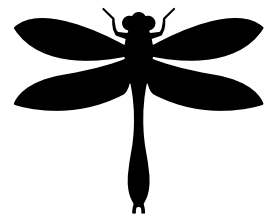




A story-based approach to video

# PREDATOR AND PREY



## About this activity

Using a short video for creative writing

- ▶ **Language level:** A2 – C2
- ▶ **Age of learner:** Upper primary, teenagers and adults
- ▶ **Duration of activity:** 60 minutes
- ▶ **Activities:** Creative writing
- ▶ **Topics:** Nature; story structure
- ▶ **Language aims:** Vocabulary expansion; descriptive language (examples)

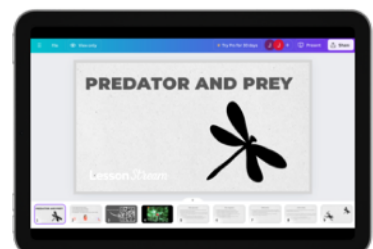
What you will need:

- A **YouTube video** (see below)
- A **handout** on pages five and six (one for each student)
- A **Canva slideshow** (scan or click on the QR code to access)



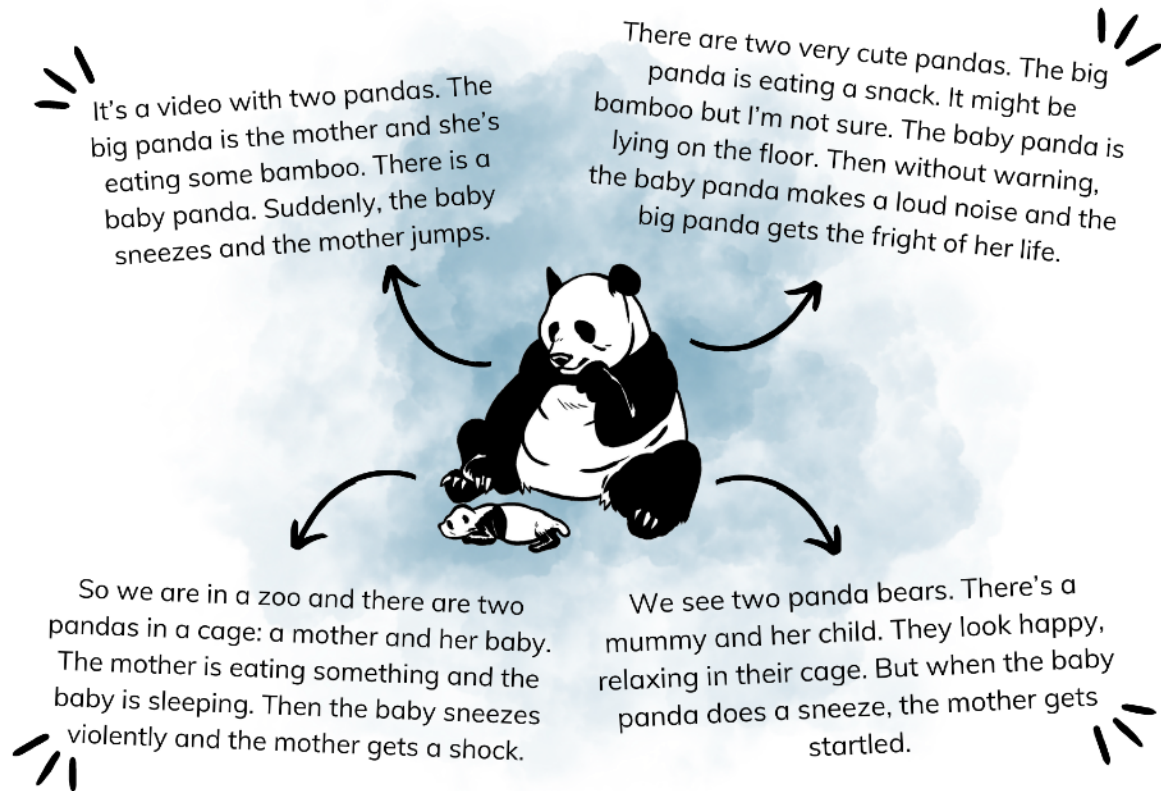
## The video

For this activity, students will take creative inspiration from a viral video titled “Frog Fail”. The nine-second, slow-motion clip captures the exact moment at which an unlucky frog attempts to catch a dragonfly but completely misses its target.



## Revisiting videogloss

You might remember the videogloss technique from unit three, where students watch a short video, write down what happens and then compare their texts.



This activity begins in a similar way. Students watch a nine-second video involving a frog and dragonfly and then write down what happens. However, rather than comparing their texts, this process is intended to prime students for writing a second, more creative kind of text.

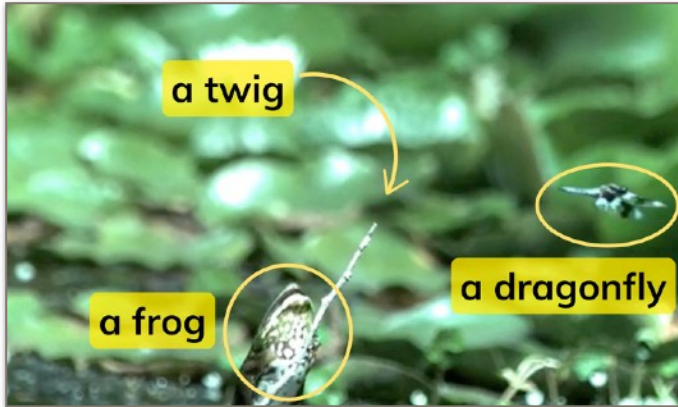
- **Text one** is a video narrative description. The aim is to encourage students to observe, consider basic language choices and prepare for the creative writing that follows.
- **Text two** is a short story and requires a more creative writing process.

## Activity outline

1. Tell students

“ I am going to show you a video.  
It's a very short video – only nine seconds long.  
Watch it carefully because then you are going to write down what happens – from the beginning until the end, OK?

2. Show students the video of the frog and dragonfly and find out if they have seen it before. Ask if they like it.
3. Display the image in the accompanying Canva slideshow, which includes three key words students might need to describe the video.



Scan or click the code to see the video

4. Tell students:

“ Now, imagine you are with a friend ...  
 And your friend has never seen that video before.  
 I want you to write a description of what happens in the video from the beginning until the end.  
 Write it as if you are talking to your friend.  
 Any questions?

Tips  
 ✨ ✨

- Before students start writing, play the video a few more times or leave it playing on loop. Alternatively, let students access it on their mobile devices using the QR code included in the slideshow.
- You can let students access bilingual dictionaries for the writing.

5. When students have finished writing, refer them to the questions included in the slideshow and ask them to compare their answers with a partner or in small groups:

**ONE.** In your text, which did you mention first: the frog or dragonfly?

**TWO.** Which sentence do you most agree with and why?

- “I feel happy for the dragonfly.”
- “I feel sorry for the frog.”

**THREE.** In your text, is there a cause and effect? In other words, did the dragonfly fly away because the frog jumped? Or was there another reason?

**FOUR:** Are there any details in the video that you find particularly beautiful, funny, incredible, disgusting, etc. How did you describe them in your text?

6. Go over the questions and find out how different students interpreted what they saw..

Tips  
✦✦

- Among other things, the first text helps students think about the language they might use to describe the video. Since this language might also feature in their stories (coming next), you may want to collect the texts for marking. This could extend the activity over two days.
- For higher-level groups, you could brainstorm with students about the details they noticed in the video and encourage them to find creative language to describe them (e.g. *An emerald green pond; The frog springs into the air; A tongue like a baby's arm; The dragonfly leaves without a care in the world*).

7. Students are now going to use the video as a starting point to create a story. There are two ways to set this up according to the language level of your students:

### I Lower-level students

Tell students:

Instructions included in Canva slideshow

- “ You are going to write a short story based on what happens in the video. Start your story with the words, “Once upon a time.”  
Decide who the main character is: the frog or the dragonfly.  
You can give them names and create details about their lives.  
Think about how to end the story: You might include a surprise ending or show what the main character learns.  
You might want to use ideas or language from your first text.  
Remember to write the story in the past tense.



### II Higher-level students

The handout on pages five and six includes 12 questions to prompt students to think more deeply about the story they will write. In response to these, they can make preparatory notes. After going over the instructions on the handout, give out copies to your students.

Tips  
✦✦

- As students write, you can circulate and provide language support and feedback.
- If possible, encourage students to make use of bilingual dictionaries.
- The writing task can be assigned as homework.
- Students can write an initial draft, share it with a partner or group for feedback, and then revise and improve their work.

8. Choose how students will present their work in class. They could write their final versions on poster paper, decorate them, and display them on the classroom walls. Alternatively, they could read their stories aloud in groups or to the whole class.



## Prepare your story

You are going to use the frog and dragonfly video as a starting point to write a story. To prepare for this, think about the following questions:



### 1. Type of story

What kind of story will you write: a poem, a horror story, a bedtime story for children, an excerpt from a literary novel, a fable with a moral, a newspaper article, a diary entry or an internal monologue from one of the characters? Will your story be funny, sad, surreal ...?

### 2. Protagonist and antagonist

There are two characters in the video – a frog and a dragonfly. In your story, which is the protagonist (the main character) and which is the antagonist (the one that creates some sort of conflict – see below)?

### 3. Conflict

All stories have a conflict: a main problem that creates a central question: Will the hungry frog get its lunch? Will the dragonfly live to see another day? What conflict will you focus on?

### 4. Setting

How will you describe the place where your story takes place? Will you describe the colours, the sounds, the smells ... ?

### 5. The characters

What sort of character or personality does the frog have? What is its backstory? What does it want in the story? What about the dragonfly?

### 6. Other back stories

Think about the following:

- Is this the first time the frog and dragonfly met?
- Are there any other characters involved in the story?
- Did anything happen before or after the incident in the video?

## 7. Investigation

Is there any information about the video that would help you with the story. For example, information about frogs and dragonflies in nature? Or information about the video: who created it, the number of views it has, etc.?

## 8. Your own experience

Can you think of any personal experiences that relate to this video? For example, a lucky escape or an unexpected failure? Do you remember how you felt?

## 9. Other story connections

Does the video remind you of any books, adverts, TV programs, cartoons, nature clips or other stories?

## 10. Beginning your story

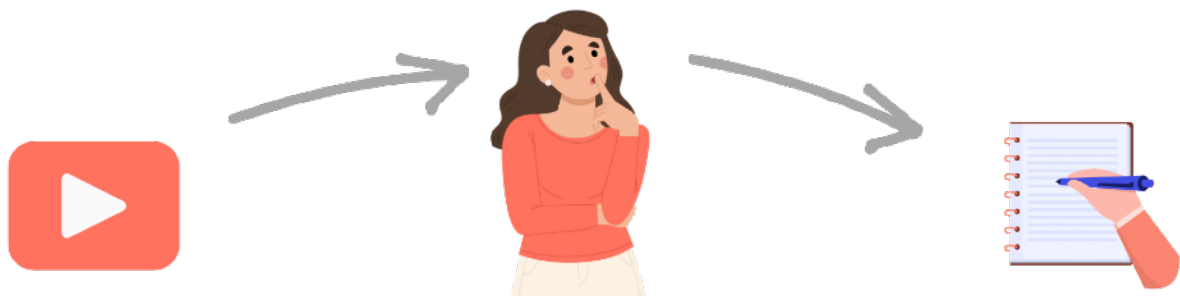
How are you going to start your story? If you like, you can use the words, "Once upon a time".

## 11. Ending your story

Think carefully about the end of your story. It should tell the reader that the story is finished. Perhaps you could give your story a twist (= a surprise ending).

## 12. Title

Will you give your story a title?



### Writing tips

- The goal is not to write an accurate, detailed description of the video but to create some sort of story based on the narrative.
- To give your story shape, you can change details in the video.
- Most writing is rewriting. You can write a first version (a draft) and then leave it for a while. Then go back to it with fresh eyes and look for ways to improve it. You are your own editor.