

Stories in ELT

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Overview

- Stories are the oldest didactic technique
- 4 types of stories in ELT: 2 for language learners, 2 for teacher learning

Essentials for Language Learning

- **EXPOSURE**
- **USE**
- **MOTIVATION**

1. Stories in Young Learner classes

A Story

- provides a meaningful context
- exercises the imagination
- provides exposure to chunks of language
- listening to or reading a story is a naturally child-like activity
- contains natural repetition of key vocabulary and structures

Children

- learn in a Meaning, Use and finally Form sequence
- naturally make full use of their imaginations
- naturally pick up chunks of new language
- are easily motivated by child-focussed activities
- naturally enjoy listening to stories over and over again

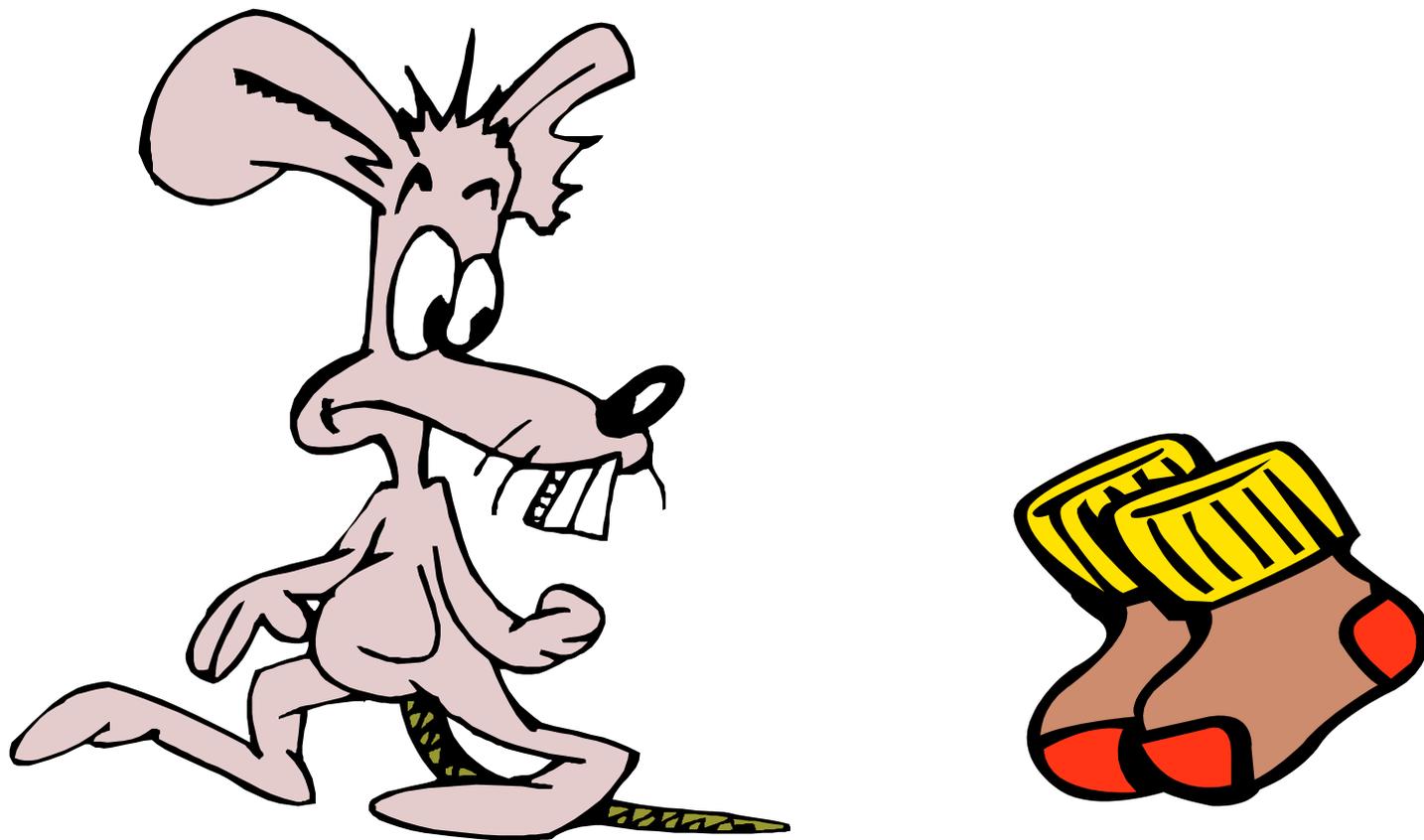
Tick Tock



'Tick Tock' goes the clock

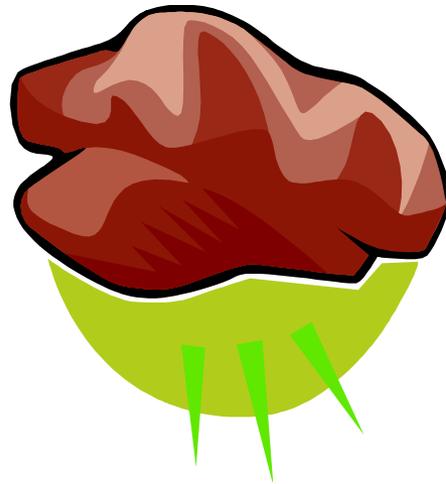


Tick TOCK, TICK TOCK!

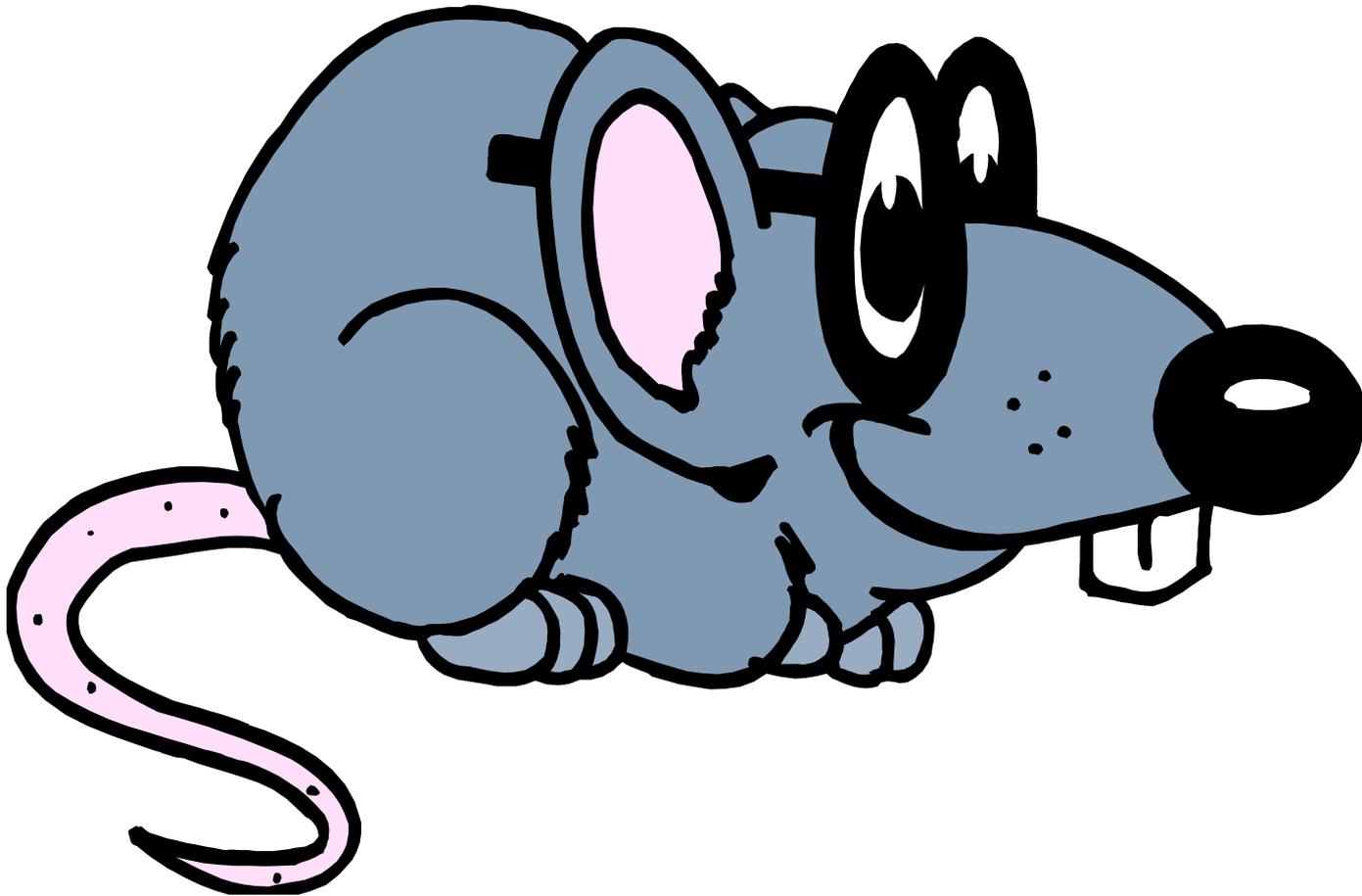


Old mouse gets a sock
tick tock, thick sock

and ('n) puts the sock on the
clock



No more *tick tock!*



2. For older learners







Example discussion task

In your groups, agree on three ways the story is relevant to your language learning

3. In ELT Teacher Development

- Many say teacher knowledge is 'storied'
- Sharing our 'stories' of teaching can support our learning
- We will learn even more if we go on to think deeply about the stories we've told.

5 steps for learning from our own and others' experience

1a) Check the story is a ***description***.

Which of these is? What are the others?

a)The lesson was boring

b)Three children yawned

c)The children were bored

b) Get (and help listeners get) a clear picture – re-view

2. How can you explain / interpret this?
(generate as many ideas as you can)

3. Is there any other information you can find
/remember which might help you choose
the most likely explanation or interpretation,
or begin to get ideas for what you might do?
(ask others / search relevant texts)

4. So which do you think is the most likely explanation, and is your reasoning 'robust'?

5. So what are the implications of this:
 - for your teaching;
 - for your or your pupils' learning; and
 - for your noticing?

Teach
Learn

4. Other stories in Teacher Development

Naked Truth and the Parable

- Naked Truth walked down the street one day.
- People turned their eyes away.
- Parable arrived, draped in decoration.
- People greeted parable with celebration.
- Naked truth sat alone, sad and unattired
- “Why are you so miserable?” Parable inquired.
- Naked truth replied: “I’m not welcome anymore.
- No one wants to see me, they chase me from the door”

- “It’s hard to look at Naked Truth” Parable explained.
- “Let me dress you up a bit. Your welcome will be gained”
- Parable dressed Naked Truth in story’s fine attire,
- With metaphor, poignant prose and plots to inspire.
- With laughter and tears and adventure to unveil,
- Together they went forth to spin a tale.
- People opened their doors and served them their best,
- Naked Truth dressed in story was a welcome guest.

(Forest, 1996)

4. Other Stories in Teacher Development

- Our experience as teachers directly feeds what Claxton (1997) has called our slow, wordless ‘undermind’.
- Our present action (using our ‘fast mind’) is most likely to be a direct consequence of our past experience.
- Metaphor (and leisure and fun) can help insights from our undermind become conscious and available for ‘thinking’ about...

Mummy mouse ...



Mentor Roles

- Model
- Support
- Sponsor
- Acculturator
- Educator

So, tell your students (& peers) stories! (and listen well to theirs)

- For all reasons above +
- ‘memorable moments’
- (*Tell*) Model expressing your meanings

- For that:
- Find suitable stories
- Prepare to ‘tell’ (story skeleton + rehearse!)

Some references

- Claxton, G. 1997, *Hare Brain Tortoise Mind*. Forth Estate
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