

Robbery in a Sweet Shop

Tell learners that this lesson is based on a true story which was reported in *The Guardian* newspaper a few years ago. The first stage (steps 1 to 3) involves encouraging learners to speculate on the story on the basis of a few clues. At the next stage (steps 4 and 5) they make up their own stories to fit the clues. At step 4 learners should ideally work in pairs or groups, but if they are not used to this they could work first as individuals, perhaps making up their story for homework, and then get together in groups to share ideas.

At steps 6-9 they compare stories. At the end of this they should be keen to and/or hear read the newspaper story (step 10) to find out what really happened.

1 Write up on the board:

The Characters:

- A shopkeeper
- Her two children
- A young man
- An eight-year-old boy
- The police

The Setting:

A corner shop in Ashton-under-Lyme, Manchester.

The Props (things used in the story):

- A balaclava
- A packet of Smarties
- A plastic bag
- A gun

Some phrases from the story:

- A young man came in to buy a newspaper
- He pointed a gun at her and told her to fill up the bag
- I pretended to reach for some money
- They are taking the case very seriously, like all cases which involve a firearm, fake or not

2 Explain some of the words and phrases which might cause difficulties. A *balaclava* is like a ski mask. It covers someone's face so only their eyes can be seen. *Smarties* are small brightly coloured sweets with chocolate covered in a thin layer of sugar. A *fake* is something which is imitation, which is not real.

3 Ask learners what they think happened in the story, but do not tell them if their guesses are right or wrong.

4 Ask them to try to guess what happened in the story. Tell them to use as many of the ideas on the board as they can. The best thing is for them to work in pairs or groups and discuss their ideas. This will give them a lot of speaking practice.

5 Tell them you are going to ask some of them to tell their stories to the class. Give them some time to prepare their stories. Go round and listen as they work.

6 When they have had enough time to prepare their stories appoint a spokesperson for each group. Ask the groups to work with the spokesperson to prepare the final version of their story.

7 Ask one of them to tell the story. Try to choose someone who thinks the young man is the robber.

8 Ask the others if their stories are the same or different. Choose someone who has a different story and ask them to tell it. Try to choose someone who thinks the eight-year-old is the robber.

9 Engage the class in a discussion as to whose story is the most likely.

10 Hand out the story for them to read. Or, if you want them to have some listening practice you can read the story out before they read it.

Eight-year-old tries to rob sweet shop.

Manchester police are looking for an eight-year-old boy who attempted to hold up a sweet shop last night in the suburb of Ashton-under-Lyme.

The boy, who was wearing a balaclava, went into the corner shop and bought a packet of Smarties for 25p. As the shopkeeper gave him his change a young man came in to buy a newspaper. The boy waited until the man had gone then threw a plastic bag at the shopkeeper. At the same time he pointed a gun at her and told her to fill up the bag.

"I'm not sure whether he wanted me to fill it with sweets or with money," said the shopkeeper, who did not want to give her name. "I didn't know if the gun was real or not, but it certainly looked more real than the guns my little boy plays with. I was quite frightened because I had my children with me. I pretended to reach for some money, but I pressed the alarm instead. When it went off he turned and ran out of the shop."

She described the boy as 1.2 metres tall, and dressed in jeans and a dark coat. The police are asking the public to help. They say they are taking the case very seriously, like all cases which involve a firearm, fake or not.

10 Language work:

10.1 Identification

. Ask learners to underline all the phrases with *to*:

tries to rob sweet shop; attempted to hold up a sweet shop; to buy a newspaper; told her to fill up the bag; whether he wanted me to fill the bag with sweets or with money; who did not want to give her name; I pretended to reach for some money; asking the public to help.

10.2 Analysis. Ask them to look at these patterns:

PATTERN A

VERB	<i>to</i>	VERB
tries	<i>to</i>	rob
attempted	<i>to</i>	hold up
(not) want	<i>to</i>	give
pretended	<i>to</i>	reach for

PATTERN B

VERB	NOUN	<i>to</i>	VERB
told	her	<i>to</i>	fill up
wanted	me	<i>to</i>	fill
asking	the public	<i>to</i>	help

Look at these sentences. Are they pattern *A* or pattern *B*?

- I need to borrow some money.
- We need someone to help us.
- The boy ordered her to fill up the bag.
- We always had to get up early.
- Can you help me to carry these boxes?

10.3 Help your learners to organise their knowledge of verbs followed by *to*:

These are the commonest verbs with pattern *A*:

agree, appear, attempt, begin choose, continue, decide, expect, forget, happen, hate, help, hope, intend, love, live, learn, mean, plan, prefer, pretend, promise, refuse, remember, seem start, try, want, would like.

How many of these verbs are to do with speaking?
How many are to do with thinking?
Can you find other words in the box which mean the same as: *appear, attempt, begin, intend, like, want*?

These are the commonest verbs with pattern *B*:

advise, allow, enable, expect, help, intend, invite, mean, order, prefer, tell, want warn (usually *warn* someone *not to*), *wish, would like*.

Can you find eight words that are also used with pattern *A*?
How many words are to do with speaking?
How many words are to do with wanting or liking?

10.4 Practice:

Lead class discussions based on this:

Choose ***either***:

- Three things you *want/would like* to do over the next year.
- OR
- Three things you *hope/intend/plan to do* over the next year.

Write down the three thing in your book. Close your book. See How many things you can remember.

You can listen to a few sentences before learners close their books, then make sure they all have their books closed and lead a class discussion about what people want to do and about what they hope to do. These sentences will generally be pattern *A*.

Lead more class discussions based on this:

Choose ***either***

- Three things your teacher *doesn't allow you to do* in class.
- OR
- Three things you *would like someone to give you*

Write down the three thing in your book. Close your book. See how many things you can remember.

Again you can listen to a few sentences before learners close their books, then make sure they all have their books closed and lead a class discussion about what people want to do and about what they hope to do. All these sentences will be pattern A.

11 Round-up:

Ask learners to read the story for homework and be ready to tell the story next lesson. It is useful to build up a repertoire of stories so that in future lessons you can ask learners *Who can remember the story about ...* and ask them to tell one of the stories that they have studied. This is a good way of getting them to remember the useful language they have encountered.

12 Vanishing words

a) Take a sentence from the text. For example:

As the shopkeeper gave him his change a young man came in to buy a newspaper.

b) Write the full sentence on the whiteboard¹.

c) Ask one or two learners to read it out.

d) Rub out two or three words:

___ *the shopkeeper* ___ *him his change a young man came in* ___ *buy a*
_____.

e) Ask learners to work in groups of three or four. Tell them to work as a group to recall the sentence. Ask a learner to recall the sentence. Ask the class if the recall is correct. If they are not satisfied, they can go on guessing until they are content.

f) Remove more words:

___ *the shopkeeper* ___ ___ *his* _____ *a* _____ *man* ___ *in* ___ *buy a*
_____.

g) Repeat e).

h) Go on until you have removed all the words.

You can make this activity more difficult:

1 By choosing a more complex sentence:

Manchester police are looking for an eight-year-old boy who attempted to hold up a sweet shop last night in the suburb of Ashton-under-Lyme.

¹ You can use Power point very effectively for this activity if you have the facilities.

2 By removing several words at each stage:

*Manchester _____ are _____ for an eight-year-old boy _____ to hold
up a _____ shop last night in the _____ of Ashton-under-Lyme.*

3 By asking learners to work in pairs or individually instead of groups of three or four.