

Broken Hearts and Fish Out of Water: Practicing Time Clauses

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Warm-Up and Grammar Review

Tell the students that they will be working on time clauses. They will read a story and ask questions to determine who is responsible for the damage caused in the story.

Time Clauses

Give some examples of time clauses (below) and explain their usage. A time clause starts with an adverb of time (*before, after, when, while, etc.*). Following that is an action. It may help if students consider that the action is connected with a time. For example, imagine that you ate some bad sushi at 1 p.m. In that case, “after I ate some bad sushi” means “after 1 p.m.”.

One action happened before or after another:

I got sick after I ate some bad sushi.

I ate the sushi before I got sick.

(“Had eaten” can be used in place of “ate” to emphasize that the action of eating was completed before the action of getting sick.)

One action happened at the same time or very soon after another:

I felt terrible when I woke up the next day.

I almost fainted when I got out of bed.

One action happened while another action was in progress:

My friends visited me while I was recovering in the hospital.

In any of these examples, the time clause can appear at the beginning or the end of the sentence. If the time clause appears at the beginning, a comma is used after it. The meaning of the sentence does not change.

My friends visited me while I was recovering in the hospital. =

While I was recovering in the hospital, my friends visited me.

Elicit some examples of sentences with time clauses. Imagine that the school cafeteria served a truly horrible meal yesterday. (If you’re lucky, it will take more imagination than I think.) What happened?

The Story

The story, comprehension questions and time clause exercise appear together at the end of this document.

Explain the terms “broken heart” and “fish out of water” in the story’s title. Do the students know of any similar expressions? Also, explain the terms “CPR” and “sue”.

Have the students read the story silently. After the students have finished reading, they should answer the comprehension questions. Students who finish early can begin the time clause exercise.

Put the students in pairs. Have the students retell the story to each other without looking back at it. Circulate among the pairs, checking their comprehension.

Discuss the story as a class. Elicit information about the story from various students. Make sure that all of the comprehension questions have been answered during this discussion. The answers are:

1. Tad saw Hannah talking to Jim.
2. Tad grabbed him.
3. Tammy saw Hannah doing CPR on Jim and thought they were kissing.
4. Tammy crashed into the fish tank.
5. The manager was away from the cash register.

Time Clause Exercise

Have students do the time clause exercise. Go over the answers (below) together. Keep in mind that there may be more than one way to phrase a particular answer.

1. Hannah started talking to Jim when Tad went to the restroom.
2. When Tad went to the restroom, Hannah started talking to Jim.
3. Tad came back while Hannah and Jim were talking.
4. Tad yelled at Jim before he grabbed him.
5. Hannah was doing CPR when Tammy walked into the restaurant.
6. Tammy walked into the restaurant while Hannah was doing CPR.
7. Tammy crashed into the fish tank when she fainted.
8. Tammy fainted before she crashed into the fish tank.
9. Water spilled everywhere when the fish tank fell over.
10. Someone robbed the cash register before the manager returned to it.

Determining Who Was at Fault

Ask the students to prepare questions to determine who was responsible for the damage. In pairs, they should make questions for Tad, Hannah, Jim, Tammy and the restaurant manager. It is also fun to make some questions for one of the fish. Ask the students to make questions containing time clauses. (Question for Tad: *What did you do when Jim fainted?*) Circulate among the groups, checking questions for grammatical accuracy.

After each pair has prepared several questions, split the class into groups of five or six and assign each student one of the roles listed above. Depending on the numbers, someone might have to play two roles, or you might have to cut out a role. (The fish is the best one to cut). Have the students take turns roleplaying and answering the group members' questions. Let the students know that they don't necessarily have to give

truthful answers. (Perjury anyone?) Also, encourage the students to make up questions on the spot. If possible, they should try to include time clauses in these questions.

Finally, have each group discuss the testimony given and decide who was at fault. Each group should report its decision to the class.

Follow-Up Assignment

Have the students write a description of the accident from the point of view of one of the characters in the story. The students should try to use time clauses in the assignment, but should not copy those used in the story or the time clause exercise.

(The story, comprehension questions and time clause exercise appear below.)

Broken Hearts and Fish Out of Water

Yesterday Tad and Hannah went to a seafood restaurant for lunch. While they were eating, Hannah noticed a very cute guy at the next table. Later, when Tad went to the restroom, Hannah started talking to the man, Jim. Tad came back while they were talking, and he got very angry. He yelled at Jim and grabbed him by the neck. Suddenly, Jim **fainted**. Tad didn't know what to do, but Hannah started to perform **CPR** on Jim. While Hannah was performing CPR, Jim's girlfriend, Tammy, walked into the restaurant. Tammy thought Hannah was kissing Jim, and she suddenly fainted. Unfortunately, when she fainted, she crashed into a giant fish tank. The fish and water spilled everywhere. After the fish tank fell over, the restaurant manager left the cash register and ran over to see what was happening. Before he returned to the cash register, someone robbed it. Both Jim and Tammy recovered, but the restaurant lost a lot of money and fish. The restaurant manager is **suing** Tad, Hannah, Jim and Tammy.

Comprehension Questions

1. Why did Tad get angry?
2. Why did Jim faint?
3. Why did Tammy faint?
4. Why did the fish tank fall over?
5. Why was it easy for someone to rob the cash register?

Time Clause Exercise

Using the words below, write sentences that match actions in the story.

Example: Hannah/ notice/ eat

Hannah noticed a cute guy at the next table while she and Tad were eating.

Example: Tad and Hannah/eat/notice

While Tad and Hannah were eating, Hannah noticed a cute guy at the next table.

1. Hannah/ start talking/go to the restroom

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2. Tad/go to the restroom/start talking

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3. Tad/come back/talking

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4. Tad/yell/grab

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5. Hannah/do CPR/walk into

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6. Tammy/walk into/do CPR

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7. Tammy/crash/faint

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8. Tammy/faint/crash

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9. Water/spill/fall over

.....

10. Someone/rob/return

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