
YOUR STORY

How to write a mini saga

Type of modul	Project work
Level	B2
Target group	16–19-year-old learners
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A kiadvány az Educatio Kht. kompetenciafejlesztő oktatási program kerettanterve alapján készült.

A kiadvány a Nemzeti Fejlesztési Terv Humánerőforrás-fejlesztési Operatív Program 3.1.1. központi program (Pedagógusok és oktatási szakértők felkészítése a kompetencia alapú képzés és oktatás feladataira) keretében készült, a suliNova oktatási programcsomag részeként létrejött tanulói információhordozó. A kiadvány sikeres használatához szükséges a teljes oktatási programcsomag ismerete és használata.

A teljes programcsomag elérhető: www.educatio.hu címen.

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Educatio Kht. 2008

INFORMATION TABLE

TYPE OF MODULE	Project work
DESCRIPTION OF MODULE	In this module learners read and write as well as evaluate mini sagas.
AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF MODULE	<p>Language proficiency: This module aims to enable Ls to do these things more effectively:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ to relate a narrative, make an agreement about a favourite piece of writing ■ to plan and write a concise piece of text (of exactly fifty words) with a title ■ to scan information about a literary genre ■ to read and understand literary texts (mini sagas) ■ to shorten longer sentences by using structures such as participles, reduced relative clauses, infinitives and inversion ■ to work cooperatively ■ to appreciate, create and evaluate pieces of creative writing.
TIMEFRAME	3 lessons
TARGET GROUP	16-19-year-old learners
LANGUAGE LEVEL	B2
SUGGESTED LANGUAGE COMPETENCE	<p>To complete the module, Ls need to be able to do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ express past happenings with variety and creativity ■ understand and express abstract ideas and notions ■ have some practice in creative writing ■ use a variety of grammatical structures and linking devices
LINKS OF THE MODULE	
Cross-curricular links	Literature
Links with other modules	-

FOCI OF SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Communicative language skills

- Gaining experience in reading creative language (almost literary texts)
- Gaining experience in creative writing
- Discussing issues concerning what makes a piece of writing exceptional

General educational skills

- Note-taking
- Scanning information
- Evaluating each others' work using a variety of instruments

EVALUATION

- Self-assessment through criterion-based self-assessment forms
- Ls will be able to assess others' and each others' work with a strong emphasis on appreciating the positive aspects of their peers' products
- T will be able to assess Ls' work using the same criteria as the Ls. Thus, rather than giving marks (which the T might still do), T and Ls will be able to evaluate the project together within a framework that encourages cooperation and appreciation of the others' work.

SUGGESTIONS

As for the evaluation of the projects, the most important aim of the evaluation scheme designed is to make Ls listen to each other and develop some interest in the others' work. This does not usually work at first, hence the cyclical nature of the project, where Ls do everything twice with the help of the T and their peers.

BACK UP SYSTEMS

- Maley, A. 1993. 'Mini-sagas'. In: Maley, A.: Short and Sweet. London: Penguin Books.
- Mini sagas from the Daily Telegraph mini-saga competition of 1997.
- <http://www.xenith.net/forums/lofiversion/index.php/t7902.html>

MAP OF THE MODULE

LESSON	FOCI OF SKILLS DEVELOPMENT	MAIN ACTIVITIES	LANGUAGE INPUT	MATERIALS AND RESOURCES
1	Note-taking	Story-telling using given criteria Shortening a story	Shortening sentences	1.2 A story in you and story-telling grid handout, 1.3 Useful language for shortening sentences, rewriting exercise, pictures
2	Listening to a detailed description and note-taking	Reading mini sagas and evaluating them using an evaluation form Writing a mini saga as homework	Expressing oneself 'economically' Scanning information Reading works of art and judging them	2.1 Slips, 2.2 Recording of the listening task, 2.2 Listening exercises, 2.3 Mini sagas, 2.3 Mini saga evaluation form
3	Reading other people's mini sagas Judging pieces of writing using an evaluation form Giving practice in self-assessment	Reading and evaluating others' mini sagas Project evaluation	Agreeing on which five mini sagas should be published in the school paper	Ls' mini sagas, 3.2 Mini saga writing evaluation form, 3.3 Self-assessment form

PROCEDURE

LESSON 1: A STORY IN YOU

Aims of the lesson:

- to introduce the subject and structure of story-telling
- to provide guidance in note-taking
- to learn useful language for shortening sentences in English

Materials and resources: 1.2 A story in you and story-telling grid handout; 1.3 Useful language for shortening sentences; rewriting exercise; pictures

STAGE 1	Warmer
TIME	5 mins
SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES IN FOCUS	Warm-up to the subject of story-telling
ORGANISATION	Frontal (whole group)
AIDS AND MATERIALS	Pictures

TEACHER'S ACTIVITIES

Show Ls some pictures and ask Ls what might have happened to the people in the pictures. If you wish to make it even more interesting, bring some illustrations of some actual happenings – e.g. show Ls a picture with someone running. When they have guessed what might have happened, tell them that the person is actually running away from the World Trade Center in 2001 September. You could find a lot of suitable pictures on the Internet.

LEARNERS' ACTIVITIES

Ls respond and share their ideas in a few sentences.

STAGE 2	A story in you
TIME	25 mins
SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES IN FOCUS	Introduction to the subject and structure of story-telling Speaking: Telling a story Note-taking
ORGANISATION	Groups of 3 or 4 Whole group
AIDS AND MATERIALS	1.2 A story in you and story-telling grid handout

TEACHER'S ACTIVITIES

1. Tell Ls that the focus of this project is going to be story-telling and story-writing and ask them to think of a special story. To help them with ideas, give Ls the handout (1.2) where they can find some ideas for a story. Tell them to choose one of the points and think of a story to share with their friends. Divide Ls into groups of 3 or 4.
2. Ask Ls to work in their groups and tell their stories in turns. Ask Ls to take notes of the others' stories as the stories are being told. To give them guidance with this, explain the story-telling grid to them (1.2) and ask Ls to fill it in.
3. As feedback, tell Ls to compare their grids with the other members of the group. Ask each group to share a few interesting parts of their stories and how the note-taking went.

LEARNERS' ACTIVITIES

1. Ls read the handout and think of a story to share with their partners.
2. Ls tell their stories and take notes of the others' stories in the grid.
3. Ls compare their grids with other members of their group and report back to the whole group.

VARIATION: A TRUE/FALSE STORY IN YOU

AIDS AND MATERIALS	1.2 A story in you and story-telling grid handout
DESCRIPTION	If you think Ls know each other too well, then you can also give them the option of lying, in which case the other members will have to guess whether the story was true or false. In this case, the feedback should also involve asking Ls how successful they were in lying to the others.

STAGE 3 A	Shortening a story
TARGET GROUP	A grammatically more advanced group or if Ls complete Stage 2 earlier than the time assigned
TIME	13 mins
SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES IN FOCUS	Writing: shortening sentences
ORGANISATION	Whole group Pairs
AIDS AND MATERIALS	1.3 Useful language for shortening sentences, rewriting exercise

TEACHER'S ACTIVITIES

1. Write this sentence on the board and ask Ls to make the shortest possible version of it by keeping only what is necessary to keep the story meaningful.

One summer my brother and I decided to fly to Paris so that we could finally see all the beauties of this magnificent city.

Ask Ls to shorten the sentence step by step, making sure that different Ls take turns.

This is an excellent opportunity for demonstrating what is an essential part of a sentence and what can be deleted. (3 mins)

A possible solution:

One summer my brother and I decided to fly to Paris to see all its beauties.

2. Give Ls handout 1.3, where they can find possible ways of shortening sentences. Tell them to work in pairs and after going through the illustrations, rewrite the seven sentences that follow. (8 mins)

LEARNERS' ACTIVITIES

1. Ls shorten the sentence on the board.

2. Ls read the illustrations and rewrite the sentences.

3. As feedback, check the sentences with the whole group. (2 mins)

3. Ls share the solution with the group.

Key:

1. The only person clever enough for this is Mike.
2. I said I did.
3. 'Neither did I.'
4. Having waited for two hours, she felt it was enough.
5. Travelling on the bus, I saw a tiger.
6. The number I dialled was wrong.
7. Although tired, we decided to go.

STAGE 3 B Shortening a story

TARGET GROUP A grammatically weaker group, slower Ls who need more explanation from the teacher

TIME 13 mins

SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES IN FOCUS Writing: Shortening sentences

ORGANISATION Whole group

AIDS AND MATERIALS 1.3 Useful language for shortening sentences, rewriting exercise

TEACHER'S ACTIVITIES

1. Write this sentence on the board and ask Ls to make the shortest possible version of it by keeping only what is necessary to keep the story meaningful.

One summer my brother and I decided to fly to Paris so that we could finally see all the beauties of this magnificent city.

Ask Ls to shorten the sentence step by step, making sure that different Ls take turns.

This is an excellent opportunity for demonstrating what is an essential part of a sentence and what can be deleted. (3 mins)

A possible solution:

One summer my brother and I decided to fly to Paris to see all its beauties.

2. Give Ls handout 1.3, where they can find possible ways of shortening sentences. Go through the examples (however, don't go into too much grammatical detail) with the Ls, and elicit from Ls how the seven sentences could be rewritten. Write the solutions on the board. (10 mins)

Key:

1. The only person clever enough for this is Mike.
2. I said I did.
3. 'Neither did I.'
4. Having waited for two hours, she felt it was enough.
5. Travelling on the bus, I saw a tiger.
6. The number I dialled was wrong.
7. Although tired, we decided to go.

LEARNERS' ACTIVITIES

1. Ls shorten the sentence on the board.

2. Ls listen to T's explanation and rewrite the sentences.

STAGE 4	Homework
TIME	2 mins
SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES IN FOCUS	Writing: Shortening a story
ORGANISATION	Individual
AIDS AND MATERIALS	None

TEACHER'S ACTIVITIES

Tell Ls to write a maximum 100-word story based on their own story told in class or, if they prefer to do so, they can choose another member's story as well. Warn them that the word limit is important.

LEARNERS' ACTIVITIES

Ls write a maximum 100-word version of a story.

LESSON 2: WHAT IS A MINI SAGA, ANYWAY?

Aims of the lesson:

- to introduce the genre of the mini saga
- to listen to a detailed description and take notes
- to judge pieces of writing using an evaluation form

Materials and resources: 2.1 Slips; 2.2 Recording of the listening task; 2.2 Listening exercises; 2.3 Mini sagas; 2.3 Mini saga evaluation form

STAGE 1	Warmer – Pairing
TIME	5 mins
SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES IN FOCUS	Forming pairs
ORGANISATION	Whole group
AIDS AND MATERIALS	2.1 Slips

TEACHER'S ACTIVITIES

1. Give each L a slip with a word or an expression. Tell them to walk around, find a slip which contains a synonym and sit down together.
2. Elicit the solution from the pairs.
3. Emphasize the importance of expressing something economically and go through what structures could be used to shorten something.

LEARNERS' ACTIVITIES

1. Ls walk around and find the L who has the synonym for their word/expression.

STAGE 2	What is a mini saga?
TIME	15 mins
SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES IN FOCUS	Listening: Scanning important information
ORGANISATION	Individual Pairs
AIDS AND MATERIALS	2.2 Recording of the listening task, 2.2 Listening exercises

TEACHER'S ACTIVITIES

1. Ask Ls if they know what a saga is. Then ask them if they have any ideas about what a mini saga could be. Give them the handout with the listening exercises and tell them to guess the answers to Exercise 1. (5 mins)
2. Tell Ls to listen to the information about mini sagas and mini saga writing and check their answers to Exercise 1. (2 mins)
3. For the second listening, ask Ls to take notes on how to write a mini saga, by filling in Exercise 2. (3 mins)
4. As feedback, elicit the answers to Exercise 1 and 2. Then ask them if they think it is easy to write a mini saga (why/why not?).

Key to Exercise 1: 1. F, 2. F, 3. T, 4. F, 5. T

Key to Exercise 2:

Step 1: Think of a story to write (either something you would like to or have heard of).

Step 2: Write a first version.

Step 3: Shorten the story by taking out unnecessary words.

Step 4: Make the story exactly fifty words.

LEARNERS' ACTIVITIES

1. Ls guess the answers.
2. Ls listen to the text and check their answers.
3. Ls listen for a second time and fill in the lines.
4. Ls give the answers to Exercise 1 and 2.

STAGE 3	The mini saga competition
TIME	20 mins
SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES IN FOCUS	Reading mini sagas Speaking: Agreeing on the best one Writing: Filling in an evaluation form
ORGANISATION	Pairs
AIDS AND MATERIALS	2.3 Mini sagas, 2.3 Mini saga evaluation form

TEACHER'S ACTIVITIES

1. Tell Ls that they are going to read some well-known mini sagas and evaluate them. Give them handout 2.3 with the mini sagas and explain the evaluation form. Ask Ls to read the mini sagas and then evaluate them in pairs with the help of the mini saga evaluation form. They should fill in the grid for each mini saga and come up with their favourite mini saga in the end. (15 mins)
2. As feedback, ask Ls to share with the group the final decision (explaining the reasons why) and vote on the best mini saga. (5 mins)

LEARNERS' ACTIVITIES

1. Ls work in pairs, read the mini sagas and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of them. They pick a favourite.
2. The pairs tell the group which is their favourite and why. The best mini saga is voted on.

STAGE 4	Homework
TIME	5 mins
SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES IN FOCUS	Writing a mini saga
ORGANISATION	Individual
AIDS AND MATERIALS	-

TEACHER'S ACTIVITIES

Tell Ls to write a mini saga (that is, a story with exactly fifty words with a title of maximum fifteen words). In order to help them with writing, allow Ls to brainstorm with their partner for a few minutes. The starting point could be a story they experienced, one of the mini sagas they read in this class, a picture, a favourite word, a proverb etc. Tell Ls to keep in mind the advice they heard about how to compose a mini saga. Ask them to print their mini sagas (if possible) and tell them not to write their names on the paper.

LEARNERS' ACTIVITIES

Ls brainstorm in pairs and write a mini saga alone.

LESSON 3: THE MINI SAGA WRITING PROJECT

Aims of the lesson:

- to read other people’s mini sagas
- to judge pieces of writing using an evaluation form
- to give practice in self-assessment

Materials and resources: Ls’ mini sagas written at home; 3.2 Mini saga writing evaluation form; 3.3 Self-assessment form

STAGE 1	Warmer
TIME	5 mins
SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES IN FOCUS	Speaking: Describing a process
ORGANISATION	Whole group
AIDS AND MATERIALS	-

TEACHER’S ACTIVITIES

Ask Ls/ pairs about the process of writing their mini saga (such as the starting point, the time it took, the order of writing, the difficulties of writing, how much they enjoyed it, etc.). Since the mini sagas are to be judged anonymously, make sure no details are told about the stories themselves.

LEARNERS’ ACTIVITIES

Ls answer the questions.

STAGE 2	The mini saga writing competition
TIME	30 mins
SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES IN FOCUS	Reading mini sagas written by Ls Speaking: Evaluating mini sagas Writing: Filling in an evaluation form
ORGANISATION	Pairs
AIDS AND MATERIALS	Ls’ mini sagas; 3.2 Mini saga writing evaluation form

TEACHER'S ACTIVITIES

1. Collect the mini sagas and make sure no names are written on the paper. After numbering each piece of writing, post them in the classroom.
2. If Ls worked in pairs, ask those who brainstormed together at the end of the previous lesson to walk around and look at other people's mini sagas together. Their task is to judge the pieces together (without revealing which one was written by them). Tell the pairs to walk around, read the sagas, discuss how they feel about them and fill in the mini saga writing evaluation form for all the mini sagas. In the end, they must choose which five they would publish in the school paper and why. If you wish, you might let them pick more than five favourites (and if it is possible, have the best ones published).
3. As feedback, ask Ls to share with the group the final decision (explaining the reasons why).
4. Collect the mini sagas (this time with the names on them) and the mini saga writing evaluation forms. Comment on them later in writing and make sure to give (positive) feedback to Ls.

LEARNERS' ACTIVITIES

1. Ls give their mini sagas to the teacher.
2. Ls work in pairs, walk around, read the mini sagas and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of them. They pick their favourites.
3. The pairs tell the group which five they would include in the school paper and why.

STAGE 3 What have we learnt? – Evaluating the project

TIME 10 mins

SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES IN FOCUS Writing: Filling in a self-assessment form

ORGANISATION Individual
Whole group

AIDS AND MATERIALS 3.3 Self-assessment form

TEACHER'S ACTIVITIES

1. Hand out self-assessment forms. Ask Ls to fill them in individually, thinking back to the whole project.
2. Walk around and give oral feedback to each pair/individual and tell them to continue filling in the self-assessment form when you are done.
3. Collect self-assessment forms and (if there is time) discuss (some of) them in the following class.

LEARNERS' ACTIVITIES

1. Ls complete self-assessment forms.
2. Ls listen to your oral feedback.