

Story Chain

Tags: [adjectives](#), [advanced](#), [beginner](#), [intermediate](#), [kids](#), [narrative tenses](#), [past simple](#), [travel](#), [warmer](#)

In the Story Chain ESL activity, students write the next part of every story that is passed to them.

 4+  15-30 mins  None

Setup

Each student will need a piece of paper, which will be passed around the class. Define an order/direction in which the papers will be passed.

Activity

1. Each student writes *Once upon a time...* on their paper.
2. They then add one word, up to three words, or complete the sentence. The amount of words added each time should depend on your target language. For a warmer, students add one, or up to three words. To practise narrative tenses, students each add a full sentence in a past tense.
3. After an allotted time (about thirty seconds for a few words, one minute for a sentence), all papers are passed to the next student in the chain.
4. This student makes their addition to the story, then the papers are passed again.
5. Repeat the process for as long as desired.
6. At the end, each student reads the story they currently have aloud. With large classes, divide the students into smaller groups for this part. Optionally, you could even get each group to choose their favourite story and act it out.

Target Language

The Story Chain ESL activity can be a fun warmer or time-filler for any level. As long as students add full sentences, it's great for practising either the [past simple](#), or a wider range of [narrative tenses](#) – i.e. the [past continuous](#), [past perfect simple](#) and/or [past perfect continuous](#). Direct your students which tenses to use appropriate to your level.

Another option is to ask students to base stories around a trip/journey, when teaching [travel](#) vocabulary. Or, you could require them to use new [adjectives](#) in each sentence. There are many possibilities!

For a very similar activity without the writing element, see [Story Circle](#).