SILENT STORIES: Using Pictures in ELT





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A PICTURES	B LANGUAGE	C LEARNING
single-frame	efficient	motiVating
multi-frame	supportive	personal
sequential	memorable	CommuniCative
piC-pairs	meaningful	self-adjusting
map/diagram		

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• Single frame





- Single frame
- Multi-frame





- Single frame
- Multi-frame
- Sequential









- Single frame
- Multi-frame
- Sequential
- Picture pairs







- Single frame
- Multi-frame
- Sequential
- Picture pairs
- Map /diagram







The Student The driver is a woman. She's 20 years old. Her parents are divorced. She isn't married. She's a student.

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The Old Couple

The drivers are an old couple. The man is a retired factory worker. The woman is a shop assistant. They're grandparents.





The Doctors

The drivers are a married couple. She's a doctor and he's a vet. They aren't young. Their children are teenagers.







Picture Differences…











In 1656, Diego Velázquez painted Las Meninas, one of the most famous works in the history of Western art. Today, the painting is on display in the Prado Museum in Madrid. Thousands of people visit the museum every day, and most of them want to see this masterpiece by Velázquez before they leave.

When you look at the picture, the first thing you see is five-year-old Princess Margarita (). She's standing in the middle of a group of girls and she's looking directly at you. The girls are wearing expensive dresses with very wide skirts. Margarita's dress is white and shines brightly in the light from a window on the right. The two girls on either side of the princess are her maids of honour, Maria and Isabel. Maria () is kneeling and offering Margarita a drink. Isabel () is standing to the right of Margarita and she's looking in our direction.

Apart from her maids-of-honour, little Margarita also has two dwarfs to keep her company. Their names are Nicolas () and Maribarbola (). You can them at the front on the right. A dog is lying in front of them and Nicolas is trying to wake it up with his foot.

Behind Isabel, the maid of honour, we can see Marcela (), the woman who looks after the princess. She's saying something to the princess's bodyguard (). At the back of the room, through the doorway we can see José Nieto (). He looks after the palace buildings. He's going up the stairs, or perhaps he's coming down, it isn't clear. He's looking towards us.

Finally, on the left of the scene is the painter himself, Diego Velázquez (). He's working on an enormous painting, but we can't see what it is. Is he painting the whole scene in a mirror, or is he painting something else? We will never know.





It shows a man's bedroom. It must be a man's room because there are men's clothes hanging behind the bed. It doesn't look very comfortable, the furniture is cheap and simple, so he can't have a lot of money. There's a wooden bed, two chairs and a table. I think the man must clean and tidy a lot, because the room is neat and there's nothing on the floor. Or perhaps he tidied the mess for the picture!

The room is quite small, and there are two doors and a window. I guess the shutters of the window must be closed because there isn't much light coming in. There are paintings on the wall - I suppose the man might be an artist, or maybe he just likes pictures. Two of them are portraits of people - they might be members of the man's family or people he knows. There aren't any books in the room, so the man can't enjoy reading much.

The room is old-fashioned. There's no electrical equipment, not even a light. In one corner of the room, there's a jug of water, a bowl, a piece of soap, a mirror and a towel. I guess this must be a washing area - perhaps there's no bathroom. Maybe this is in a place without electricity or running water, or perhaps it's a long time in the past, before these things were common.





Jack Larson lived in a small town called Twin Peaks, Montana, not so far from the Canadian border. Jack was a lumberjack with many years of experience working in the forest. Jack's son Charlie was fifteen years old and he really admired his father. He wanted to be like him.

One day, Charlie decided to surprise his dad and prove that he too could cut down a tree. So he and a school friend set out into the forest in Jack's pick-up truck, with a chainsaw in the back. They found a good tree by the side of the forest track and stopped. Charlie started to work with the chainsaw.

Charlie had never cut down a tree before, and he didn't know any of the tricks of the trade. He never gave any thought to which way the tree would fall, he just trusted luck. And this was not his lucky day. The massive tree started falling, slowly at first. There was time enough for Charlie and his friend to jump out of the way, but there wasn't time to save the truck, which ended up being crushed by the tree.

Charlie and his friend spent the rest of the day trying to cut the tree into smaller pieces so that they could lift it off the truck. But slowly, they understood that it was a waste of time. The truck was a write off, and Jack was not going to be impressed! Charlie and his friend just began to laugh. Hysterically. What else was there to do?









You often hear people say that dogs look like their owners. It sounds like a crazy idea, but a new study from California suggests that it's true - but only in certain circumstances.

Researchers wanted to find out if people really do look like their dogs, and just how this happens. First of all, they took photos of 45 dogs and their owners. They mixed the photos up and asked a group of people to match them.

The people who took part in the research were able to match most of the owners with their dogs if they were pure-bred - dogs whose parents are both the same type of dog. However, they weren't able to do the matching for mongrels - dogs with parents of two different types. The researchers have suggested that this may be because people choose dogs which look like themselves, and people who want pure-bred dogs choose their pets more carefully.

The researchers say it isn't clear how the people in their study were able to do the matching. They didn't simply match hairy dogs with hairy people or big dogs with big people. It seems that they used a more complicated method, such as matching friendly looking dogs with friendly looking people.

What do you think? Try it for yourself. Can you match these dogs with their owners?

