

# Narrating in Simple Past with Video

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If a picture speaks a thousand words then motion pictures must express millions. Although video can be used as a stimulus to write in a variety of genres, styles and persuasive forms, this activity uses video to produce a narrative paragraph.

- Objectives

- To provide practice in constructing simple past tense forms and checking for subject verb agreement.
- To give students a context to write a narrative paragraph using appropriate temporal adjectives and past tense forms.

- Level:

- False Beginner to low intermediate

- Materials:

- Video segment depicting a series of actions. Some good sources are TV commercials, rock videos, and movies. One of my favorite movie segments is the suspenseful opening scene in Raiders of the Lost Ark. I also have a favorite TV commercial in which a mother does and witnesses a number things before her first cup of coffee in the morning. After that first sip she transforms from a mute zombie to a roaring drill sergeant.

- Preparation:

- Select the video segment.
- Write a target narrative paragraph to determine the number and nature of the verbs that are likely to be used.
- Make a list of these target verbs and supplement the list with related verbs.

- Procedure:

- Warm-up (to pre-teach or stimulate thinking about verb forms)
  - Make a list of lexical verbs including those that might be useful in the following activity.
  - Read the present tense for one by one to each student. Student should supply the correct simple past form. Use pronouns before the verb forms to increase some awareness of subject verb agreement in present tense forms.
  - Read the past tense using a pronoun form with the verb. Student should supply the correct present tense form with subject pronoun agreement.
- Variation:
  - An alternative is to give the lists to each group and ask one group member to read out verb prompts to the group. In that case the list should have pronouns written with the verbs.

- Task

- Form small groups (3-4) and watch video segment.
- Write a short summary of what happened, step by step in simple past. Use temporal markers like first, then, next, finally, at the end, etc.
- Ask one group member to read the summary aloud.
- Ask a different group member to list the verb forms used on the board, writing both the simple past and the present tense forms.
- Repeat steps 3 and 4 for each group.
- Circle the verbs common to each group's summary, underline those that are different, correct any that are ill-formed.

This is a sub-page of [ESL/EFL Lessons Using Movies](http://www.iteslj.org/)