

A JOURNEY IN TEFL

TINY STORIES

A Simple Way to Get A1–A2 Learners Speaking and Writing

UPDATED EDITION

12 Tiny Stories • 6 Level A1 • 6 Level A2

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What Is a Tiny Story?

At A1–A2 levels, we ask learners to produce language, but we don't always give them a reason to. So much of the practice at this stage is drill-shaped, built around things nobody would ever actually say. A tiny story is different: three or four sentences, with a small shift somewhere in the middle. Something like this:

“Yesterday she missed her train. At first she was angry. Then she found a lovely café near the station.”

That's it. But notice what's already there: a situation, a feeling, a change of feeling, and a reason for the change. A tiny story gives learners vocabulary, grammar, reading, and inference practice all at once, and it gets them talking because the story feels like it's about someone a little bit like them.

How to Use This Booklet

1. Give students a tiny story and let them read it silently.
2. Ask the follow-up questions and let students expand the story in writing, using the lines provided.
3. Put students in groups to compare their versions. How similar or different are they, and why?
4. For a speaking-focused lesson, cut the stories into slips, fold them, and let students pick one to expand aloud instead of in writing.
5. Optional: display finished stories on the wall for a gallery walk, and let students choose their favourite and say why.

Level A1

6 TINY STORIES · A1

A1.1. The Dog in the Garden

I have a small dog. His name is Max. Yesterday he ran into the garden. He...

- What did Max find in the garden?
 - What did you do next?
 - How did the story end?
-

A1.2. The Market

On Saturday I went to the market. I wanted apples, but there were none. I...

- What did you buy instead?
 - Who did you talk to at the market?
 - How did you feel about it?
-

A1.3. The New Bike

My sister has a new bike. Yesterday she rode it to school for the first time. She...

- What happened on the way to school?
 - Did she like riding it?
 - What did she say when she got home?
-

A1.4. The Rainy Morning

It was raining this morning, so I couldn't walk to work. I...

- How did you get to work instead?
 - Were you late?
 - What happened when you arrived?
-

A1.5. The Birthday Cake

I made a cake for my friend's birthday. When I opened the oven, I...

- What did you see when you opened the oven?
- What did you do next?
- Did your friend like the cake?

A1.6. The Park

We went to the park yesterday. There were a lot of children playing. My little brother...

- What did your brother do?
 - Who did he play with?
 - What happened before you went home?
-

Level A2

6 TINY STORIES · A2

A2.1. The Broken Phone

Last week my phone stopped working. I was really worried because all my photos were on it. I...

- What did you do first?
 - Did you get your photos back?
 - How did you feel at the end?
-

A2.2. The Noisy Neighbour

My neighbour always plays loud music at night. Last night I finally knocked on his door to complain. He was very surprised...

- What did he say to you?
 - What happened next?
 - Is your street quieter now?
-

A2.3. The Birthday Dinner

I booked a table at a new restaurant for my birthday. When we arrived, the restaurant...

- What did you see when you arrived?
 - What did you do next?
 - How did the evening end?
-

A2.4. The Phone Call

My best friend moved to another city last month. Yesterday she called me and said...

- What was her news?
 - How did you react?
 - What are you planning to do now?
-

A2.5. The Lost Keys

I lost my keys on the way home from work. After an hour, I...

- Where did you find them?
- Who helped you?
- How did you feel when you found them?

A2.6. The New Hobby

I decided to learn a new hobby this year. On my first lesson, something strange happened...

- What happened?
 - What did you do?
 - Are you still doing this hobby?
-

More Tiny Stories Coming

This is the updated edition of the Tiny Stories booklet, and it will keep growing. A fuller set, sorted by level, is on its way — bookmark evasimkesyan.com to catch new stories as they're added.

Tiny stories aren't only for the classroom. Readers have used them to practise a second or third language of their own — reading one, translating it, and writing their own continuation. If you're learning a language yourself, try picking a story from this booklet and doing the same.

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