

...with Lorraine Sorrell

<my-share@jalt-publications.org>



We welcome submissions for the My Share column. Submissions should be up to 1000 words describing a successful technique or lesson plan you have used which can be replicated by readers, and should conform to the My Share format (see any edition of *The Language Teacher*). Please send submissions to <my-share@jalt-publications.org>.

MY SHARE ONLINE

A linked index of My Share articles can be found at:
<jalt-publications.org/tlt/myshare/>

IN THIS January issue we have some exciting articles. We have a sporting-related lesson from Terence McLean and a great quiz show from Warren Midgeley. Daragh Hayes helps you totally confuse your students with his astrological twister. Finally, Christopher Bozek provides a structured warm-up for beginners.

The rubber chicken: A fowl debate

Terence McLean

MacEwan College, Edmonton,
AB, Canada

<mcleanky@telusplanet.net>

Quick Guide

Key Words: Accused, complainant, charged, assault (legal terms)

Learner English Level: Intermediate to advanced

Learner Maturity Level: College/University

Preparation Time: Varies

Activity Time: 1–2 classes

Language Focus: skim/scan/discuss/present/debate

Materials: Classroom set up for a debate, OHP, a rubber chicken (optional)

This is a task-based activity that provides students with the opportunity to use culture (Canadian) and situation (law court) specific language while they practice reading, discussing, presenting, and debating. Before having the students tackle this activity, the teacher is assumed to have already taught basic skimming, scanning, presenting, and debating skills. Optional activities can include taking time to focus on form (timely focus on relevant grammar structures) and review vocabulary. This activity could also be adapted to fit in with Japanese sporting culture—see note below the story for a sumo example.

Procedure

Step 1: Vocabulary (pre-reading). Ask the students to write down words that they know about law and courts.

Step 2: Skimming. Have the students skim the story (see Appendix) to get an understanding of what happened.

Step 3: Scanning. Have the students scan the story for the following information.

- a. Who is the accused?
- b. Who is the complainant?
- c. Where did the incident take place?
- d. What teams were playing?
- e. Why didn't the goal count?
- f. Why was the crowd unhappy?
- g. What did Kai throw?
- h. What happened to Hanna?
- i. What happened to Kai?

Step 4: Organize the students to work in groups and ask them to do the following task:

Group 1: Take the role of Kai's team of lawyers. Use the information in the story to make a persuasive argument explaining why your client is *not* guilty.

Group 2: Take the role of Hanna's team of lawyers. Use the information in the story to make a persuasive argument explaining why the accused *is* guilty.

Group 3: You are the judges and jury. You must decide which group has made the best argument. Prepare a list of criteria on which you will base and justify your decision.

Step 5: Presentation preparation. Each lawyer group must write an outline for the argument on a transparency (for the OHP). They should make revisions together.

Step 6: Presentation. Each group member must speak during the presentation. Presentations must be under 10 minutes in length. (Option: Give time for rebuttal and closing remarks). Remind the students that they are in court—they should use language accordingly.

Option: The presentations must include at least three adjective clauses and three transition words or phrases (*therefore, consequently, however, etc.*) Transitions are not only helpful when writing, but they are also helpful when speaking formally.

Conclusion

This lesson gives the students a chance to learn a little about Canadian culture while practicing formal spoken English. Given that university and college students are studying academic English, it is necessary for them to be able to present their arguments in a convincing yet professional manner.

Acknowledgement and Reference

This story was adapted with permission from:

Renke, W. (2000). *Canada's political and legal culture. Volume II: Mock trial materials*. Edmonton: Faculty of Law, University of Alberta.

Appendix

The rubber chicken and the fowl call

The accused, Kai Tamaki, lives in Edmonton, Alberta. He is a 21-year-old college student. On January 10th, Kai went to a hockey game at Rexall Place, a hockey arena in Edmonton. Edmonton's hockey team is the Oilers. Kai took his seat high up in the stands with the other hockey fans. The complainant, Hanna Sato, was also at the game.

The Oilers were playing against their archrival, the Calgary Flames. Oiler fans do not like the Flames. Late in the third period of the game, the score was tied at one. Finally, with one minute to go, Ryan Smyth, an Oiler star player, shot the puck and it went off one of his teammate's skates and into the Flames' net. The Oilers and their fans went wild. However, the referee waved off the goal because it was kicked in. In hockey, if the puck bounces off a skate, the goal *can* count, but you *cannot* score a goal by deliberately kicking the puck into the net.

The crowd at the game thought that the referee was wrong and that the goal was good. People threw things toward the ice to show their anger. Kai threw a rubber chicken toward the ice.

Unfortunately, Kai's rubber chicken did not land on the ice. Hanna Sato, the complainant, had been standing near some steps when she fell and broke her leg. One of the issues at the trial is whether the rubber chicken thrown by Kai hit Hanna on the head, causing her to fall and break her leg.

After Hanna got hurt, a security guard said, "Who threw that chicken?" Kai panicked and started to run away. The security guard caught Kai and called the police. Kai was taken to the police station and charged with assault for hurting Hanna Sato with the rubber chicken.

Note: This activity could be adapted to fit in with Japanese sporting culture. For example, when a wrestler upsets a grand champion at a sumo tournament, people often throw their cushions, *zabuton*, toward the ring (new title: The Wayward Zabuton).

Quiz show for practicing questions

Warren Midgley

Miyagi University

<yelgdim_4@ybb.ne.jp>

Quick Guide

Key Words: Making and asking questions, general knowledge

Learner English Level: Lower intermediate to advanced

Learner Maturity: High school and over

Preparation Time: 10–15 minutes

Activity Time: 40–45 minutes

Materials: Students' own pen and paper

Sometimes it is difficult to motivate students to develop and ask questions in English. This activity gives students the opportunity to prepare questions in English about subjects they have knowledge of and interest in. The competitive nature of the activity provides extra motivation.