

In some speaking exams you may have to tell a story that you make up or a true story about something that happened to you. This is sometimes called a personal anecdote. Watch two students doing this in the video on our website and then use the tips below to help you tell your own story.



Here are our top tips for telling a good story or anecdote.

Do:

- Take time to think about the question and the story before you start talking.
- Use narrative tenses – past simple, past continuous and past perfect.
- Use adjectives and adverbs to make the story interesting.
- Use sequencing words: first of all, then, after that, later on, finally, in the end ...
- Give your story an introduction. Say briefly what your story is about.
- Give the background to your story. Say when and where it took place and what you were doing at that time.
- Say what happened step by step. Use words like so, because and although to connect the actions until you reach the end of the story.
- Keep the action moving!
- Finish your story or anecdote by saying why it is important to you or why you remember it.
- Look at your listeners.

Don't:

- Take too long telling the story or your listeners will get bored.
- Use a flat or bored voice.
- Look down or look around the room.

Examples of storytelling tasks

- Tell me about a holiday you had.
- Tell me about a difficult journey you had.
- Tell me about a perfect day you've had.
- Tell me about a special event in your life.
- Tell me about a birthday you remember.
- Tell me about a time when you lost something important.
- Tell me about a time when you gave someone a surprise.