

8 Storytelling

Nicholas Sheard

1 Stories or anecdotes are usually told in five stages.

1 Introduction 2 Background 3 Problem 4 Resolution 5 Comment

Put the story below in the correct order by matching each paragraph to one of the stages above.

A Beijing surprise

A (1)_____ somebody lit some candles and put them around the room, (2)_____ I still couldn't see my notes very well. The speech was a complete disaster. You can imagine my surprise when the Chinese businessmen started to smile and clapped loudly when I finished the talk. I sat down and started to eat my meal. (3)_____ I asked the translator sitting next to me why everyone had clapped so enthusiastically, she replied, 'None of the people here speaks English. I'll translate your speech for them (4)_____.'

B Since then I've never prepared any of my speeches. They seem to work better when I improvise. I did give the translator my notes though!

C I was in Beijing as part of a trade delegation and our company was one of several asked to give a speech. I had spent a long time preparing my speech and had written about five pages of notes. I suppose there were about thirty people in the room listening to me and I was quite nervous.



D Have I ever told you about the time I was asked to give a speech to some Chinese businessmen?

E I started to speak. (5)_____ there was a power cut and all the lights in the room went out. (6)_____ I couldn't see my notes very well at all. (7)_____, I continued speaking, (8)_____ I realised that I had started with page three and couldn't find page four or five. (9)_____ I just improvised (10)_____ I found page one.

2 Complete the story in 1 with the linking words and phrases in the box.

in the end just then however when because of this
and then eventually but soon So but later

3 Work with a partner. Look at the prompts below. Choose five and use them to create your own story. Tell your story in the five stages described in 1 and include some of the words and phrases in 2. When you are ready, tell your story to another pair.

a secretary an office party a car crash an airport a text message the CEO
a bottle of champagne a business trip a broken lift a hotel bridal suite
a stolen laptop a strange taxi ride €60,000 an e-mail a meal in a restaurant