

Short Sequence ESL Lessons

Teacher *Suggestions*

~Appearance & Action~

These ESL/EFL lessons typically run about one hour with optional next-day follow-up quiz. Depending on available time, level of students, and teaching style, teachers may choose to reduce or adjust the steps in any given short-sequence lesson resource.

The lessons are designed for **teacher flexibility and student transparency**. This means that lessons are streamlined and the lesson instruments (handouts) are relatively easy for students to wrap their brains around. What follows is suggested under-the-hood context, the likes of which must be provided by the ESL teacher during the classroom lesson. Therefore, the well-prepped teacher has a thought-out game plan to help insure a successful short-sequence lesson.

1. To begin the lesson, teacher prompts students to examine the lesson handout, discuss preview questions, and predict possible story line of the short-sequence. Teacher can ask students how long the movie sequence is. (Answer on handout.) Teacher can allow students to choose which of four characters they are most interested in.
2. Teacher divides the class into **four groups** of 3-5. Assign one of four characters to each group (based on student preferences if possible). In some short-sequence ESL lessons, a character may be a group of minor characters or setting for the sequence.

Prepare groups to view the short-sequence and ultimately report their character's appearance and actions to the class using the target grammar. Present progressive may be the most natural-sounding verb tense for reporting appearance, and present and past simple tenses are most often used by native speakers of English when reporting an action. In any case, it is important to maintain a consistent time frame when reporting appearance and action. Advanced students should also be able to handle a possible time shift when telling a story.

3. Teacher expands on the vocabulary meanings (can also be postponed until after the first viewing). Each lesson has about twelve vocabulary and expression items. I recommend that the class focus on the meaning in the context of the short-sequence (as opposed to considering alternative contextual meanings of a word or expression).

4. **First viewing.** The short-sequence usually lasts from 3-5 minutes. I generally recommend presenting the first viewing non-stop, so students can get the general flavor and main idea of the

sequence. Using this approach works well with presenting vocabulary after the first viewing. Subtitles are recommended *ON* at this stage of viewing.

5. Groups choose a leader and discuss their assigned character's **appearance and actions**. Teacher circulates and facilitates discussions, offers corrections in target grammar and word choice.

6. **Second viewing.** Teacher may occasionally pause the short sequence in order to highlight character, action (possible grammar prompt), or vocabulary items. Subtitles are recommended *OPTIONAL* at this stage of viewing.

7. Each group collaboratively writes 4-6 sentences about their character's appearance and action using target grammar. They may also **suggest a title** for the short sequence. Teacher helps with corrections. Student-group leaders select one member to report their characters appearance and action to the class. Student presenter should point out how vocabulary items fit into their character's appearance and action.

8. Meanwhile, group leaders write appearance-and-action sentences and suggested title on poster-board sheets which are stuck to a wall. Teacher corrects errors, and group leaders may wish to rewrite their sentences. Teacher models pronunciation of sentences. Students repeat aloud. At this point, the **class votes on the best title** for the short sequence.

9. **Third viewing** (optional). Time permitting, students could play **Movie Karaoke** or other short-sequence activities, a number of which are recommended at **Movies Grow English/ Teacher - Short-Sequence Lessons**. Subtitles are recommended *OFF* at this stage of viewing.

10. **Homework:** Group leaders meet and combine character sentences into a unified written narrative. Final copy is presented to the teacher to be photocopied, and distributed to class.

11. A follow-up comprehension and vocabulary quiz may be designed by the teacher and administered.

For High-Level Students:

Assign characters *secretly*. After students watch short sequence and prepare, they **present their character's appearance and actions to the class**. Other students guess which character.



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