

The Inside Out Anecdote Competition is your chance to tell us your favourite story by creating a video for our Facebook page. Every two months we will choose the best video and the creator will receive a prize of a Macmillan English Dictionary, plus have their video featured on the Inside Out website.

**By uploading a video on the Inside Out Facebook page you are giving Macmillan Education permission to use it.**

**Unfortunately, we are only able to showcase original and royalty-free material.** Any content that is rights-protected will not be considered. Please ensure that all the content that you or your students use is original, this includes sound, images, illustrations etc.

## Who can enter

The Inside Out Anecdote Video competition is open to all learners of English – both native and non-native English speakers. This includes students affiliated to a university or school as well as independent learners. Anyone appearing in the video must be **18 years of age or older**.

## How to enter

1. Decide on the story you are going to tell. If you need inspiration, have a look at the Anecdote speaking activities in the Inside Out coursebooks. You can see some sample anecdote videos on the Inside Out website at <http://www.insideout.net/video/anecdote-video-player>. These are some topics that we recommend:

- Your last holiday
- A wedding you've been to
- A recent party you went to
- Your most treasured possession
- An interesting film you've seen recently
- The last thing you bought
- Your favourite time of year
- A close friend
- A childhood memory
- Someone interesting you met

2. Your video should be no more than 3 minutes long (including any introduction and credits), so practice telling your story, maybe to a friend or classmate so you know exactly what you're going to say.

3. Record your video! You can do this with a video camera, a webcam on a computer, the video mode on a digital camera, or even your mobile phone – just make sure that the sound is nice and clear so we can hear what you are saying.

4. **VERY IMPORTANT:** To take part in this competition anyone appearing in the video must be 18 years of age or older.

5. Once your video has been created, come on over to the **Inside Out Facebook page** and 'Like' us. You will be able to upload your video to this Facebook page.

## Contest Rules

1. Every two months we will select one video as a winner. The winner will receive a prize of their choice of a Macmillan Dictionary (Advanced Learners / Collocation / Phrasal Verbs).
2. Winners will be notified through a message on Facebook.
3. Videos will be judged on the following criteria:
  - Creative use of English
  - Quality
  - Number of 'like' votes on Facebook
4. The winner will be chosen by a panel of judges. The judges will consider the popularity of the video, so make sure your friends hit the "Like" button to vote for you and post a comment.
4. **DO NOT TRY TO SEND US VIDEO FILES DIRECTLY**, the only way to enter the competition is through the Facebook page.
5. You may submit as many videos as you like.

**If you have any questions, please email: [help@macmillan.com](mailto:help@macmillan.com) with 'Inside Out Anecdote Competition' in the title.**

## NOTES FOR TEACHERS – RUNNING ANECDOTE ACTIVITIES IN CLASS

In our experience, teachers get excited about a lesson when they feel that their students have communicated on a level that goes beyond 'going through the motions', when they have engaged with the topic on a personal level. Inside Out is filled with personalised speaking activities which encourage students to talk about the things that matter to them, rather than playing roles and exchanging invented information.

The kind of speaking task that we are going to describe here is an extended speaking activity which provides an opportunity for students to tackle a longer piece of discourse and to develop their speaking skills. We've called these "anecdotes".

For examples of authentic anecdotes you can use in class, see the [Anecdote Videos in the video section](#). Anecdote topics need to be meaningful to virtually all your students. They should be subjects about which most people have something to say: a film they've seen, a close friend, a journey, an evening out in a restaurant or a childhood memory. However, even though the topics are universal, many students will find it difficult to think of what to say on the spur of the moment. They may not be able to elaborate without some kind of framework to follow; they will need to have their memories jolted, their ideas 'activated'.

This is achieved in the anecdote activity by careful preparation of a series of leading questions designed to trigger ideas. Ten to twelve questions are ideal. For example, these might be the leading questions for an anecdote about a family holiday when you were a child:

- What was the name of your holiday destination?
- Where exactly is it?
- Was it far away from where you lived?
- Did you often go to the same place for your family holiday?
- Who went with you?
- How did you travel?
- What did you do to pass the time on the journey?
- How long did it take to get there?
- What sort of accommodation did you stay in?
- How did you spend your time there?
- Have you been back there since you were a child?
- How has the place changed over the years?
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The easiest way to do an anecdote activity is as follows. Give your students a list of leading questions to read and ask them to tick the questions they can or want to answer. This allows them to take control of the activity and also means that shyer students can avoid matters they feel are too personal.

Then give them planning time to think about both what they are going to say and how they are going to say it. Be on hand to help them and encourage them to use dictionaries and make notes, but discourage them from writing out what they will actually say. The planning stage need not take more than ten minutes, but students are more likely to be adventurous and use more complex language if they have had time to think about it. Research has shown that students who plan for tasks attempt more ambitious language, hesitate less and make fewer basic errors.

In "Challenge and Change" published by Macmillan, Pauline Foster writes "planning time allows students to devote attention to both form and content, rather than forcing them to choose one at the expense of the other." After the preparation time, ask students to work in pairs and to exchange anecdotes.

The following is another way of doing an anecdote activity. Ask students to listen to you reading the leading questions aloud. Tell them to close their eyes if they wish and just to listen and to allow thoughts to come into their minds as you speak. Read the questions aloud, slowly, in your most hypnotic tones, pausing for a few seconds between questions while the students' memories are activated. Some classes will find this a more involving process. It also allows you to adapt the questions to your class, adding new ones or missing out ones you think are inappropriate. After the reading, give the students time to prepare in detail for the speaking task and put them in pairs to exchange anecdotes.

An anecdote activity is not the kind of speaking task that requires students to use target structures as in the 'free' stage of the PPP (Presentation, Practice, Performance) approach. Rather, in line with a task-based model of language teaching, it may be followed with the playing of a recording of native speakers performing the same, or similar, tasks for students to listen to. Alternatively, your students can watch illustrations of anecdotes on the Inside Out videos. As the students are already personally engaged with the topic, they are likely to be receptive to the new language they are exposed to in this way.

Research indicates that asking students to repeat a task a second time is well worthwhile. When students do an anecdote activity for the first time, tell them that you are going to ask them to repeat the same anecdote with a new partner in a later class. This will not only reassure them that you are doing it deliberately, but, more importantly, it will mean that they can dedicate some time and thought to preparation.

Students appreciate the opportunity to do the same thing in their second language and research has shown that given this opportunity they become more adventurous and more precise in the language they use. The first time the students do an anecdote activity, they are more likely to concentrate on content; repetition of the task means they have more time to process the language, increase the range of vocabulary and use more syntactically complex language.

In "Uncovering Grammar" published by Macmillan, Scott Thornbury writes "Simply getting the learners to repeat the task, with different partners, or in the next lesson, is a way of producing more grammatically complex language. Having done the activity once – as a kind of rehearsal – learners now have more spare attention to devote to the form of their output."

When you repeat the task, it is a good idea to mix the class so that each student works with a new partner. If you are still worried that your students may be reluctant to repeat the same task, move the goal posts: for instance, tell them that you are going to record them this time. It is a real boost for the students to hear themselves ([or even better, see themselves on video](#)) and notice the improvements in their performance the second time round.