



Straightforward

Second edition

Repeated anecdotes

by Jim Scrivener

This technique is useful for introducing new language items in the context of a story.

1. Write the target language on the board. Just leave them there; don't teach or explain them.
2. Introduce the characters of a story using photos or drawings.
3. Tell an anecdote.
4. When you get to a word just before one of the language items you want to present, pause and wait for students to call out the right item from the list on the board.
5. When they get it right, repeat that section of the story yourself with the correct item. Then continue with the rest of the story, pausing before each new item.
6. When you get to the end, start the story again and see if the students can say the right collocation faster. You may want to tell the story three or four times to give repeated practice. If you keep speeding up, students are unlikely to find this boring and may appreciate the challenge.

Here is an example story and some collocations on a friendship. Use a photo of two people to introduce the characters. The ^ symbol shows places to pause.

Collocations: oldest friends; got on well; good friends; similar backgrounds; a lot in common; see each other; keep in touch.

Story: I want to tell you about Bill. He works for a large computer company. The other person in the photo is Fred. He's one of Bill's ^ oldest friends. They first became ^ good friends when Bill bought a used car from Fred. They ^ got on well immediately because they came from ^ similar backgrounds, they had ^ a lot in common, and they both loved working with computers. Nowadays, they never ^ see each other, but they ^ keep in touch by email. The car, by the way, is still working!