

# Technická universita v Liberci

## PEDAGOGICKÁ FAKULTA

---

Katedra: Anglického jazyka  
Studijní obor: Anglický jazyk

### PRE-READING ACTIVITIES ARE NECESSARY TO HELP STUDENTS UNDERSTAND THE TEXT.

(Úvodní aktivity jsou nezbytným prostředkem  
napomáhajícím porozumění textu.)

Závěrečná práce 95-PF-KAJ

Autor: Lucie Horáková

Podpis: *Lucie Horáková*

Adresa: Bergerovo nám. 184  
Stráž nad Nisou  
463 03

Vedoucí práce: PhDr. Marcela Malá

Konzultant ZP: Donna Sarvay, MA

UNIVERZITNÍ KNIHOVNA  
TECHNICKÉ UNIVERZITY V LIBERCI



3146065747

Počet

stran	obrázků	tabulek	příloh
38	28	1	14

V Liberci dne 26. května 1995

Abstract

Čtení hraje velkou roli jak ve škole, tak v našem každodenním životě. Učitelé by měli věnovat velkou pozornost óvrodní aktivitě, protože to je jedním z hlavních faktorů k efektivnímu porozumění textu, což je účel našeho čtení.

Cílem tohoto projektu je podpořit hypotézu, že úvodní aktivita je velmi dobrým prostředkem naponáhlejším porozumění textu. Když se učíme, proč a co čtou v cizím jazyce, jsou stimulováni číst více, a to je jeden z účelů učování angličtiny jako cizí řeči.

Prohlašuji, že jsem závěrečnou práci vypracovala samostatně a že jsem uvedla veškerou použitou literaturu.

Děkuji tímto paní Donně Sarvay, MA a paní PhDr. Marcele Malé za vydatnou pomoc a trpělivost během vypracování mé závěrečné práce.

V Liberci dne 26. května 1995

Lucie Horáková



## Anotace

Čtení hraje velkou roli jak ve škole, tak v našem každodenním životě. Učitelé by měli věnovat velkou pozornost úvodním aktivitám, protože ty jsou vodítkem k efektivnímu porozumění textů, což je účel našeho čtení.

Cílem tohoto projektu je podpoření hypotézy, že úvodní aktivity jsou nezbytným prostředkem napomáhajícím porozumění textu. Když studenti pochopí to, co čtou v cizím jazyce, jsou stimulováni číst více, a to je jeden z cílů vyučování angličtiny jako cizí řeči.

## Abstract

Reading plays quite a big role both in the classroom and in our everyday lives. A great deal of a teachers' attention should be devoted to the issue of pre-reading activities because they are the guide to effective comprehension of texts, which is the purpose of all our reading.

The aim of this project is to support the hypothesis that pre-reading activities are necessary to help students understand the text. When students understand what they read in a foreign language, they are stimulated to reading more, and that is one of the goals of teaching English as a foreign language.

## Vorwort

Das Lesen spielt eine wichtige Rolle sowohl in der Schule, als auch in unserem Alltagsleben. Deswegen sollten der Lehrer eine große Aufmerksamkeit den Einführungsaktivitäten widmen, weil diese zu effektivem Verständnis des Textes führen, was der Zweck unseres Lesens ist.

Das Ziel dieses Projekts ist, die Hypothese zu unterschützen, daß die Einführungsaktivitäten ein unerläßliches Mittel zum Textverständnis sind. Wenn die Schüler das begreifen, was sie in der Fremdsprache lesen, sind sie dann mehr zum lesen motiviert, und das ist eines der Hauptziele des Englisch als Fremdsprache.

TECHNICKÁ UNIVERZITA V LIBERCI  
Univerzitní knihovna  
Voroněžská 1329, Liberec 1  
PSC 461 17

Výuka - angl. jazyk  
Angličtina - výuka  
Čtení - stimulace

V 16/95 P

KAJ/A3

38 s. 142 s. příl.

## OUTLINE

**Thesis statement:** Pre-reading activities are necessary to help students understand the text.

### **I. The importance of pre-reading warm-ups, some kinds, and their selection**

#### **A. The role of pre-reading activities**

1. In the classroom
  - a. The targets of pre-reading activities
  - b. Alvermann/Phelps (citation)
  - c. Learner's experience
  - d. Teacher's experience
2. Outside the classroom
  - a. Bowen/Marks (citation)

#### **B. Some kinds of pre-reading activities**

1. Pictures
  - a. Brumfit/Moon/Tongue (citation)
2. Brainstorming
3. Miming
4. Multiple choice questions

#### **C. The selection of pre-reading activities and texts**

1. The criteria for selection of pre-reading activities
  - a. Interesting activity
  - b. Not too difficult
  - c. Active involvement of pupils
2. The criteria for selection of texts
  - a. The balance between the ease and difficulty
  - b. Interesting topics

#### **D. Thesis**

#### **E. The following paper parts**



## **II. Summaries 1. - 4. Reflective Teaching Practice**

### **A. Class profile**

### **B. Summaries 1 - 4**

1. Pre-lesson Plan Commentary
2. Lesson Summary
3. Reflection
4. Conclusion/Action

## **III. Conclusion**

### **Summarizing theory, methodology, and practice**

## I. THE IMPORTANCE OF PRE-READING WARM-UPS, SOME KINDS, AND THEIR SELECTION

### **A - The role of pre-reading activities**

Pre-reading activities are not considered to be a weighty issue in teaching a foreign language; however, they are an important part of the reading process. Pre-reading activities are necessary to help students understand a text.

The role of pre-reading warm-ups is essential for reading in the classroom and may stimulate students to read outside it. For reading in the classroom, the targets of pre-reading activities are as follows: (1) to motivate students, (2) to get them involved, (3) to prepare them for reading a certain text, and (4) to help students understand what they will read. To fulfil these four aims means, for a teacher, to activate students' background knowledge or to make pupils familiar with the background information. Alvermann and Phelps (1994) affirm the importance of pre-reading activities, "What teachers do before reading to prepare students can be more effective in promoting comprehension than what is done after reading" (Alvermann and Phelps, 1994:122).

As a learner in the Secondary School of Economics, I was told to open my book to a certain page and start reading. Obviously, I did not experience any pre-reading activities in that school, not even listening to a text on a tape recorder before reading it, which is the most frequently used pre-reading warm-up carried out by lots of teachers in basic schools (as far as I can judge from my observation lessons).

Since as a student I experienced that to understand a text without being tuned-in can be really difficult, I decided not to put the students, whom I taught during my teaching practice into the same situation. Eliciting the knowledge and experience from the students, and supplementing it in order to give them complete background information were the pre-reading activities by which I motivated, involved, and prepared the pupils for reading special texts. For example, in a lesson about Leif the Lucky I told students that Leif was a discoverer and that another famous discoverer was Christopher Columbus. Then I asked pupils if they knew what he discovered and when. I also elicited students' knowledge about Vikings -- where they came from and what they looked like. I completed the information with data about Leif and his ancestors. Sharing students' and my knowledge about discoverers of America and



Vikings, together with doing some other pre-reading activities on the same topic, contributed both to pupils' motivation to read the article and to better understanding of the text.

Since pre-reading activities help students understand and enjoy texts which they read in the classroom, they also motivate pupils and wake up their interest in further texts provided by a teacher; consequently, students are stimulated to continue with reading outside the school. As Bowen and Marks (1994) believe, ". . .if they [learners] can see clearly that they can obtain real information and pleasure from reading in a foreign language, . . .then there is every likelihood that they will develop the habit of reading in English. . ." ( Bowen and Marks, 1994:125-126).

### **B - Some kinds of pre-reading activities**

Now that the important role of pre-reading activities has been stated, let me mention a few concrete kinds of these warm-ups. Predicting what a story is about from illustrations, brainstorming on a given topic, miming, or answering a set of multiple choice questions are some of the ways of preparing students for reading a text.

1, Pictures are an appreciated guide to comprehension of a text by students. For example, from my teaching practice, in one lesson I chose a story about saving life from the book Leif the Lucky. Although I am not a professional painter, I dared to create four pictures expressing the setting and plot of the story. Not only were children enthusiastic to describe my hand-drawn pictures, but those illustrations also helped them to understand what the text was about. Brumfit, Moon, and Tongue (1991) affirm that "Good illustrations will enhance children's understanding of the text, and promote lots of excited discussion" (Brumfit, Moon, and Tongue, 1991:185). Even if the illustrations are not so good, they may be helpful. That pictures play an important role in reading can be illustrated also by an experience from my childhood. When selecting books, I always reached for ones with pictures and ignored those which comprised only of pages full of letters.

2, Besides illustrations, brainstorming is an effective and useful pre-reading activity. This activity not only reveals what students know about a set topic, but it also gets pupils familiar with words that are likely to appear in a text. Students both revise and learn new vocabulary when brainstorming. By inserting such a vocabulary exercise in the reading process, a teacher introduces students to the topic, prepares them for



-- this resulted in a portrait of the famous creature. During these pre-reading activities students were being prepared for the topic of the text and they revised some vocabulary used there. All this was done on the level appropriate for them; moreover, it was done in a way which was attractive and motivating for pupils.

As for the criteria concerning the selection of texts, the balance between ease and difficulty must be assured. When a text is much too easy for pupils, they get bored. When an article is too difficult for them, they are discouraged because they lose their interest in it. An example of the latter happened in the first of my special lessons when pupils got a shortened and simplified text to read; however, it was still too difficult and long for them. The actual reading turned out to be a long, boring activity. I did not know students' level in reading, so I had selected a text not suitable for them. In the next lesson I gave pupils a much shorter and easier article to encourage them, and the reading went well.

Not only the complexity and the length influence the selection of texts but also the topics. Thirteen-year-old pupils have different interests from children ten-years-old. To find out what my students were interested in, I used a questionnaire (See Appendix, p. 1). It comprised eight questions from which I learned about pupils' favourite topics and their attitude towards reading. The most frequently repeated topics, about which students wanted to read, were sports, mysteries of the world, and Guinness records. Generally, pupils preferred texts of adventure, science-fiction, and about detective characters. Pupils' attitude towards reading was positive as far as I could tell from their questionnaires. All of the students ticked a yes answer to the question "Do you think it is necessary to read?", and all except one wrote that they read at home; a majority of the students read two to four times a week. I also searched out that two-thirds of the pupils had not read any other texts but those in the textbook, and that in school they used only passages from their textbooks. So it was up to me to introduce a new dimension to students' reading. The readings related to the most popular themes as well as the pre-reading activities on which my project focused. I tried to carry out as many of them as possible in four special lessons. In each lesson the pre-reading activities were ordered from the general ones, concerning a topic of a text, to more specific ones, relating closely to the text. The best example of this was the lesson about sports. Brainstorming was the first warm-up during which I elicited as many names of various sports as possible from students. Then followed an



activity with two pictures cut into sixteen pieces which pupils in groups were to put together and say the names of the sports they had. Three sports were included here. The lesson proceeded with miming five sports. Guessing two sports and matching words with them followed -- at this stage pupils revised vocabulary connected with ice-hockey, which the article was about. An activity even more closely related to the text took place just before reading. Pupils walked around the classroom in groups and wrote down answers to multiple-choice questions which were placed on the walls. In this lesson the pre-reading activities proceeded from those dealing with more kinds of sports to those concerning specifically ice-hockey. The reading of the article about ice-hockey went very well and pupils had no problems with it.

**D -Thesis**

The motivating effect, the role of the connector between students' experience and a text, and also the variety of pre-reading activities lead me to support the statement that pre-reading activities are necessary for students' understanding of a text.

**E - The following paper parts**

In section Two of my paper I will discuss the conditions of the class taught and my lessons, with focus on pre-reading activities. In the third part I will deal with the outcome of my practice and its relation to theory and methodology.

## II. SUMMARIES 1. - 4. REFLECTIVE TEACHING PRACTICE

The following material is presented in two main parts. First, the Class Profile describes the specific class in which the four lessons were taught. Teaching and learning problems as well as some basic characteristics of the class such as the students' age or level are mentioned there. Second, the Summaries 1 - 4 consist of four elements. The Pre-Lesson Plan Commentaries demonstrate the lesson planning stages of the teaching practice. The Lesson Summaries show the stages of classroom presentation and practice. In Reflection on the lesson, the experience of the learners is presented. Conclusions discuss the outcome of the lessons.

### Class Profile

Class	7th
Age	13 - 14 years
Number of pupils	22
Girls/Boys ratio	11 girls 11 boys
Level	Pre-intermediate
Textbook	<u>Project 2</u>
Lessons per week	3 x 45 mins
Teaching problems	Poor basis of students' target language. Some discipline problems.
Learning problems	Mixed ability. Two weak students. One dyslectic child.
What was positive	Supervising teacher.



## Comment

### 1. Class

The pupils attended the seventh form and they had been learning English for nearly three years.

### 2. Age

At their age, the children were generally not enthusiastic to learn English. On the other hand, there were a few pupils who took interest in learning it.

### 3. Number of Pupils

22 students was a big number to teach. At the beginning of the practice it was difficult for me to watch so that I spread my attention to every pupil. Such a big number was not convenient for carrying out certain activities either. For example, when I divided pupils into two groups (girls x boys) for the purpose of asking and answering questions in a competition, there were too many pupils in each group and it did not guarantee that all of them were participating.

A bigger number of students also, in a few cases, influenced the amount of time devoted to some activities. When, for instance, I wanted each pair of pupils to perform a dialogue they made up, the presentations took too much time, much more than they would take in a class with a lesser number of children.

### 4. Girls/Boys Ratio

There were half girls and half boys in this class which was very good because boys and girls were used both to sitting next to each other and to working together.

### 5. Level

The pupils were on the pre-intermediate level. They were able to understand simple, basic instructions in English; however, they had problems with some more complicated ones (especially when I introduced an activity which students had not done before). The children were not used to speaking too much. They were not able to make up and say more than one or two sentences.



## 6. Textbook

The pupils used Project 1 in the previous year and this year they worked with Project 2. Before I started teaching them, they had covered the following items: present simple, present continuous, past simple, and future tenses; numbers; articles; plurals; imperatives; o' clock; genitives; some/any; adjectives.

During the teaching practice I taught them the following: past continuous tense; past simple x past continuous tense.

What was good about this book was that there were lesson plans suggested.

I used parts of the plans and put them into practice.

The negative thing about this textbook were some topics and articles which were to serve as the basis for teaching certain structures and grammatical items. For example, I tried to use an article on page 30 called "Temperatures" to introduce and explain comparatives. It was unsuccessful because pupils did not understand it since it was a complicated topic for them and it would be difficult for them to understand it even in Czech.

## 7. Lessons per week

This class had 3 x 45-minute lessons per week. This was not enough to cover all material I should because, for instance, pupils needed much more practice in the past continuous tense which I taught them. In students' books this was planned to be covered in shorter time than I managed.

## 8. Teaching Problems

Poor basis of pupils' target language was a problem. For example, when I wanted students to ask and answer questions about an article in the past tense which they had read, they were not able to form the questions. They usually made a mixture of present and past tense questions. So I agreed with the teacher that I would revise and practise making questions both in the present and in the past tenses with students. Finally I revised and practised only questions in the present tense, and when I checked it in a later Ask/Answer competition, pupils were able to make these questions well.



Also, there were some discipline problems while checking results of group work because students usually talked to each other during the group work and they were not able to stop talking at once and to listen. Their teacher advised me to tell pupils to sit back in their seats, immediately after finishing the group work, and to check it then. I tried it like this and it worked.

### 9. Learning Problems

Mixed ability was a problem in this class. There were a few good students who were always ready earlier with work than the others. I tried to solve this problem by waiting a little while for the others, but I could not wait for all students since there were two very weak pupils. I helped these pupils by repeating the explanation again or by giving them an additional example of what to do. I always waited till the majority of students did the work and then we checked it together. There was a dyslectic child in this class but I had no problems with her.

### 10. What was Positive

One thing which was very positive about the practice was the approach of the supervising teacher towards me. Although she was very busy, being a director, she always found a while to discuss the lessons with me. She told me what she liked about the lessons, what she would do differently, and she gave me much useful advice and encouragement. The teacher did not tell me to cover a certain amount of units but to teach in a pace which I thought was valuable for the students -- so that they learned and remembered what I taught them. We have always agreed on the pace with the teacher.

## Summary 1

### 1. Pre-lesson plan commentary

#### i. General lesson theme/topic/objective

This lesson began with introducing historical and geographical background of the life of Vikings. The main pre-reading activity was predicting the plot of the story according to pictures. Finally, students read a story "Leif Saves a Life". Pupils did a True/False exercise for homework.

#### ii. Thesis Focus

In this lesson I intended to conduct a few pre-reading activities before the actual reading of the text to prepare students for the topic and the setting of the story, and to revise some words used in the text so that it was familiar to pupils when they started reading it. There were four major pre-reading activities. In the first one, I shared the pupils' and my knowledge about the Vikings. Next, students revised a few words describing Greenland. In the third stage, I used illustrations to make students describe Vikings' life. In the main pre-reading activity pupils predicted the plot of the text.

#### iii. Anticipated teaching problems/possible solutions

As regards the fourth stage, creating the plot of the story according to my hand-drawn pictures, the problem I could anticipate was that students would not have sufficient vocabulary, especially verbs, to describe the pictures. I decided to solve this problem by writing out some verbs from the story on the blackboard and adding translation to them. Pupils then could choose the appropriate verbs to each situation, put them into the right form, and continue in describing the pictures.

When looking at the original text "Leif Saves a Life" in the book Leif the Lucky, I thought it would be much too long and complicated for the pupils. I decided to make the text easier by shortening and simplifying it. I omitted some paragraphs and sentences, and I replaced difficult verbs by more common ones.



iv. Lesson aims:

- 1.a. to introduce the setting of the story partly by giving and partly by eliciting the historical and geographical background;
- b. by choosing words to characterize Greenland;
2. to revise vocabulary used in the text;
3. to predict the plot of the story;
4. to introduce/revise verbs used in the text;
5. to practise reading for understanding;
6. to check if students understood the story they read

v. Materials: A book Leif the Lucky by Erick Berry, Chapter 4, text "Leif Saves a Life", p. 27 - 30 (see an attached text); pictures from this book (see attached photocopies); self-made pictures (see attached photocopies); a map of the world; self-designed True/False exercise

## **2. Lesson Summary**

1. Introduction of the topic, historical and geographical background

a. teacher introduces the book, gives/elicits information about historical and geographical setting (5 - 7 minutes)

teacher's talk and questions: This book is about a man who discovered America. Do you know what 'discover' means? A famous discoverer was Christopher Columbus. What did he discover? When? This book is about Leif who discovered America before Columbus, around the year 1 000. Leif was a Viking. Do you know anything about Vikings? Where do they come from? (student points at a map);

aim: to familiarise students with the subject of the lesson, and with the historical and geographical setting of the text which students will read in stage 5

b. teacher sets pair work to students (4 minutes)

teacher writes 10 words on the blackboard in advance:

birds, forests, fish, flowers, grass, mountains, roads, ice, cats, zebras  
students choose the words which characterize Greenland;

aims: to make students more acquainted with the setting of the story they will read in stage 5; to revise vocabulary students will need for describing pictures in stages 2 and 3

## 2. Describing pictures

(4 minutes)

teacher shows pictures from the book Leif the Lucky to students, students describe activities in the pictures;

teacher helps by asking questions: What are Vikings doing in this picture?

What is this man doing?

aims: to familiarise students with words and phrases they will meet in the text in stage 5; to make students more acquainted with Vikings life

## 3. Predicting the plot of the story

(8 - 10 minutes)

teacher puts 4 pictures on the blackboard gradually and asks students to describe: i. objects and setting;

ii. action in the pictures;

teacher helps by pointing at the pictures, writing unknown words on the blackboard (connected by arrows with the objects in the pictures), and asking questions;

teacher's questions: What can you see in this picture? Who is he?

What is he/are they doing? Where is he standing?

(students also use verbs on the blackboard which teacher has written there in advance for this and the fourth stage);

aims: to prepare students for reading the story by creating the plot of the story -- predicting what it will be about according to pictures; to move closer to the actual story from the general background information

## 4. Introduction/revision of verbs

(2 minutes)

teacher reads verbs written on the blackboard, students repeat them chorally;

e.g.: kill, jump, throw, turn, knock, . . .

teacher stresses the fact that the verbs written on the blackboard are in the present tense while the verbs in the text are in their past forms;



aims: to introduce/revise verbs used in the story; to let students know that they can look at the verbs on the blackboard if they meet some unknown during reading in stage 5

5. Reading (13 - 18 minutes)

students read the story in paragraphs, first silently;  
teacher asks for the gist of each paragraph;  
students read the story aloud (each student one sentence) and they summarize the content of each paragraph in Czech;

aim: to practise reading for gist

6. True/False exercise (4 minutes)

students read 6 statements about the story they read and tick either true or false column;

6 statements: 1. The Vikings and the Eskimos were not friends.

2. The Eskimos raised cattle.

3. Thorvald wanted to kill the Eskimo boy.

4. The Eskimo boy hunted with his falcon.

5. The spear hit the Eskimo boy.

6. Leif saved life to the Eskimo boy.

aim: to find out how well students understood the text they read

### 3. Reflection

(Thesis-focus activities)

1. (Introduction of the topic, historical and geographical background)

a. Students noticeably contributed to my introduction at the beginning of the lesson. They told me what Christopher Columbus discovered and when; they showed me on a map where the Vikings used to live and they even described Vikings appearance a little bit.

b. I thought this exercise might be too easy for pupils; however, it was not. During checking, some students revealed they thought there were forests and flowers growing in Greenland. This activity was useful for students since they got the right idea of the country where the story took place.

## 2. (Describing pictures)

There were no problems with describing the activities in the pictures, except one or two words which pupils did not know. I said these words to students and wrote them on the blackboard (e.g.: trade, sail).

## 3. (Predicting the plot of the story)

Students had no major problems with describing the objects and the setting in the pictures. The situation was worse when creating the plot, speaking about the action in the pictures. I tried to solve this problem by writing verbs (taken out of the text) on the blackboard in advance. I also tried to help pupils and guide them to say the action as described in the text.

e.g.: student: He wants to kill the bird.

teacher: Yes, it could be like this but it is not.

He wants to kill. . . (teacher points at a picture)

student: He wants to kill the Eskimo boy.

(general)

## 5. (Reading)

I managed to do the first paragraph as I planned. Students read it first silently, then aloud, and finally they summarized it in Czech. However, it took too long and I saw it would not be possible to finish reading at that pace in the rest of the lesson. Therefore, I omitted the second paragraph completely and the third, fourth, and fifth paragraphs pupils read just aloud and freely translated.

## 6. (True/False exercise - homework)

I set this exercise as homework for students because there was nearly no time left at the end of the lesson. I only asked pupils to look at the statements and find out if they understood everything. Pupils gave this homework to me in the next lesson.



#### **4. Conclusions/Action**

According to the True/False exercise, which all students except one put right, I can say that pupils understood the story they read. However, the results of this exercise might have looked differently if students had done it in the classroom right after reading the text. At home they had more time to do it and possibly read the article again. Nevertheless, pupils finally understood it and I hope that the pre-reading activities, which students liked and participated in very well, helped them sufficiently.

One thing I will watch next time in my special lessons is to choose a shorter text to read. I did not estimate the students' level in reading well; therefore, this lesson, the first one, did not come out quite as I expected. I will try to keep the big number of pre-reading activities; however, I will have to observe the timing to always have a while left after reading for doing an exercise showing me how well pupils understood the text, in other words, what effect the pre-reading warm-ups had.



















Self-made





Self-made





Self-made





Self-made



## Leif Saves a Life

The Eskimos lived in the icy north. Sometimes the Vikings and Eskimos traded with each other. But sometimes they fought. They never became friendly because their ways of living were so different. The Vikings were cattlemen. They lived on milk and fish and meat. The Eskimos lived on meat too, but they did not raise their own. They hunted seals and walruses.

Leif was a good hunter. One day he hunted alone on a rocky shore. He had a hunting falcon with him. A hunting falcon is trained to fly up and attack other birds and small animals. Then the hunter takes the dead bird away from the falcon. The falcon returns to his master. Now the falcon flew high in the air.

An Eskimo boy watched from his sealskin boat, a kayak. Now he came ashore. He smiled at Leif and stood beside him. The Eskimo boy watched the falcon. Leif heard a sound behind him and turned. There was Thorvald, ready to throw a spear at the Eskimo boy.

Leif jumped. He threw out his arm and knocked the Eskimo to the ground. The spear flew by and hit a rock beyond. Leif took the boy's hand and helped him to his feet. He gave him a push toward the water. "Run! Run!" he said. "There may be others with Thorvald, men with spears."

The boy understood. He ran to his boat. He jumped into it and paddled away. Far out on the water, he turned and waved to Leif, thanking him.

Berry, E. Leif the Lucky. Illinois: Allene Champlin Best, 1961. /adapted/



## Summary 2

### 1. Pre-lesson plan commentary

#### i. General lesson theme/topic/objective

The topic of the lesson was 'Sports'. The lesson began with pre-reading activities. Then there was reading of an article called "Hockey". Checking students' comprehension of the passage by a True/False exercise followed. The lesson proceeded with another text about skiing from a monthly magazine Let's start and ended with revision of sports.

#### ii. Thesis focus

In this lesson I intended to do as many pre-reading activities as possible, ordering them from more general ones concerning various sports to those that related more closely to the reading text which was about ice-hockey. In this way I wanted to make pupils familiar both with the topic of the lesson and of the text, to motivate students to read, and to prepare them for getting information from the text.

Altogether there were five pre-reading activities in the beginning of the lesson. Three general ones included brainstorming, putting cut pictures together, and miming. The other two, a vocabulary quiz and a set of multiple choice questions, related directly to the reading text about ice-hockey.

#### iii. Anticipated teaching problems/possible solutions

One problem I was to solve was the number of multiple choice questions. I intended to put pieces of paper with those questions on walls all around the classroom and divide students into pairs or groups so that there was one group answering one question at a time. Since there was about twenty pupils in the class, I thought it would be best to have at least seven questions. Then there would be no more than three students in each group and it should be a suitable number. I managed to create six questions relating to the article which pupils were to read later. However, the text was followed by a True/False exercise and I could not avoid asking three questions which were used there. At least, I changed the formulation of them.



iv. Lesson aims:

- 1.a. to introduce the topic sport by brainstorming;
  - b. by putting together pieces of pictures with sports;
2. to practise names of sports by miming them;
3. to introduce/revise vocabulary connected with ice-hockey and skiing in a quiz;
4. to familiarise students with the gist of the article by guessing answers to a set of multiple choice questions;
5. to practise reading for specific information;
6. to learn what pupils knew about ice-hockey and if they were able to find the data in the text;
7. to check students' comprehension of information contained in the article by a True/False exercise;
8. to practise reading aloud in a role play;
9. to revise names of sports

v. Materials: Preludes to Reading by L.H. Massoud, text "Hockey", p. 37 (see an attached photocopy); True/False exercise from this book, p. 37; a monthly magazine Let's start, text "Linda, Patty and Tim", p. 7 - 8 (see an attached photocopy); pictures of sports and environment cut out from various magazines and photocopied from books (see attached photocopies); self-designed set of multiple choice questions

## **2. Lesson Summary**

1.a. Brainstorming

(8 minutes)

teacher writes the topic 'Sports' on the blackboard, elicits names of sports from students and writes them on the blackboard;

teacher shows pictures of sports to students, students say the names of sports again; If there are sports which students did not name and they do not know them, teacher says the names and writes them on the blackboard (students repeat the unknown names);



### 1.b. Putting together pictures of sports (4 minutes)

teacher divides students into groups of 3 and gives each group a set of 2 pictures cut into 16 pieces and mixed up;

3 variations of mixtures: 1. cycling, running;

2. cycling, shot put;

3. running, shot put;

students put the pieces together, make the original pictures;

all groups say to the rest of the class the names of the sports they had;

aims: to introduce the topic 'Sports'; to make students involved actively in the lesson from the beginning; to motivate students

### 2. Miming sports (4 minutes)

5 pairs of students go to the blackboard (one by one), pick up a card with a certain sport written on it (e.g.: tennis, football, volleyball, running, swimming), and mime it;

other students guess the mimed sports;

aim: to practise names of sports

### 3. Vocabulary quiz (4 minutes)

teacher writes 9 words on the blackboard in advance;

e.g.: ice, puck, ski, skates, snow, goal, slalom, stick, mountain

students read the words and decide which two sports they relate to;

students say aloud those sports and the words which belong to each of them; teacher writes the sports on the blackboard (ice-hockey x skiing) and underlines vocabulary in 2 different colours (red for ice-hockey, green for skiing);

aim: to introduce/revise vocabulary connected with ice-hockey and skiing which students will meet in reading texts in stages 5 and 8

aim: to familiarise students with expressions they will encounter in stage 5; to motivate students to read

### 5. Reading

students read the article "Hockey" silently;

aim: to practise reading for specific information

4. Multiple choice questions (8 minutes)

teacher places 6 pieces of paper with the multiple choice questions about ice-hockey all around the classroom in advance;

questions: 1. We play ice-hockey on: a. grass  
b. ice  
c. snow  
d. pavement

2. Two groups of : a. 5 players play ice-hockey.  
b. 6  
c. 7  
d. 8

3. We play ice-hockey with: a. ball  
b. rugby ball  
c. golf ball  
d. puck

4. Players of ice-hockey use: a. rackets  
b. bats  
c. sticks  
d. ski poles

5. We play ice-hockey in three: a. 10 minute periods.  
b. 15  
c. 20  
d. 25

6. To play ice-hockey you must be good at: a. skiing  
b. swimming  
c. skating  
d. running

students (in groups of 3) walk around the classroom, decide about the right answer and write it down (only 1 group answers 1 question at a time);

aims: to familiarise students with expressions they will meet in the reading text in stage 5; to motivate students to read

5. Reading (3 minutes)

students read the article "Hockey" silently;

aim: to practise reading for specific information



6. Checking answers to multiple choice questions (3 minutes)

teacher reads the questions with all prospective answers one by one,  
students say their answers;

teacher asks each group how many answers they had right;

aims: to check how much students knew about the topic before reading the article; to check if they were able to find the information in the text

7. True/False exercise (6 minutes)

students turn the sheets of paper with the article down so that they could not see it; students read 8 statements, decide if they are true or false, and write a corresponding letter (T or F) next to the sentences;

8 statements: 1. Each period in the game is 20 minutes.

2. Each side has six players.

3. Many U.S. hockey players come from Canada.

4. The players hit a ball with their sticks.

5. Players sometimes fight.

6. Hockey players usually make a lot of points.

7. There are ten players on the ice.

8. They wear light clothes.

individual students read the statements and say if they are true or false;

aim: to check if students understood the text

8. Role play (3 minutes)

teacher gives out a text about skiing to students; teacher gives students about 30 seconds to go through the bubbles;

teacher divides the roles of Linda, Patty, and Tim among students;

3 students read the bubbles aloud;

another 3 students role play the text;

aim: to practise reading aloud in a role play

9. Revision of the names of sports (2 minutes)

teacher holds up pictures of various environment (e.g.: of a town, countryside in summer, countryside in winter, mountains, lake, fields);

students look at the pictures and shout out the names of sports which can be practised in each environment;

aim: to summarize the lesson by revision of sports relating them to different environment

### **3. Reflection**

(Thesis-focus activities)

#### 1.a. (Brainstorming)

Pupils were enthusiastic to name all kinds of sports. They knew a great deal of them because they learned about sports before and they were all interested in this topic (notice this was a basic school with a special orientation on sports). When I showed children pictures, they said the names again with enthusiasm and they were glad to learn some new terms as, for example, 'shot put' and 'archery'.

#### 1.b. (Putting together pictures of sports)

In this activity, all pupils were very actively involved again. They all liked this stage, and especially the weaker students because they got a chance to be first, too.

#### 2. (Miming sports)

I deliberately chose pairs of pupils for this activity because of two reasons. First, children were not so shy as they might have been if they had gone to the blackboard alone, one by one. Second, it was better for some sports to be mimed by at least two persons because they were collective sports (e.g.: football, volleyball, tennis).

#### 3. (Vocabulary quiz)

This activity went well too. Pupils had no problems with finding out the names of sports. It was a revision of vocabulary for a majority of the students; only few of them did not know words 'stick' and 'goal'.



#### 4. (Multiple choice questions)

There were little organization problems at this stage. Pupils had not done a similar activity before so it took me a little more time to explain what I wanted students to do. During the activity, it happened that more than one group was answering one question. This was because some groups were quicker than the others. I decided on the spot to let pupils finish the work at whatever their pace was.

#### 6. (Checking the answers to multiple choice questions)

I found out that students mostly knew something about ice-hockey and so a majority of them had the answers right.

#### 7. (True/False exercise)

I wanted students not to look at the text because they knew it well after answering the multiple choice questions and reading it. Pupils did not have problems with the statements except the fourth one which was a little bit confusing. It was: "The players hit a ball with their sticks." Some students marked this as right because they thought the statement was asking about the sticks, and they overlooked word 'ball' which was wrong there.

### **4. Conclusions/Action**

I think all the pre-reading activities were successful and students participated very well in them. However, I have a feeling that this time the text was too easy for pupils. In the last lesson the story "Leif Saves a Life" was too long and difficult for them, and in this lesson I went too far in the other direction. The article "Hockey" was short and quite easy. Nevertheless, I think it did not matter too much because pupils were not bored and they needed a little encouragement in reading after that complicated text about Leif.

Now that I know the two boundaries, I have a clearer standard for selecting a text of appropriate difficulty for these pupils for the next lessons.





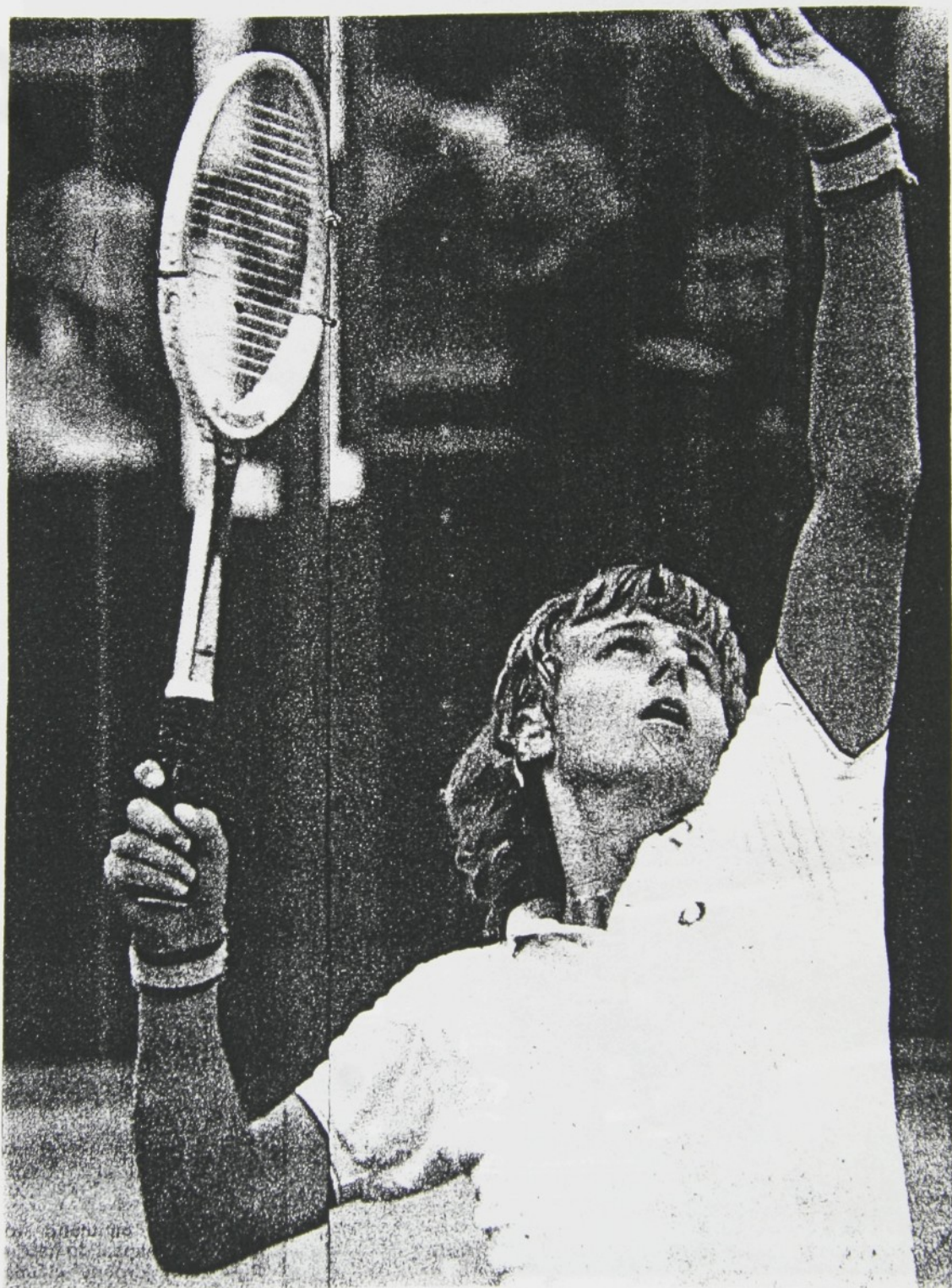
Stadión 22 /1991/, p. 23

Teen 6 /1991/, p. 4





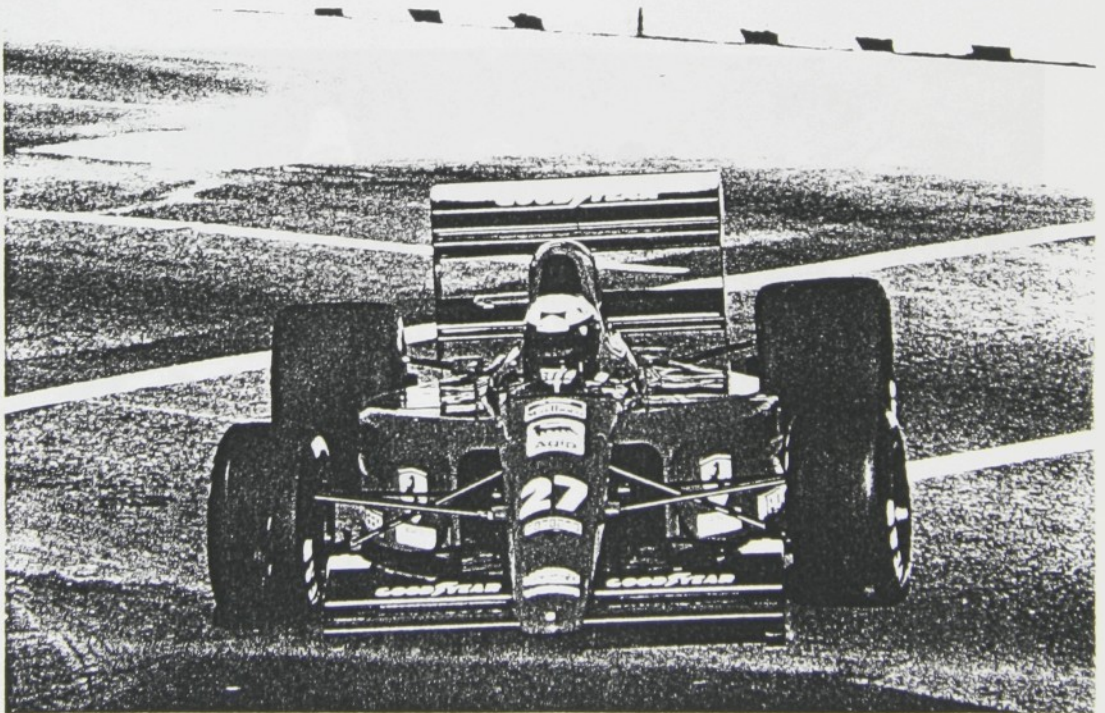




Stación 1 /1991/, p. 22 - 23

Stación 1 /1991/, p. 23





Teen 1 /1990/, p. 28

Teen 4 /1990/, p. 36

Teen 1 /1991/, p. 22







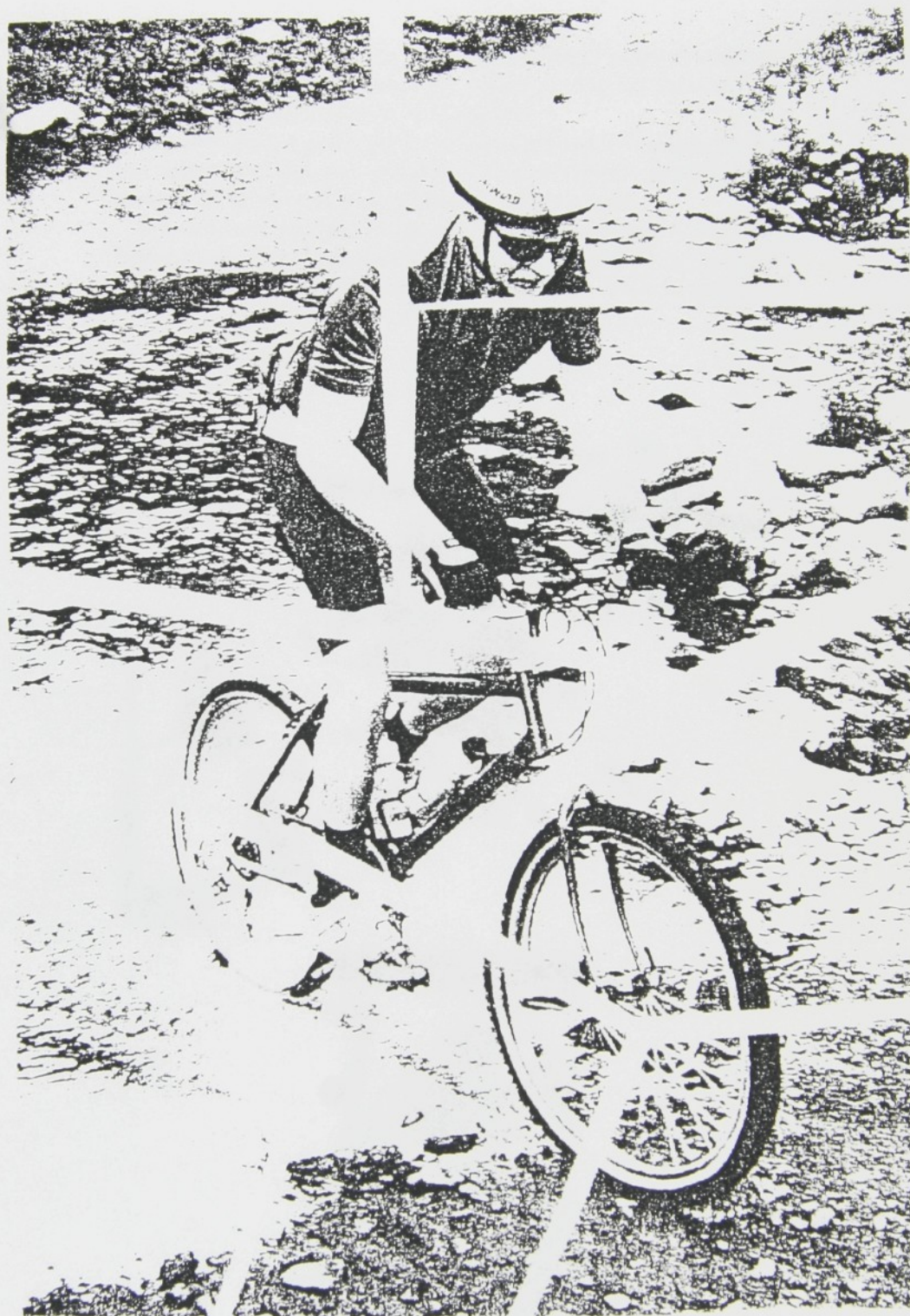


Athletics, p. 26  
Athletics, p. 13









Mountain Biking, p. 108

Published by the University of California Press

Albany

1980 - 1981 / 1982, v. 1



# HOCKEY

Hockey is a winter game. The playing "field" is ice. Two groups of 6 players each hit a small flat object across the ice with their sticks. The players wear heavy clothes.

Hockey is not a gentle game. It is fast and wild. Sometimes there are fights between the players. There are three twenty-minute periods in hockey. Every minute is full of action.

It is not easy to make points in hockey. Ten points is very high. Many of the hockey players in the U.S. come from Canada. French Canadian names are not unusual among U.S. hockey players.







# LINDA, PATTY and TIM







Midwest European Publications Linda, Patty and Tim.  
Let's Start, Dec. 1991, 7-8.



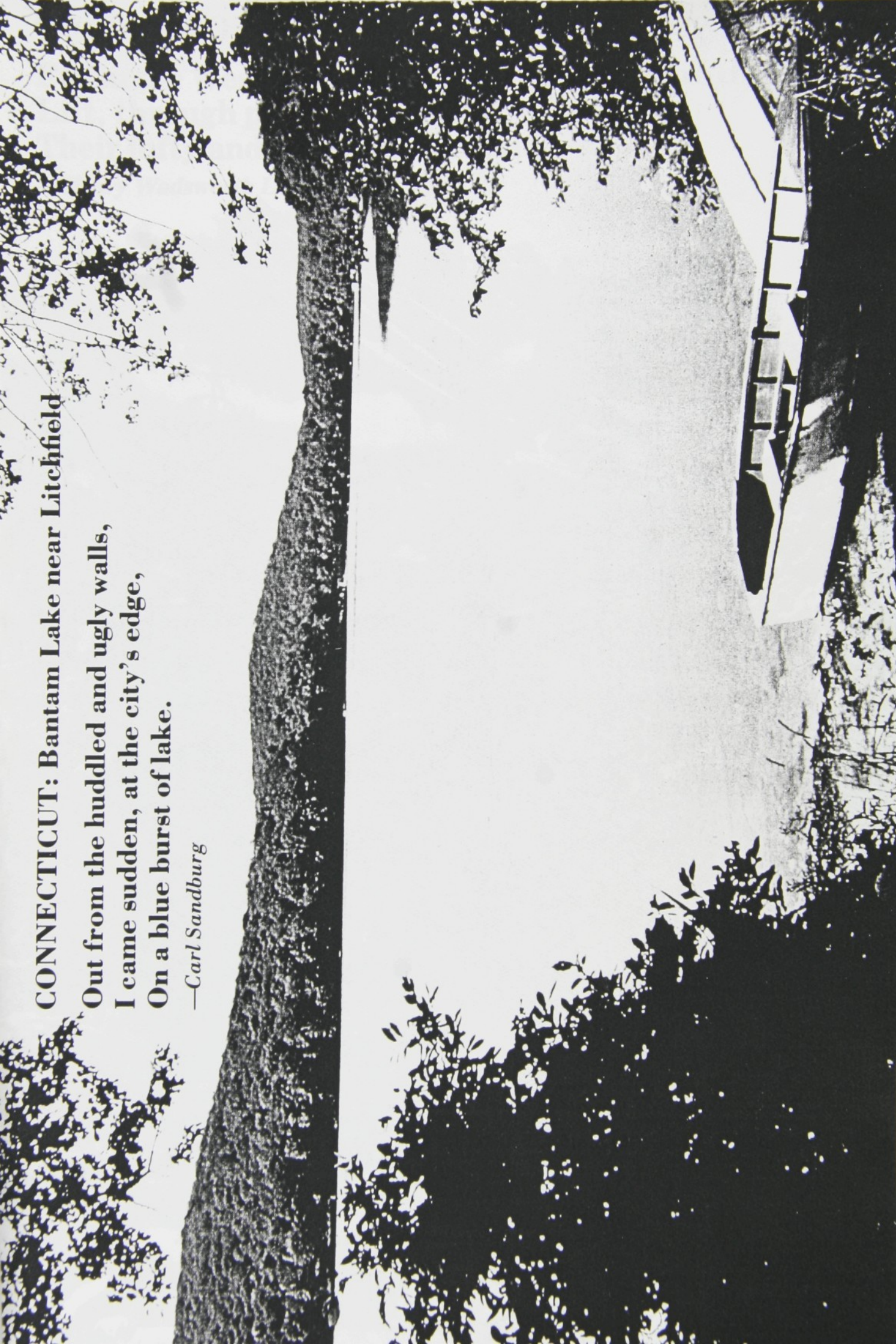




**CONNECTICUT: Bantam Lake near Litchfield**

Out from the huddled and ugly walls,  
I came sudden, at the city's edge,  
On a blue burst of lake.

—*Carl Sandburg*





## COLORADO: Long's Peak

Far in the West there lies a desert land, where the mountain  
Lift, through perpetual snows,  
Their lofty and luminous summits.

—Henry Wadsworth Longfellow





**COLORADO: Denver**

**The mile-high city!**







KENTUCKY: Near Lexington

Weep no more, my lady,

Oh! weep no more today!

We will sing one song for the old Kentucky Home,

For the old Kentucky Home far away.

—Stephen C. Foster



## Summary 3

### 1. Pre-lesson plan commentary

#### i. General lesson theme/topic/objective

The topic of this lesson was 'Monsters' and the text dealt with a Frankenstein monster. The lesson began with pre-reading activities which led to preparation of students for reading an article "Frankenstein". A True/False exercise ended the lesson.

#### ii. Thesis Focus

In this lesson I wanted to carry out a few pre-reading activities to prepare students for reading a text in a sense of familiarising them with the topic and vocabulary used in the text in an amusing way so that pupils were motivated to read the story about the Frankenstein monster.

Altogether there were five pre-reading activities in this lesson. The first two, introducing the topic 'Monsters' and eliciting information about the appearance of monsters, were more general. The third, fourth, and fifth pre-reading warm-ups, which included drawing the Frankenstein monster, determining its moods, and putting sentences in order, related closely to the text "Frankenstein".

#### iii. Anticipated teaching problems/possible solutions

The only problem I could foresee was that students might not know the adjectives describing the mood of the Frankenstein monster in stage 4. I thought the best way to solve it was simply to write translation of those adjectives there. It would save time and children could concentrate only on choosing the moods.

As regards the reading text, in its original form it was long and difficult. Recalling experience from the two previous lessons I shortened and simplified the text so that it was of appropriate difficulty for the students.

#### iv. Lesson aims:

- 1.a. to introduce the topic 'Monsters' by finding out what students know about Frankenstein;
- b. by eliciting other monsters;
- c. by showing pictures;



2. to elicit information about the appearance of monsters;
3. to draw the Frankenstein monster on the blackboard;
4. to determine the moods of the monster;
5. to put sentences in the right order;
6. to read an article "Frankenstein";
7. to check the adjectives describing the Frankenstein monster's mood;
8. to check that pupils comprehended the text by a True/False exercise

v. Materials: Developing Reading Strategies by Dillingofski, Menconi, and Willis, text "The story is born", p. 46 (see an attached photocopy); pictures of monsters and ordinary people photocopied and cut out from various books and magazines; self-made pictures of faces and self-designed True/False exercise (see attached photocopies)

## **2. Lesson Summary**

1. Introducing the topic (4 minutes)  
 teacher writes the word 'Monsters' on the blackboard and asks students about its meaning;  
 teacher writes 'Frankenstein' on the blackboard and asks students:  
 Do you know Frankenstein? Do you know the story of Frankenstein?;  
 If students do not know it, teacher explains just the beginning of the story introducing vocabulary: scientist -> Einstein, Newton  
 create = make;

aims: to introduce the topic of the lesson and of the reading text; to find out if students know the story of Frankenstein; to motivate students

- 1.b. Eliciting monsters (2 minutes)  
 teacher asks students: "Do you know any other monsters from books and films?"  
 students name the monsters they know;

aim: to find out if students are familiar with this topic



1.c. Showing pictures

(3 minutes)

teacher shows pictures of monsters and ordinary people to students and asks:

Is it a monster or not? (if not) Who is it?

aims: to make the idea of monster clearer; to give students more ideas about the appearance of monsters (they might use it in stage 2)

2. Eliciting information about the appearance of monsters (4 minutes)

teacher asks students questions: What do monsters look like?

Are they beautiful? Are they short or tall?

What colour are their eyes/is their hair/skin?

students answer; teacher writes some words on the blackboard

(e.g.: hideous, yellow eyes, black lips);

aims: to introduce/revise vocabulary which students will meet in the reading text in stage 6; to prepare students for the next stage -- drawing a monster

3. Drawing the Frankenstein monster on the blackboard (5 minutes)

3 or 4 students go to the blackboard (one by one) and draw parts of the Frankenstein monster there according to teacher's instructions;

teacher's instructions: The monster is tall; it has got yellow skin;

long, black hair; yellow eyes;

its lips are straight black lines;

aims: to revise vocabulary used in the text; to give students idea of the looks of the monster they will read about in stage 6

4. Determining the moods of the Frankenstein monster (4 minutes)

students look at sheets of paper with 6 little pictures of faces expressing different moods (below them there are also written adjectives in English and Czech describing the moods);

teacher reads the adjectives aloud, students repeat them chorally

e.g.: lovestruck, angry, lonely, sad, happy, hopeful;

teacher asks students: "What moods, do you think, can the Frankenstein monster be in?" "How can the monster feel like?"



students circle 3 faces which they think are appropriate and say the adjectives to teacher; (teacher does not say the right answer yet);

aims: to revise vocabulary (adjectives); to predict some features of the monster

5. Putting sentences in order (8 minutes)

students, in groups of 4, read 7 sentences on stripes of paper and put them in the right order - chronologically (as the events might have happened in the story about Frankenstein)

7 sentences: D. Viktor Frankenstein created a monster.

B. Dr. Frankenstein was shocked by the monster's hideous looks.

A. Dr. Frankenstein turned away from the monster.

G. Also other people turned away from the monster.

C. The monster became lonely and angry.

E. The monster began to kill.

F. The monster killed Dr. Frankenstein's brother, wife, and friend.

students say the letters by which the statements are marked and read the sentences;

aims: to familiarise students with the main points of the story they will read in stage 6; to familiarise students with some expressions used in the text

6. Reading (8 minutes)

students read the text "Frankenstein" silently, then aloud (1 student reads 1 sentence);

aim: to practise reading for comprehension

7. Checking the adjectives describing the moods of the Frankenstein monster (2 minutes)

teacher asks students: "Was the monster lovestruck/ angry/ lonely/ sad/ happy/ hopeful?"

students answer chorally either "Yes" or "No";



aim: to check students understood the article

8. True/False exercise (5 minutes)

students read 5 statements silently, decide if they are true or false, and tick the appropriate columns;

5 statements: 1. The monster was called Viktor Frankenstein.

2. The monster was not beautiful.

3. Dr. Frankenstein liked his monster.

4. People did not want to be friends with the monster.

5. The monster killed Dr. Frankenstein.

students read the statements aloud and say if they are true or false;

aim: to check that students comprehended the story

### **3. Reflection**

(Thesis-focus activities)

1.a. (Introducing the topic)

Pupils did not know the story of Frankenstein although they all knew the name. Only one student tried to tell the story but he made a different one of it. The better it was for finding out if pupils really understood the story from just reading it and with help of the pre-reading activities.

2. (Eliciting information about the appearance of monsters)

There were no problems at this stage since students learned about appearances in a preceding unit of their textbook, and after the first pre-reading activity they knew what monsters look like. Pupils liked this activity because they could use their imagination and almost everything they said was right (because there exists no exact description of a monster).

3. (Drawing the Frankenstein monster on the blackboard)

Students enjoyed this because they like drawing. Only it is a shame that just four pupils could take part in making the portrait. If there was more time in the lesson, then I could give students sheets of paper and , in groups, all of them could draw the monster. It would certainly be even more interesting for pupils.



#### 4. (Determining the moods of the Frankenstein monster)

Since students did not know the story and the monster, not all of them guessed the right adjectives. However, when I asked them after reading, in stage 7, all of the pupils knew what moods the monster was in, and that was the point.

#### 5. (Putting sentences in order)

There were little problems with vocabulary in this exercise. When I was monitoring, children asked me about words 'also', 'turn away from', and 'begin'. I said translation of these words to students and when another group of pupils asked me about the same, I said it to the whole class. This activity took a while to pupils and I think they had not done an exercise like this before. Finally, all students managed to put the sentences into the right order.

#### **4. Conclusions/Action**

I think that students favoured all the pre-reading activities done in the lesson and I think that the warm-ups helped pupils with comprehension of the text. I say this considering the facts that students did not know the story of Frankenstein nor were some of them able to guess the moods of the monster before reading. The True/False exercise, whose results most pupils had right, showed me that children understood the story.

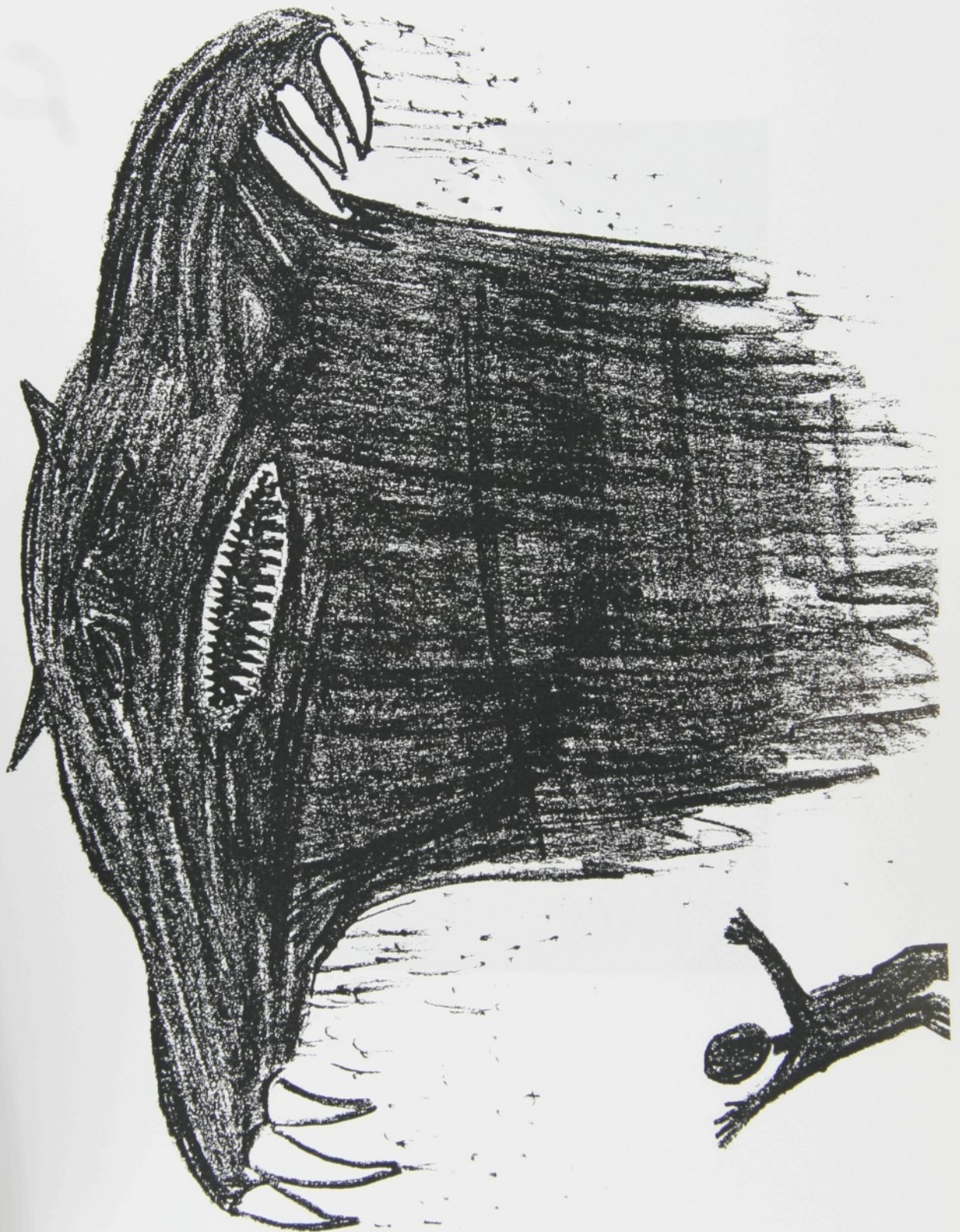
According to the second questionnaire (See Appendix, p. 2), which I gave pupils after finishing all four special lessons, this lesson about monsters was the most successful and also the text "Frankenstein" (this time I think of appropriate length and difficulty) was the most liked by children.





Fungus the Bogeyman, front cover





Self-made





brochure /Theatre Museum/





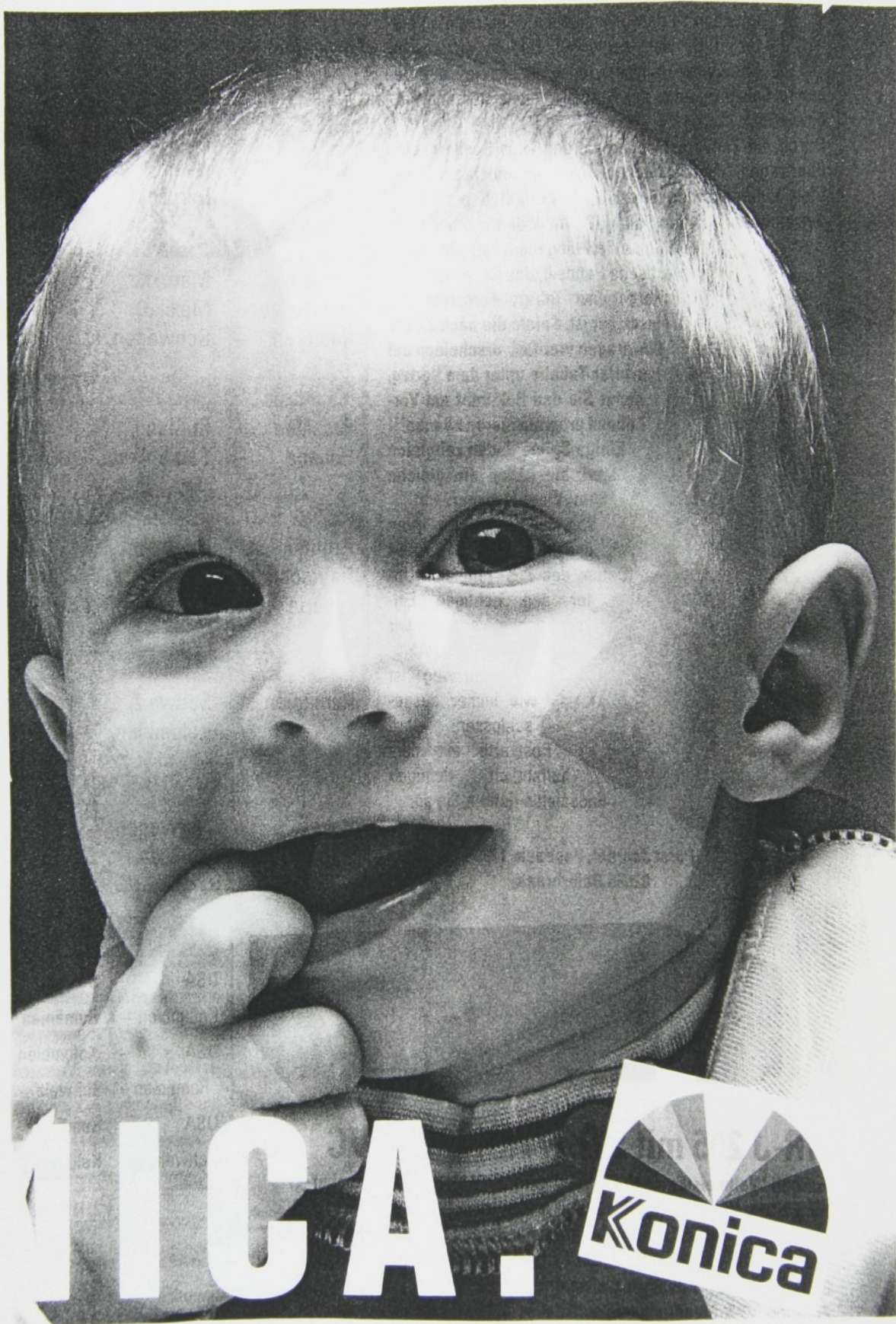
Various magazines





Big Pumpkin, p. 16







HOW CAN THE FRANKENSTEIN MONSTER  
FEEL LIKE ?



Looks, p. 36

"How Are You Feeling Today?" (adapted)



# HOW CAN THE FRANKENSTEIN MONSTER FEEL LIKE ?



- ANGRY  
ROZZLOBENÝ



LONELY  
OSAMĚLÝ



HAPPY  
ŠASTNÝ



HOPEFUL  
PLNÝ NADĚJE



LOVESTRUCK  
ZAMILOVANÝ



SAD  
SMUTNÝ

"How Are You Feeling Today?" /adapted/



# FRANKENSTEIN

Viktor Frankenstein was a young scientist. He wanted to create a living being. One night, he created it. It was 244 cm tall, with yellowish skin and long, black hair. Its lips were straight black lines. Its eyes were yellow. It looked as dead. The monster was hideous. Dr. Frankenstein didn't want to create such a hideous monster. He was shocked by its looks. But the monster was not bad. It wanted love and understanding. But Frankenstein turned away from the monster. Also other people turned away from it. Everybody was shocked by the monster's hideous looks. The monster was lonely and angry. It began to kill. It killed Dr. Frankenstein's brother, wife and his best friend.



Dillingofski, M.S., Menconi, J.P., and Willis, B. Developing Reading Strategies. Texas: Steck-Vaughn Company, 1991.

/adapted/



## Summary 4

### 1. Pre-lesson plan commentary

#### i. General lesson theme/topic/objective

The topic of this lesson was "Records" (Guinness records). The lesson began with eight pre-reading activities which included revision of adjectives, explanation and practice of superlatives, revision of numbers, superlative quiz, Guinness records exercise, a matching exercise, and finally, ordering students according to their height. Reading the texts "The tallest man", which was read by boys, and "The tallest woman", which girls read, followed. The lesson ended with Ask/Answer competition by which I checked pupils' comprehension of the text.

#### ii. Thesis Focus

In this lesson I wanted to carry out a few pre-reading activities and after reading a text to check that students comprehended it with the help of the pre-reading warm-ups. This lesson was a little bit different from the previous ones because I did not only activated pupils' background knowledge and revised/introduced vocabulary, but I actually had to present a new grammar item. I briefly explained superlatives to students because it was necessary for pupils to know them since they wanted to have a lesson about Guinness records. The eight pre-reading activities, mentioned above in General lesson theme/topic/objective, could be summarized into three main parts. The first part was explanation of superlatives, the second part dealt with records concerning people and non living things. The third part related in its topic more closely to the reading text because it dealt with people and their height.

#### iii. Anticipated teaching problems/possible solutions

One problem which I realized immediately after having made the decision to devote a lesson to the topic of Guinness records (to satisfy students' wishes) was that pupils did not know superlatives. Therefore, I decided not to put the topic aside but to explain the superlatives briefly as one of the pre-reading activities.



One thing I had to decide about was the text. As I went through The Guinness Book of Records, it seemed a good idea to me to prepare two texts about the tallest people in the world. Since I saw an article about the tallest man, I thought it would be suitable for boys. The article about the tallest woman could be interesting for girls. I translated these texts and made slight changes in them so that it was not too difficult for the pupils. Mostly I wrote simple sentences; I omitted some sentences completely, and as I was not sure that students would understand one phrase, I drew a picture to accompany the text.

Another problem I could foresee was that if I let boys make up questions about the girls' article, and the other way round (the articles were similar but contained different data) in stage 10, it would take too much time and it would not fulfil the aim of checking comprehension of the text. Therefore, I decided to solve this problem by writing the questions for both the girls and boys on sheets of paper myself. Then, students could just read the questions and they could get points for every right answer.

iv. Lesson aims:

1. to introduce the topic and elicit adjectives;
2. to explain superlatives;
3. to practise superlatives;
4. to revise numbers;
5. and 6. to introduce some world records;
7. to introduce records connected more closely with people;
8. to revise the meaning of superlatives 'the tallest' and 'the shortest';
9. to practise reading for gist and for specific information;
10. to check that students understood the text and were able to find facts in it.

v. Materials: Guinnessova kniha rekordů by Peter Matthews, texts "Nejvyšší muži" and "Nejvyšší ženy", p. 50 (see attached photocopies); information about other Guinness records from the same book (see an attached photocopy); Play Games with English 2 by Granger and Plumb, "Comparative Quiz", p. 31 (see an attached photocopy); Play Games with English 1 by Granger and Plumb, "Superlative Quiz", p. 51; Project 2, "Quiz", p. 31 (see an attached photocopy); self-designed questions to texts



## 2. Lesson Summary

### 1. Introduction of the topic, eliciting adjectives (4 minutes)

teacher writes the word 'Records' on the blackboard and elicits its meaning from students;

teacher draws pictures expressing some Guinness records on the blackboard in advance; teacher points at them and elicits adjectives describing the pictures

e.g.: tall, short, long, big, old, young, light, heavy, small, high

aims: to introduce the topic of the lesson; to revise adjectives

### 2. Superlatives (3 minutes)

teacher writes the adjective 'tall' on the blackboard and adds the suffix '-est' and the definite article to the word in a red colour;

teacher briefly explains the rule for making superlatives;

teacher mentions 2 exceptions in spelling (e.g.: biggest, heaviest) which students will meet during the lesson;

aim: to explain superlatives because students will need it during the whole lesson when working with records

### 3. Practice of superlatives - quiz (5 minutes)

students look at the adjectives and nouns in the quiz, decide what is (of 3 possibilities) the largest/youngest/biggest/fastest, and write it down;

i.e.: large - sea

- ocean

An ocean is the largest.

- lake

students read the sentences they wrote about, teacher checks that the forms of superlatives are right and that students chose the right answer;

aims: to practise making superlatives; to revise the meaning of adjectives



#### 4. Superlative quiz

(6 minutes)

in groups of 4, students read the questions and the prospective answers, decide about one answer and tick it;

e.g.: Which is the fastest animal? - antelope

- horse

- cheetah

teacher asks each group about their answers, says the right one, and writes points to groups which ticked the right answer;

teacher counts points and announces the winning group;

aims: to practise superlatives; to make students familiar with some world records

#### 5. Revision of numbers

(2 minutes)

students count from 1 to 22 in a chain (every student says one number);

teacher shows flashcards with certain numbers to students, students say the numbers;

e.g.: 218; 231,7; 6670; 404; 9,86; 65; 365; 4755; 2333; 30,48; 8848;

aim: to revise the numbers that will appear in records about which students will speak in stage 6

#### 6. Guinness records exercise

(8 minutes)

each student picks up a piece of paper with certain world record written on it;

e.g.: Lucia Xarate;

the lightest living woman in the world;

5,9 kg

a few students go to the blackboard and read the information -- their role -- transforming it into sentences, and point at the appropriate pictures on the blackboard (teacher draws pictures there in advance);

teacher helps students by writing hints on the blackboard (e.g.: I'm. . .and I'm. . ./I have. . .);

sentences that students say: I'm Lucia Xarate and I'm the lightest living woman in the world. I'm 5,9 kilograms heavy.

aim: to get students participate actively in sharing some world records



### 7. Matching exercise (4 minutes)

teacher gives students 6 strips of paper with 'the. . .-est persons' and 6 strips of paper with their measurements;

in pairs, students match the measurements to the appropriate persons

e.g.: The tallest living man - 231,7 cm;

The shortest living woman - 65 cm

The lightest living woman - 5,9 kg

The heaviest living man - 404 kg

The fastest runner (100 m) - 9,86 seconds

The oldest living woman - 118 years

teacher reads the beginnings of the sentences, students fill in the measurements

e.g.: (teacher) The tallest living man is. . .(student) 231,7 cm tall.

aim: to introduce records connected more closely with people and their measurements (students will read about the tallest man/woman in stage 9)

### 8. Ordering students according to their height (4 minutes)

5 students go in front of the blackboard and stand there;

teacher elicits from other students who is the shortest/the tallest of those 5 pupils;

teacher asks students to order them: i. from the shortest to the tallest;

ii. from the tallest to the shortest;

aim: to revise the superlatives the shortest and the tallest because students will read about the tallest man/woman in the next stage

### 9. Reading (4. minutes)

teacher changes the seating arrangement so that boys sit on the right side of the classroom and girls on the left;

students read the texts silently (boys read "The tallest man" and girls read "The tallest woman");

aim: to practise reading for comprehension



#### 10. Ask/Answer competition

(5 minutes)

girls get a sheet of paper with 6 questions about the boys' article, boys get a sheet of paper with 6 questions about the girls' article;  
a student from the girls' group asks a question, boys look in the text and answer the question ; then a student from the boys' group asks a question and girls answer it;

questions: 1. Who is the tallest man/woman in the world?

2. When was he/she born?

3. When did he/she start to grow abnormally?

4. How tall was he/she in 13 years?

5. How tall was he/she when he/she died?

6. How long were his/her shoes?

teacher gives points for every right answer;

teacher announces the winner;

aims: to check students' comprehension of the text; to check students' ability to find out information in the text

### **3. Reflection**

(Thesis-focus activities)

1. (Introduction of the topic, eliciting adjectives)

Students participated well in this activity. I elicited quite a lot of adjectives from them and I introduced only two which students did not know (e.g.: light, heavy).

3. (Practice of superlatives)

At this stage maybe it was not necessary to ask students to write the sentences down since in the rest of the lesson there were no such activities where pupils would need to write the superlatives. A little time would be saved in favour of another activity if students decided about the right answer and just said it instead of writing.



#### 5. (Revision of numbers)

Here I had to stress that we say 'and' after hundred when speaking about numbers (e.g.: three hundred and sixty-five) and that we read 'point' in numbers like 231,7 - two hundred and thirty-one point seven. Otherwise pupils mastered the numbers quite well.

#### 6. (Guinness records exercise)

This exercise did not go quite as I expected. Students liked to be given a role and to go in front of the blackboard and say who or what they were, but formulation of those three sentences took quite a long time to them. Therefore, there were only about four students in front of the blackboard. The rest of the pupils stayed in their seats and read just who or what they stood for, and I pointed at the appropriate pictures on the blackboard.

(general)

#### 10. (Ask/Answer competition)

Answering the questions went well. I think there was only one mistake which one of boys made when a girl asked him "How tall was Robert Wadlow when he died?" and the boy's answer was "Twenty-two years.". But this mistake was probably caused by overhearing the word 'tall' and confusing it with 'old'.

### **4. Conclusions/Action**

Students liked all the pre-reading activities and they participated very well in them, and I think that especially the quizzes were attractive for this age group. I think that the pre-reading activities helped pupils to get involved in the topic and to prepare them for reading the text. As I wrote above in Reflection to stage 10, students knew all the answers to the questions, except one, and it was a sign of their comprehension of the text. Therefore, as concerns the text, I think it was of appropriate length and difficulty. Students welcomed the change of having two slightly different texts instead of one.

In the second questionnaire (See Appendix, p. 2) these texts were the second most successful according to the students' opinion. Similarly, children marked this lesson called "Records" as the second most favourable lesson together with the one about sports.



# SUPERLATIVE QUIZ

## QUIZ

### 1. LARGE



sea

ocean

lake

EXAMPLE:

An ocean is the largest.

### 2. YOUNG



baby

teenager

infant

### 3. BIG



city

village

town

### 4. FAST



train

plane

bicycle



# SUPERLATIVE QUIZ



Put a ☒ next to the correct answer.

1. Which is the largest ocean?



- Pacific ☐  
Atlantic ☐  
Indian ☐

2. What is the largest continent?

- a) Africa ☐  
b) Asia ☐  
c) America ☐

3. What is the largest animal in the world?

- a) an elephant ☐  
b) a blue whale ☐  
c) a shark ☐

4. Which is the smallest country?



- Vatican City ☐  
Monaco ☐  
Andorra ☐

5. Which is the longest river?



- Mississippi ☐  
Nile ☐  
Amazon ☐

6. What is the biggest city in the world?

- a) Tokyo ☐  
b) Calcutta ☐  
c) New York ☐

7. What is the fastest animal in the world?

- a) a lion ☐  
b) an ostrich ☐  
c) a cheetah ☐

8. Which is the tallest building?



- Eiffel Tower ☐  
Sears Tower (Chicago) ☐  
Empire State Building (New York) ☐



Sandy Allen;  
the tallest living woman  
in the world;  
231,7 cm tall

the Pacific Ocean;  
the largest ocean  
in the world;  
165 mil. square km

Vatican City;  
the smallest country  
in the world;  
44 hectares

Albert Jackson;  
the heaviest living man  
in the world;  
404 kg

Lake Superior;  
the biggest lake  
in the world;  
51 488 square km

Mount Everest;  
the highest mountain  
in the world;  
8 848 m

Madge Bester;  
the shortest living woman  
in the world;  
65 cm

the heaviest Easter egg  
(made of chocolate)  
in the world;  
4 755 kg

the biggest pizza  
in the world;  
37,4 m

Verrazano-Narrows Bridge;  
the longest bridge  
in the world;  
2 039 m

the biggest bubble  
(made of chewing gum)  
in the world;  
diameter 55,8 cm



Diana Witt;  
a woman with the longest hair  
in the world;  
365 cm

BAC;  
the fastest plane  
in the world;  
2 333 km per hour

Manute Bol;  
the tallest living man  
in the world;  
231,7 cm

blue whale;  
the largest animal  
in the world;  
30,48 m

the biggest wave  
on the open sea  
in the world;  
34 m

Gul Mohammad;  
the shortest living man  
in the world;  
57 cm

Sears Tower;  
the highest building  
in the world;  
520 m

the longest sausage  
in the world;  
21,12 km

Jeanne L. Calment;  
the oldest living woman  
in the world;  
118 years

Carl Lewis;  
the fastest runner  
in the world;  
(in 100 m run)

Lucia Xarate;  
the lightest living woman  
in the world;  
5,9 kg

Matthews, P. 9.86 seconds a kniha rekordů, London: Guinness  
Publishing Ltd., 1994. /translated and adapted/

Guinnessova kniha rekordů



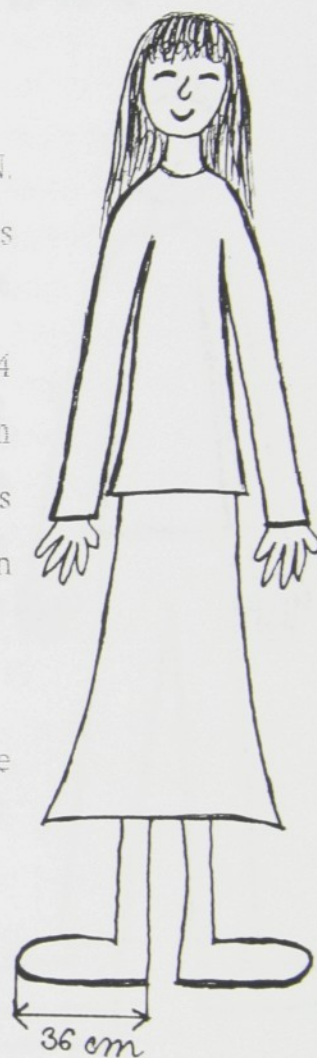
# THE TALLEST WOMAN

The tallest woman in history was ZENG JINLIAN. She was born on the 26th of June in 1964. She was born in Jujiang village in China.

She started to grow abnormally when she was 4 months old. When she was 3 years old, she was 156 cm (centimetres) tall. When she was 13 years old, she was 217 cm tall. When she died on the 13th of February in 1982 (she was 18 years old), she was 247 cm tall.

Her shoes were 36 cm long.

Her hands were 25,5 cm long - measured from the wrist to the end of her middle finger.



Matthews, P. Guinnessova kniha rekordů. London: Guinness Publishing Ltd., 1994. /translated and adapted/



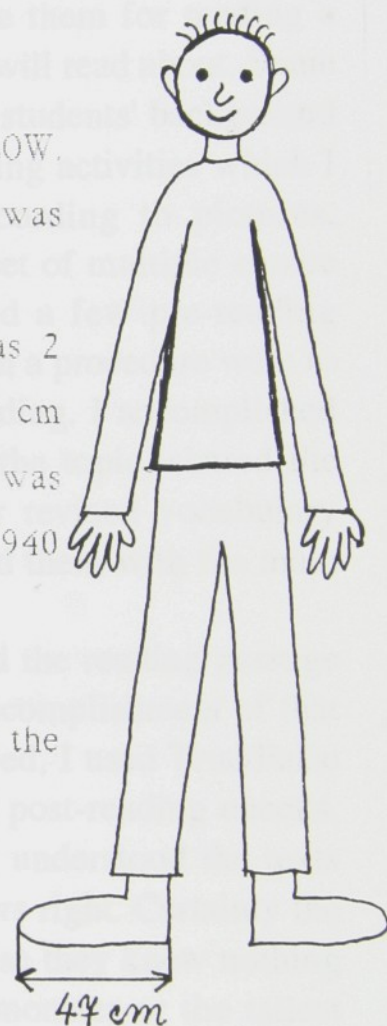
# THE TALLEST MAN

The tallest man in history was ROBERT WADLOW. He was born on the 22nd of February in 1918. He was born in Alton city in USA.

He started to grow abnormally when he was 2 years old. When he was 5 years old, he was 163 cm (centimetres) tall. When he was 13 years old, he was 218 cm tall. When he died on the 15th of July in 1940 (he was 22 years old), he was 272 cm tall.

His shoes were 47 cm long.

His hands were 32.4 cm long - measured from the wrist to the end of his middle finger.



Matthews, P. Guinnessova kniha rekordů. London: Guinness Publishing Ltd., 1994. /translated and adapted/



### III. CONCLUSION

#### SUMMARIZING THEORY, METHODOLOGY, AND PRACTICE

Since reading plays quite a big role both in the process of teaching a foreign language and in our everyday lives, we should concentrate on some ways to reach effective comprehension of the texts we read. When reading in the classroom, one of the ways is to use pre-reading activities. They are necessary to help students understand a text. Warm-ups carried out before reading motivate pupils, get them involved, prepare them for reading a certain passage, and help them understand what they will read about. Some kind of introduction and linking new information to students' background knowledge is important here. A few of the pre-reading activities which I used in the lessons were predicting a story according to pictures, brainstorming, miming, and guessing answers to a set of multiple choice questions. In each of my four lessons I performed a few pre-reading activities before going on to the text. The aims of such a procedure were to tune students in, motivate and prepare them for reading. I accomplished this with a set of exercises in which I introduced the topic, shared the pupils' and my knowledge about it, introduced or revised vocabulary students needed for reading the text, and familiarised them with the main points of the article.

My teaching aim was to help pupils understand the reading passage and pre-reading activities were to lead toward the accomplishment of that aim. To discover whether or not the aim was achieved, I used True/False exercises or a set of questions about the articles as post-reading checks. These exercises usually showed me that pupils had understood the texts because always a majority of students had the answers right. Certainly the pre-reading activities were useful for students because they knew nothing about the topics Leif the Lucky, the Frankenstein monster or the tallest man and woman in the world. (An exception was the lesson about sports where students were familiar with ice-hockey which the article was about). Without the pre-reading activities, it is questionable if students would have been able to comprehend most of the texts and answer the exercise questions successfully.



Since pre-reading activities seemed to help students with comprehension of the text, it might be claimed that my thesis was supported. However, this assumption is not completely supported. In fact, it is almost impossible to put such an experiment, which would show objectively that pre-reading activities are necessary to help students understand the text, into practice. This would require two groups of students completely identical in their knowledge, reading abilities, and many other factors. Then, one group would be given a passage and told to read it. The other group would do the same with the addition of going through a few pre-reading activities before reading. Afterwards, the difference in comprehension of the text with having some pre-reading warm-ups or having none could be seen.

A similar experiment might be worth of trying out in a future practice. Of course, it would not be entirely objective since there cannot be two absolutely alike groups of students, but testing it with two parallel classes could show some results too. It would be worth devoting more time to this research to find out, for example, how many pre-reading activities would be the best number to carry out, or what kinds of activities would be the most effective with which texts. However, for myself, I have made an initial step and I think probably the most important one in learning about the need for pre-reading activities.

I believe that pre-reading activities help students understand the text. When good warm-ups are chosen, they not only prepare pupils for the passage, but they also have a great motivating effect so that students enjoy reading. Therefore, I think that pre-reading activities are a necessary part of the reading process. From my teaching experience I assume that a certain kind of preparation is needed in training the other skills, too. A message for my future practice is that I will always try to prepare students somehow for anything they are going to do afterwards.



## REFERENCES

- Alvermann, D.E. and Phelps, S.F. Content Reading and Literacy.  
Needham Heights: Allyn and Bacon, 1994.
- Bowen, T. and Marks, J. Inside Teaching. Oxford: Adrian  
Underhill Heinemann, 1994.
- Brumfit, Ch., Moon, J., and Tongue, R. Teaching English to Children.  
London: Collins ELT, 1991.



## QUESTIONNAIRE 1

1. Do you think it is necessary to read?

- a) yes
- b) no

2. Do you read at home?

- a) yes
- b) no

3. If yes, how often?

- a) once a week
- b) twice to four times a week
- c) five times a week

4. Have you ever read any other texts except the textbook ones?

- a) yes
- b) no

## APPENDIX

5. What texts did you use in lessons?

- a) textbook ones
- b) teacher's texts
- c) your own

6. Write the name of the book that you have read recently.

7. Which books do you prefer?

- a) adventurous
- b) of detective character
- c) books of travels
- d) historical
- e) fairy-tales, fables
- f) others (write which ones)

8. Write topics which you would like to read about  
(for example: sports, animals, ...).



## QUESTIONNAIRE 1

1. Do you think it is necessary to read?
  - a) yes
  - b) no
2. Do you read at home?
  - a) yes
  - b) no
3. If yes, how often?
  - a) once a week
  - b) twice to four times a week
  - c) five times a week
4. Have you ever read any other texts except the textbook ones?
  - a) yes
  - b) no
5. What texts did you use in lessons?
  - a) textbook ones
  - b) teacher's texts
  - c) your own
6. Write the name of the book that you have read recently.
7. Which books do you prefer?
  - a) adventurous
  - b) of detective character
  - c) books of travels
  - d) historical
  - e) fairy-tales, fables
  - f) others (write which ones)
8. Write topics which you would like to read about  
(for example: sports, animals, . . . ).



## QUESTIONNAIRE 2

1. Number the texts from 1 to 4 as you liked them:

"Leif Saves a Life"

"Ice-hockey"

"Frankenstein"

"The tallest man/woman"

2. Did you comprehend all texts?

a) yes

b) no

3. If not all, which one/s/ did you not comprehend?

(write it/them down)

4. Number the lessons from 1 to 4 as you liked them:

- the lesson about Leif

- 'Sports'

- 'Monsters'

- 'Records'