

## PAST TENSE

# From Beginning to End

Dino Mahoney

<b>Levels</b>	<i>Intermediate to advanced</i>
<b>Aims</b>	<i>Use the past tense and joining words in short narratives</i> <i>Develop creative storytelling skills</i>
<b>Class Time</b>	<i>1 hour</i>
<b>Preparation Time</b>	<i>30 minutes</i>
<b>Resources</b>	<i>Index cards (or slips of paper)</i>

**S**tudents practice the past tense and work on temporal connectors and other transition words by developing stories to connect a first and last sentence.

## PROCEDURE

1. Prepare two sets of index cards. Each set should contain enough cards for each group of three to four students:
  - **Set 1:** Each index card should contain one sentence that could serve as the beginning of a story; all the cards in this set can contain the same sentence. An example beginning might be, “It was a cold, wet Sunday in February, so Georgina thought it would be a good day to stay at home and read a book.”
  - **Set 2:** Each index card should contain one sentence that could serve as the end of a story. It’s a good idea to have several different possible endings, and the endings should be intriguing. For example, “After that, she decided it was time to move,” or “She never again opened her front door to a stranger.”
2. In class, divide the students into groups of three or four.
3. Give each group two of the prepared cards, one from Set 1 and one from Set 2.
4. Appoint one student in each group as the scribe.
5. Ask each group to create a story that fills in the missing information, making sure to set a time limit, for example, 15 minutes.
6. Circulate among the groups to give feedback as needed.
7. Stop the activity after the time is up and ask the scribes to tell their group’s story.
8. Have the class vote on the best story.

## CAVEATS AND OPTIONS

1. Students can write out their stories during class or for homework.
2. Give a list of specific lexical or other items that students must use in their stories, for example:
  - attorney
  - helicopter
  - Inspector Stevenson
  - but before doing that . . .
  - when she realized that . . .
  - the next thing she remembered was . . .