

2.1 Opening Lines

Nothing could have prepared me for the scene I witnessed when I arrived.

When our eyes met, I knew my life was about to change.

It had been raining for two straight days, and the river level was rising rapidly.

I knew this was going to be difficult, but I had no choice.

I still can't quite believe how this has happened, but I'm about to appear live on national TV.

This is the saddest story I have ever heard.

It was a bright cold day in April and the clocks were striking thirteen.

It was the wrong number that started it, the telephone ringing three times in the dead of night.

I am an invisible man.

Someone must have slandered Josef K, for one morning, without having done anything truly wrong, he was arrested.

2.2 And the award goes to...

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| Best movie | Best actor in a leading role | Best actress in a leading role | Best director |
| Best animated feature movie | Best actor in a supporting role | Best actress in a supporting role | Best costume design |
| Best documentary | Best foreign language movie | Best movie made in this country | Best special effects |
| Best soundtrack | Best song | Best comedy | Best family movie |

2.1 Opening Lines

Aim

To practice writing stories collaboratively

To discuss opening lines/scenes in books and movies

Language

Narrative tenses

Time

Approximately 30 minutes, including Extension

Preparation

Enough copies of the worksheet to provide one opening line for each pair of students, cut up

One blank sheet of paper for each pair

Procedure

- Put students in pairs. Explain that they are going to write stories, line by line, with other people in the class.
- Hand out one opening line to each pair. You don't have to use all the lines and some pairs can have the same line. Allow students to ask about words they don't know. Write them on the board and explain them to the whole class.
- Ask pairs to write their opening line at the top of their sheet, and then discuss and write the next line. When they have finished, they should hold their paper in the air.
- Tell pairs to swap their paper with another pair who are holding up their paper.
- They read the story so far, discuss it and write the next sentence. When they have finished, they hold the paper up and swap it with someone else holding their paper.
- During the activity, you might need to manage the paper swapping to keep it flowing. Help students who need it.
- Allow fifteen to twenty minutes, then stop the activity.
- Ask students to read and write a second draft of the text they have, by making corrections, using a greater variety of tenses or vocabulary, and making additions and cuts. If the story doesn't have an ending, they should write one.
- Students take turns reading out the stories and the class can vote on the best.

Extension

- The following five lines are real book openings:

"This is the saddest story I have ever heard." –Ford Madox Ford, *The Good Soldier*

"It was a bright cold day in April and the clocks were striking thirteen." –George Orwell, *1984*

"It was the wrong number that started it, the telephone ringing three times in the dead of night." –Paul Auster, *City of Glass*

"I am an invisible man." –Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*

"Someone must have slandered Josef K, for one morning, without having done anything truly wrong, he was arrested." Franz Kafka, *The Trial*

- Ask students if they know which books any of the quotes are from. Which do they like the best? Why?
- Ask them to think of three great beginnings to movies or books that they know. Then, working in pairs, tell them to explain to each other what happens.

2.2 And the award goes to...

Aim

To discuss movies of personal importance to students

To practice describing, debating, and persuading

Language

Common questions asked in conversations about movies

Persuasive language

Time

Approximately 30 minutes, including Extension

Preparation

A copy of the worksheet for each group of three or four students, cut up

Procedure

- Tell the class they're going to be talking about their favorite movies, and that later the class will host its very own Oscars award ceremony. First, though, they should think of a movie they've seen recently. While students are thinking—or before the activity starts—write on the board a few common questions often asked about movies, such as *Who's in it? What kind of movie is it? What's it about? Who's it by? / Who directed it? When did it come out? What's it like? What did you think of it?*
- Model the first activity by telling the class about a movie you've seen and enjoyed. Encourage them to ask questions. If anyone else has seen it, compare opinions. Then put students in groups to discuss the movies they chose. While they are talking, go around and correct errors or give students the English they need.
- When a couple of groups are finished, stop the activity and share any interesting things you heard. Then work on new language that came up, and look at errors to correct, which you may have written on the board.
- Then tell students that they will now decide their own winners for the class Oscars. In groups of three or four they will need to agree on their nominations for the categories on the cards. Give each group a set of cards, placed face down. They should persuade each other of their favorite nominee for each category. The movies can come from any era, but each group can have only one nominee for each category and write it down. If they don't have any ideas for a category, they should move on.
- Once two or three groups have finished, combine the groups into larger groups and tell them to reach collective decisions for each category, voting where necessary.
- Finally, ask the whole class for their nominations for each category. Where there is more than one, encourage students to explain why their nomination should win. Then hold a class vote to decide the ultimate winners.

Extension

- You could redo the card-based activity, but this time for the **worst** possible nominations. Run the activity in the same way and hold class votes to decide the “winners.”