smirked. I wonder why!

Source: <http://www.phioxee.com/2013/02/boracay-island-mediterranean-vacation.html>

IV. Evaluation

Assuming that the teacher has already discussed the topic on how to write an excuse letter, students will compose a well-written excuse letter following the correct use of the simple past tense. The teacher will grade their work using the following rubric:

Organization- 25%
Content- 25%
Language Use- 50%
TOTAL- 100%

V. Assignment

Activity Title: Diary of Good Deeds

Directions: The students will write ten good deeds they did in the previous week. They have to write it in their journal notebook. The output will be submitted next meeting with 100 as the highest score using the following rubric:

Organization- 25%
Content- 25%
Language Use- 50%
TOTAL- 100%

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