

Teaching Grammar Creatively

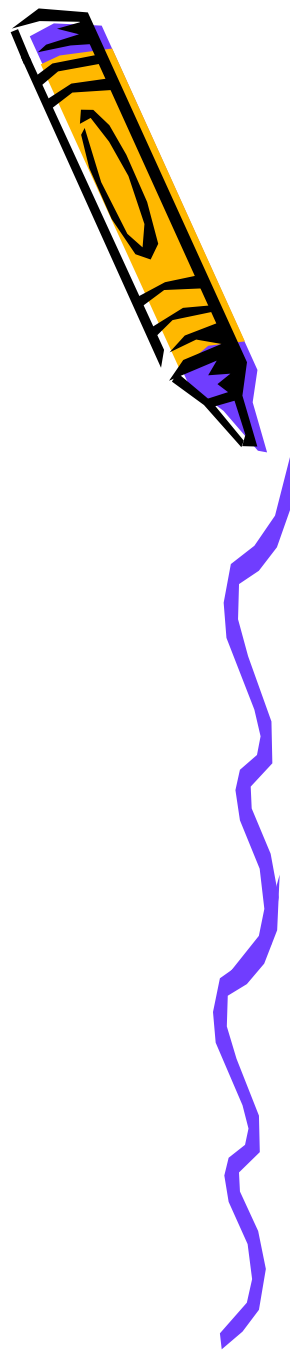
Using poems and stories to practise
grammar

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Creativity

- What?
- Why?
- How?



What do we mean by creativity?



- Webster: the ability to produce through imaginative skill, to bring into existence something new.
- Van Oech: imagining familiar things in a new light, finding previously undetected patterns and finding connections among unrelated phenomena
- Boden : novel valuable and surprising
- Amabile : novel and useful



Creativity and creativity

- Boden (1994) makes the distinction between Big C – a creation that is original in world terms (eg Michelangelo) and little c - a creation that is original and creative for the creator (eg our students)

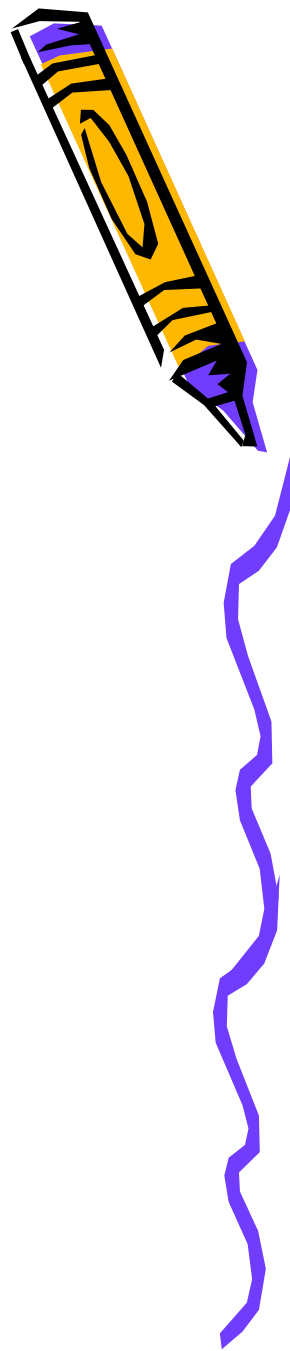


Creativity involves

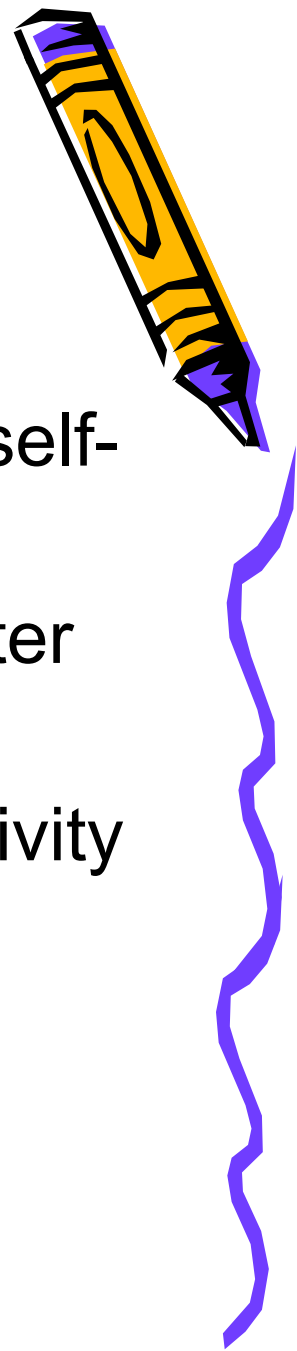
Using imagination to

- see familiar things in a new way
- find patterns
- break rules
- connect unrelated things

in order to produce something ‘original’



So why use creativity?



- Motivating: leading to positive affect and self-esteem
- In creative activities students perform better and use language more interestingly
- Deeper processing associated with creativity enhances memorisation
- Creativity is instrumental in L2 identity-building

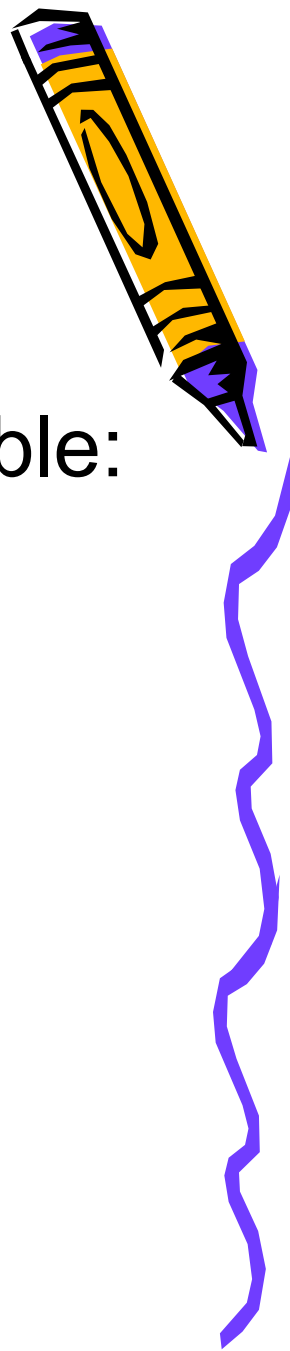


Why encourage creativity in grammar teaching?

At first sight it would appear incompatible:

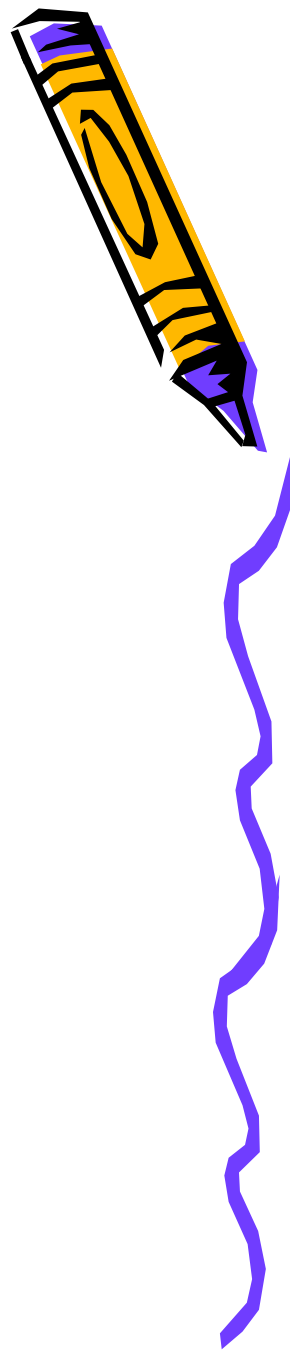
Grammar involves

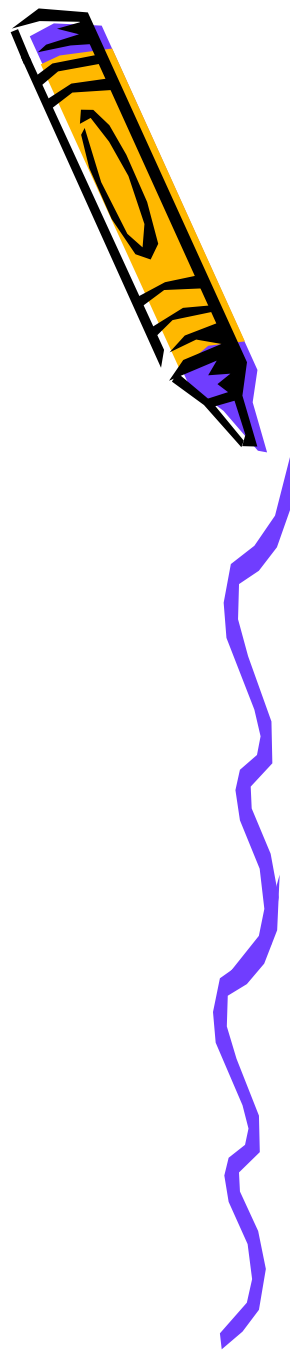
- Rules
- Repetition
- Recognised patterns
- Established connections



Contradictions

- Rules vs Creativity
- Established Patterns vs New Connections
- Repetition vs Novelty
- Control vs Freedom





Constraints and Creativity

- Creativity within boundaries
- New connections within established patterns
- Novelty within repetition
- Freedom within limits

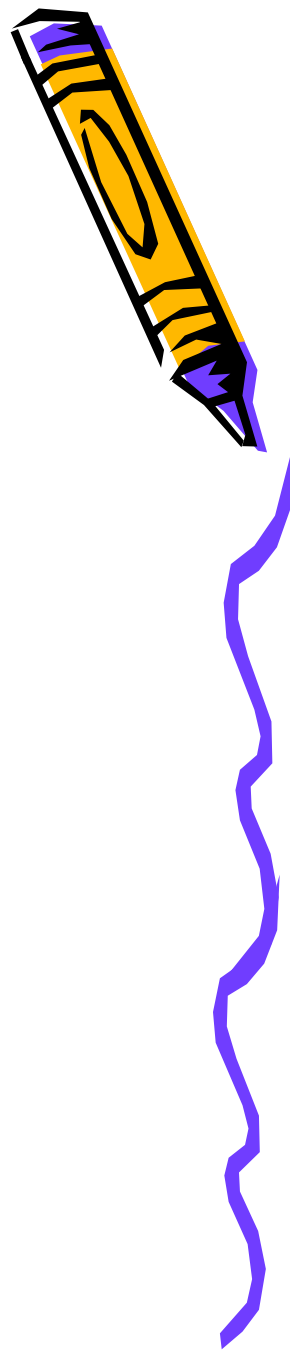


Creativity in grammar teaching

The tension between

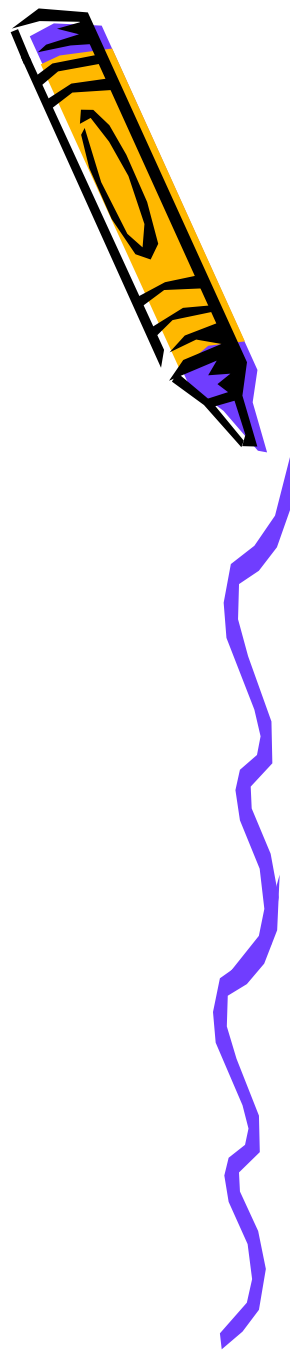
- Constraint and freedom
 - Rules and breaking rules
 - Pattern and new connection
- is inbuilt in the creative process

Can we use it in grammar teaching?



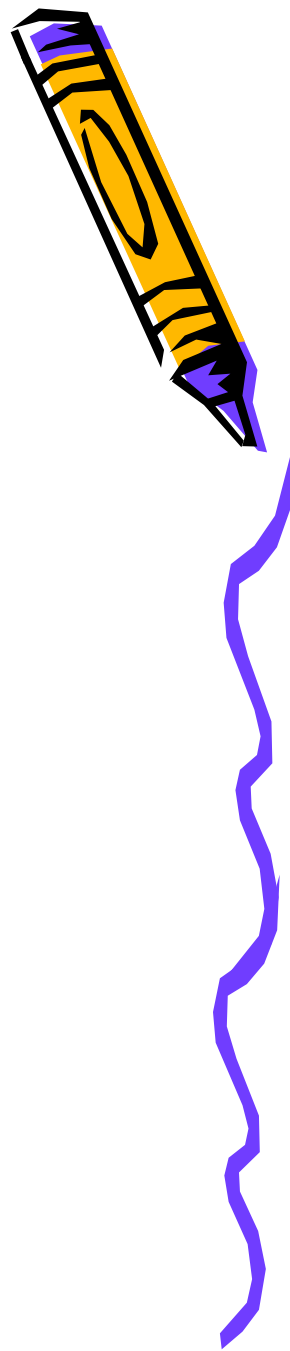
Three ways we can help

- Providing constraints
- Providing an Imaginative trigger
- Providing an Audience



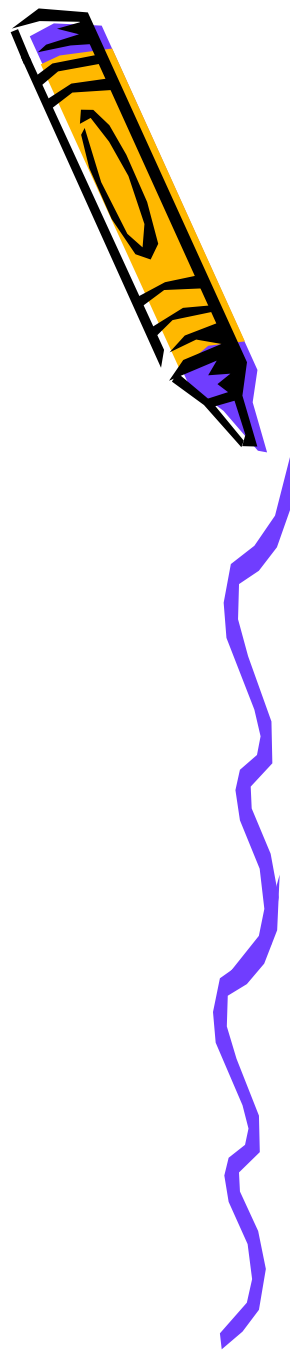
Providing Constraints

- Grammar practice and creativity can be combined by providing tightly controlled frameworks and a format which involves repetition:
- Pattern poems
- Substitution tables
- Word lists
- Sentence frames



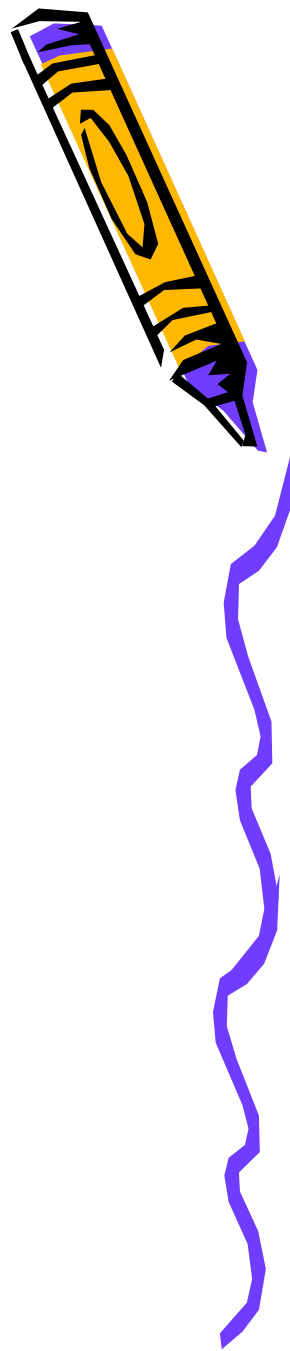
Imaginative trigger

- Concrete stimulus
- Brainstorming
- Idea Collision



Providing an Audience

- Create and Guess
- Create and Share
- Create and Combine



Connecting the Unconnected

Tom usually wakes up early. Yesterday he....

Tom usually walks to work. Yesterday he.....

Tom is usually early for work. Yesterday he.....

Tom usually has a sandwich for lunch. Yesterday he...

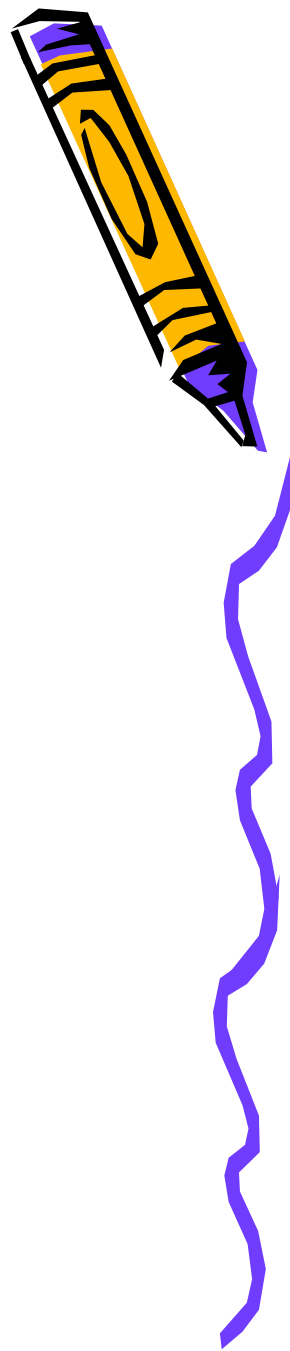
Tom usually watches TV in the evening Yesterday he...

Tom usually sleeps well. Last night he...

Abridged from Murphy English Grammar In Use CUP1989



Poems



prepositions



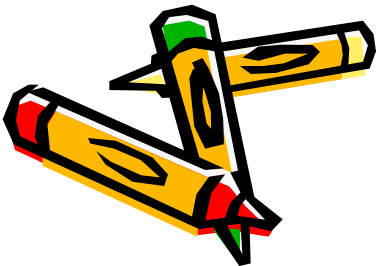
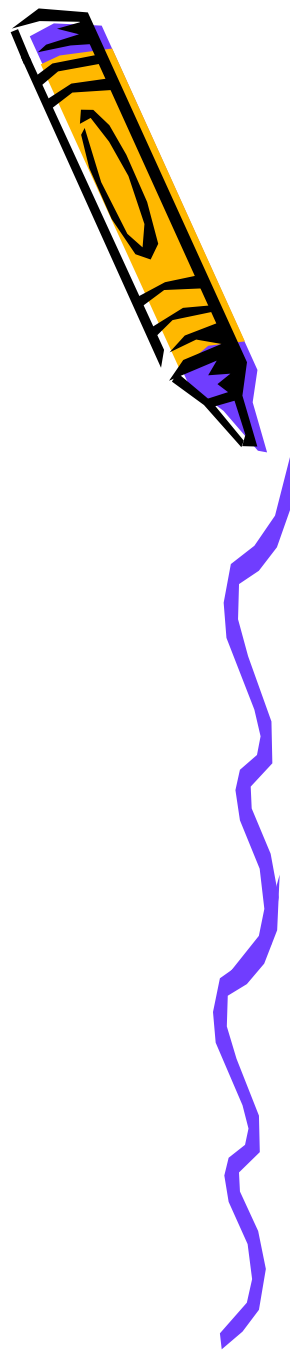
creative commons.

<https://pixabay.com/en/lake-zurich-park-bench-water-rest-270625/>

Preposition painting

Using a substitution table

On the table
next to a tree
beside a lake
beneath the mountains
under a deep blue sky
lies a....





Near
In
On
Next to
Under
Beside

the

table
chair
fireplace
window
bookshelf
tree
lake
mountain
moon
sunlight
beach
star

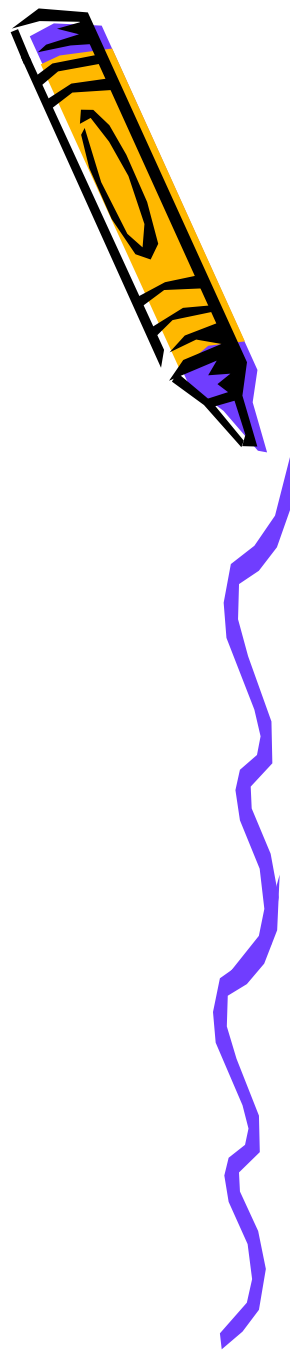
lies....
is...
are...
stands

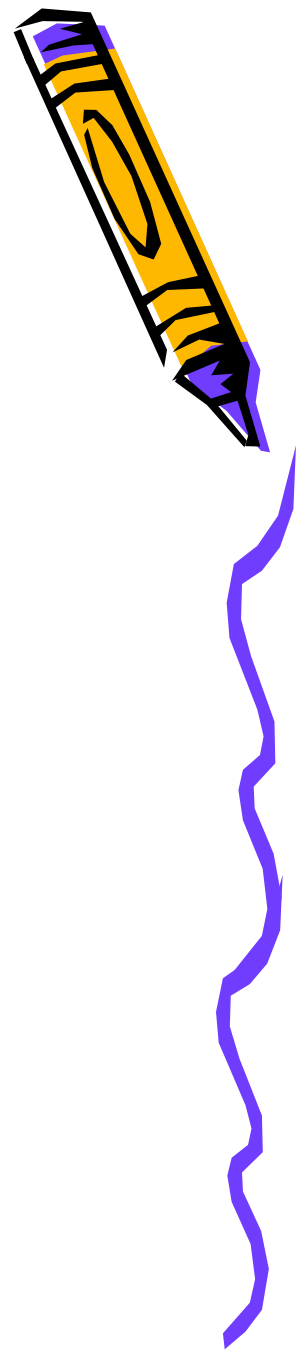
Past regrets

Using rhyme and pattern

I've never been to India
I've never been to France
I've never eaten frogs' legs
And I've never learned to dance

I've always lived in Thames
I've never been abroad
I've always lived at home
I'm getting rather bored...



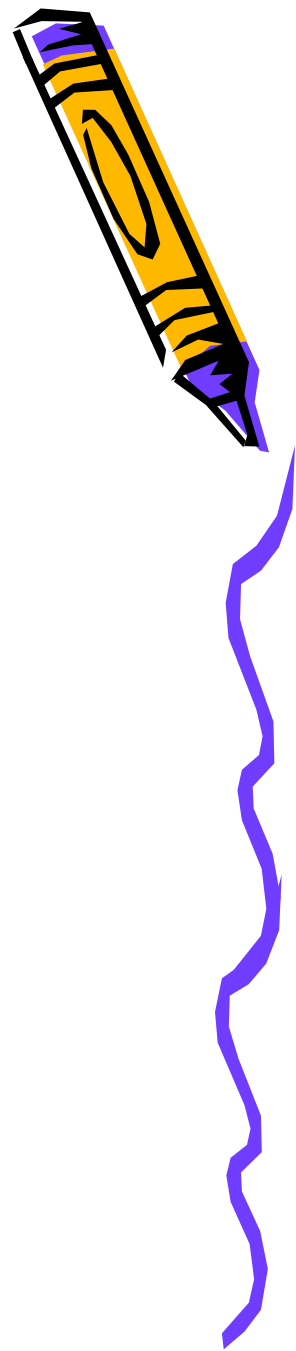


- Snails/ jail/whales/tale/
- Spain/rain/train/plane
- Cruise/ news/ shoes/booze/zoos
- Mountain/fountain
- Greece/ fleece/niece/police/
- Prize surprise/ lies/pies/
- Hair/dare/
- Bank/prank/tank/



Scenarios

Using rhyme and brevity



- *Buying* *eating* *drinking* *sleeping* *writing*
- *Flying* *meeting* *thinking* *peeping* *fighting*
- *Trying* *greeting* *weeping*

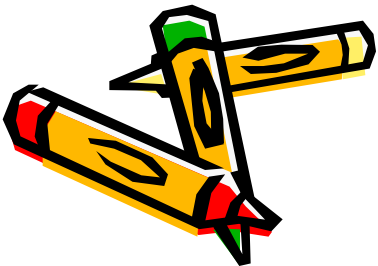
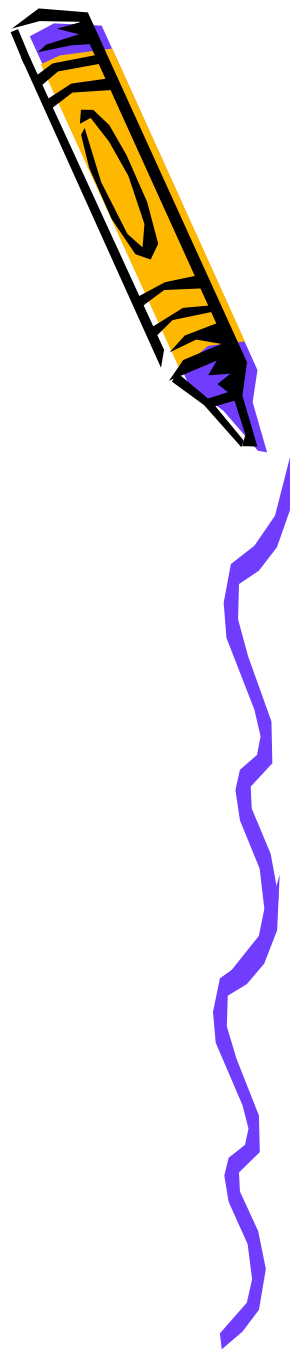
- *Sighing* *walking* *reading* *kissing*
- *Crying* *talking* *speeding* *missing*
- *Lying* *feeding*

- *Taking* *crawling* *playing* *waiting* *hoping*
- *Shaking* *bawling* *staying* *hating* *moping*



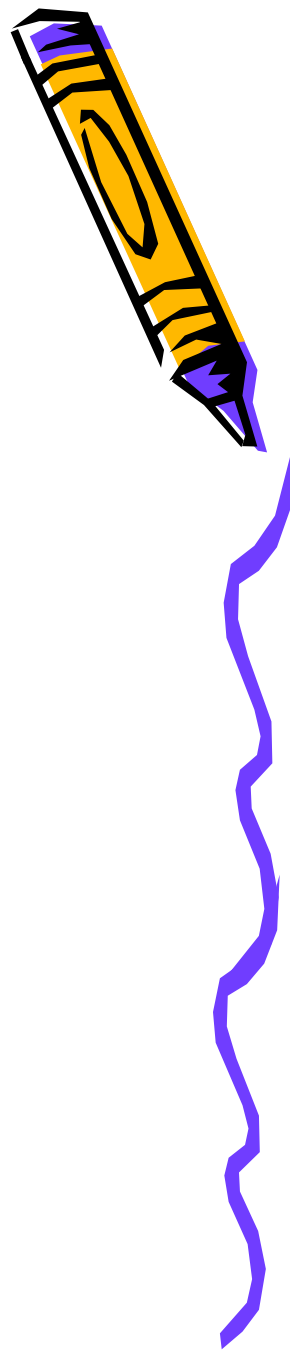
Behind the Teacher's Back

Children fighting
No one writing



The supermodels meet for lunch

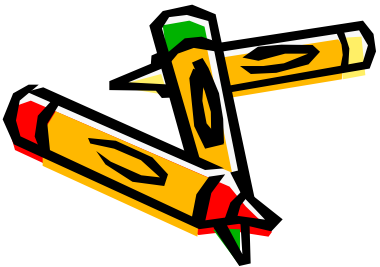
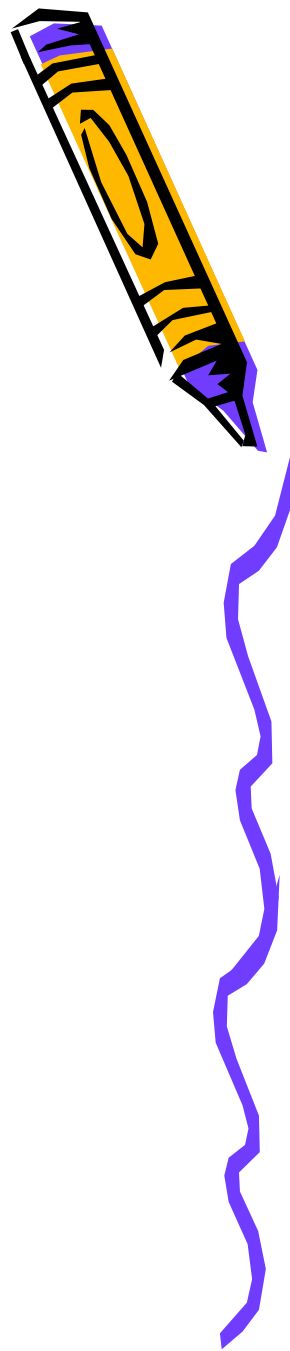
Airkiss greeting
Not much eating



A Boy's Head

Framework poem plus game element

Based on Miroslav Holub's poem
'A Boy's Head'



A boys' pocket.
A girl's handbag
A businessman's briefcase
A teenager's diary

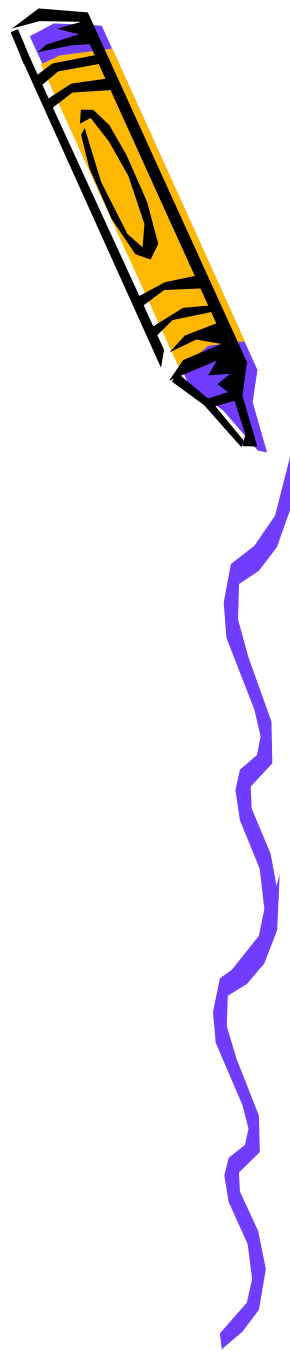
In it there is a

a.....

a ...

There are some....

And there is

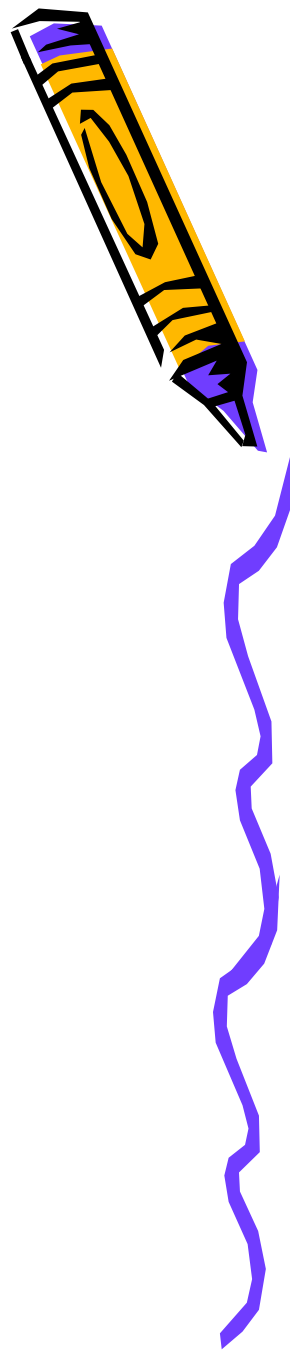


Lexis problems?

- In authentic material the ‘fit’ between the grammatical structure and lexis may not be good: the vocabulary may be of a higher level than the level at which that particular structure is introduced.



Stories

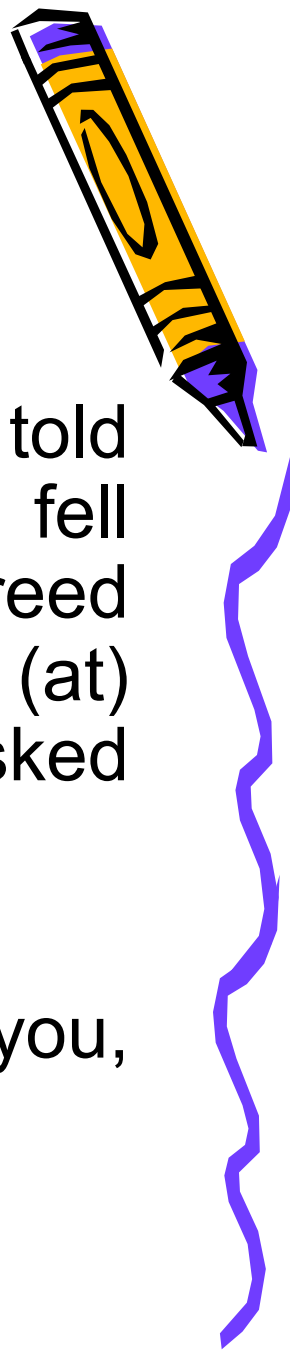


Soap Opera

Limiting Vocabulary, Making use of
genre

waved (at) smiled (at) winked (at) saw told
spoke(to) wrote (to) phoned met liked fell
in love with dreamed about disagreed
(with) agreed (with) yelled (at) shouted (at)
left cried came back (to) ignored asked
refused quarrelled (with)

she ,her, he, him, it, I, me, we, us, you,
they, them.





I fell in love with him. He fell in love with her. I saw them. I cried. I shouted. I yelled . He left me. He quarrelled with her. He came back to me. I refused.



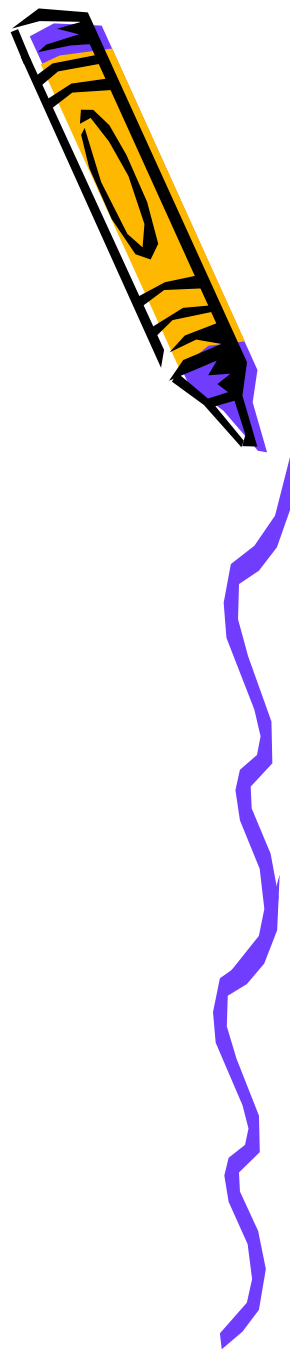
The House That Jack Built...

Pattern and chaining

This is the house that Jack built.

This is the malt that lay in the house
that Jack built.

This is the rat, that ate the malt that
lay in the house that Jack built.

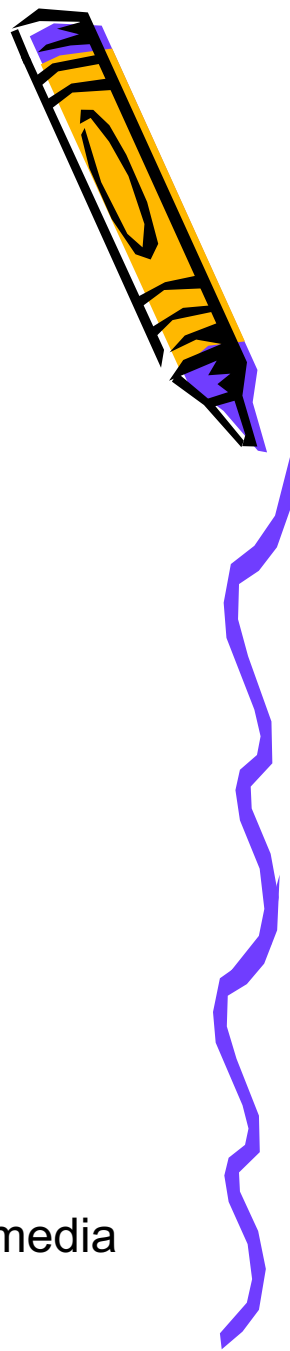


This is the farmer sowing his corn, that kept
the cock that crowed in the morn, that waked
the priest all shaven and shorn, that married
the man all tattered and torn, that kissed the
maiden all forlorn, that milked the cow with
the crumpled horn, that tossed the dog, that
worried the cat, that killed the rat, that ate
the malt that lay in the house that Jack built.



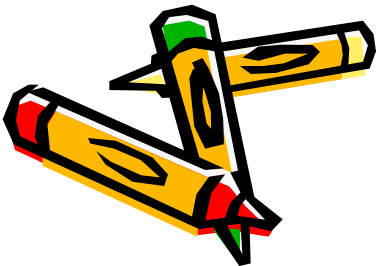
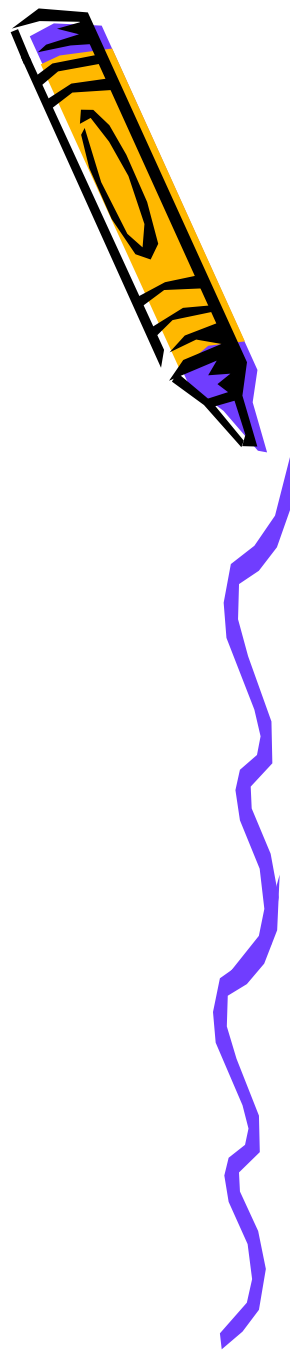


Source: creative commons wikimedia

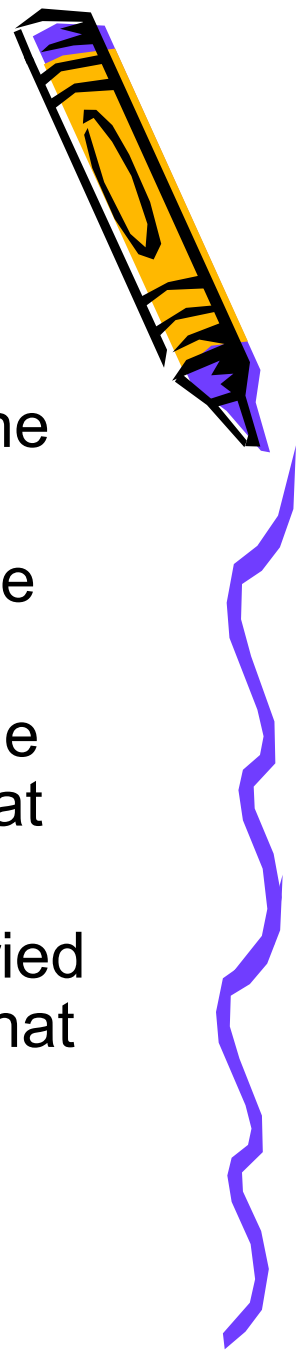


This is the photo that Jack took

man fish girl boat wind
wave whale rod camera rock
beach shark cook friend
chips cat



This is the photo that Jack took

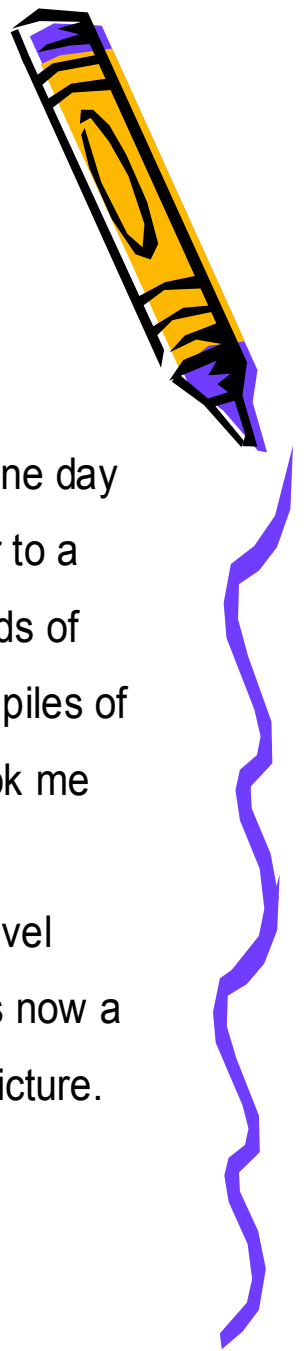


- This is the man that caught the fish that was in the photo that Jack took
- This is the girl that kissed the man that caught the fish that was in the photo that Jack took
- This is the boat that carried the girl that kissed the man that caught the fish that was in the photo that Jack took
- This is the whale that capsized the boat that carried the girl that kissed the man that caught the fish that was in the photo that Jack took



Story of an Object

Twist on genre...



A long time ago I started life as a tall tree growing in the middle of a deep forest. One day men came with axes and saws. I was cut down and sent floating down a wide river to a factory. There I was chopped up, carved and painted and then taken , with hundreds of others to a shop in a big city . I lay on a shelf for several months next to cards and piles of writing paper . Then one day a child came in with his father. He bought me and took me home. When we got to room he held me tightly in his hand and together we made something beautiful. Now the child is a man and I am too old to work– but I still travel everywhere with him . He says he keeps me with him for good luck. That child is now a famous artist– and he and I remember that day long ago when we drew his first picture.



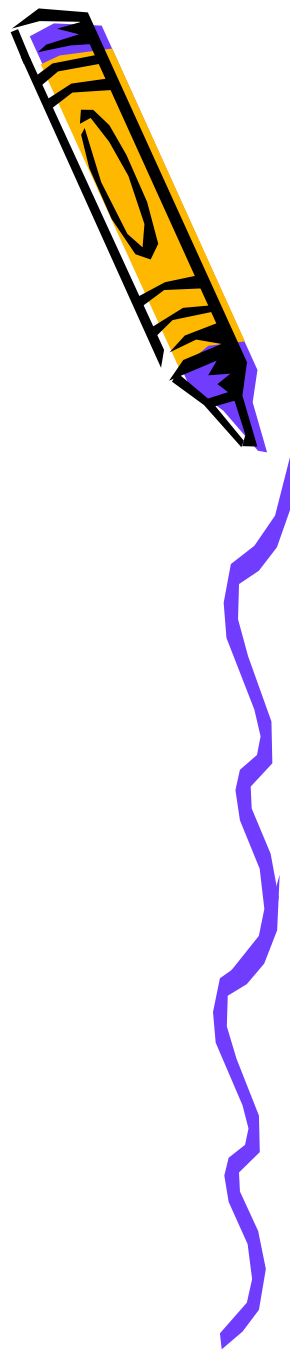
Past passive history

- Choose an object:

Photo frame paperclip knife coin

stamp ring bookmark notebook

Or one of your choice....



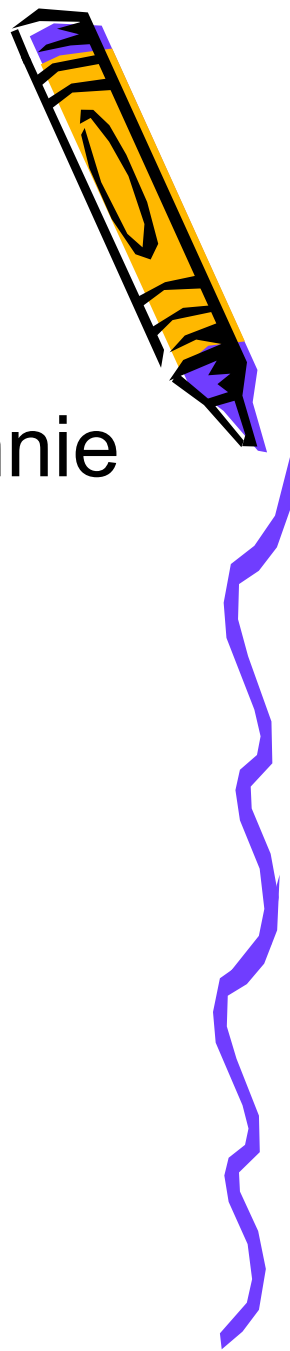
Maternal Advice

Genre with a twist

Using 'When in doubt , wash' from Jennie
by Paul Gallico:

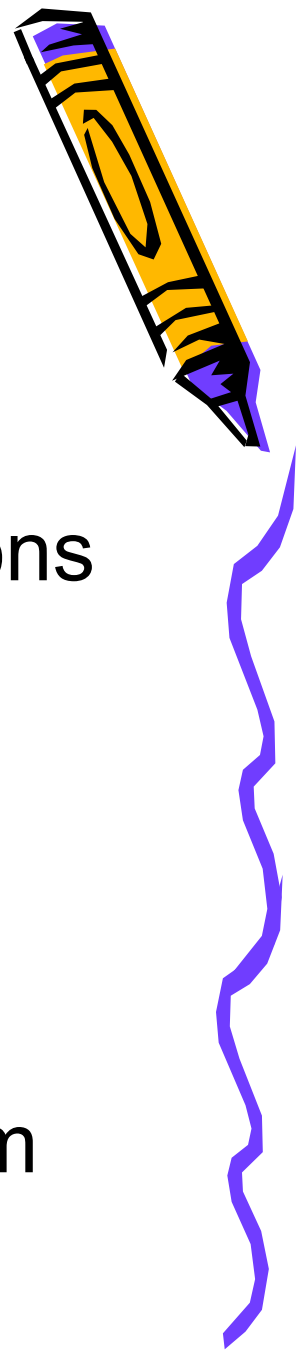
Listen and guess the animal.

Then choose an animal and write
maternal advice.



How it's done

Genre with a twist



- Choose an activity and write instructions. Read out your instructions . Others guess the activity:
- Eating spaghetti Falling in love
- Getting promoted Bathing a dog
- Having a relaxing evening
- Going to a wedding Taking an exam
Looking after a two-year old

