

PRE-WRITING TASKS

Alone at home – a story

Die folgenden Aufgaben und Materialien wurden von Lehrerinnen und Lehrern für Lehrkräfte der SEK I entwickelt und können als gesamtes Aufgabenpaket oder als Einzelaufgaben in den Unterricht integriert werden. Sie sollen Schülerinnen und Schüler beim Aufbau der individuellen Schreibfertigkeit in der Fremdsprache Englisch unterstützen. Das gesamte Aufgabenpaket umfasst *Exercises* und *Activities* zu den Aspekten *Task Achievement*, *Cohesion and Coherence*, *Grammar* und *Vocabulary*. Die *Exercises* und *Activities* entsprechen den zur Bewertung von Schülertexten herangezogenen Dimensionen der vom BIFIE entwickelten *Assessment Scale* (<https://www.bifie.at/node/3231>).

PRE-WRITING LONG TASK ALONE AT HOME – STORY

You are staying at a summer camp for young people in England. Your teacher there has asked all kids there to write an exciting story for the camp magazine. The beginning of the story is the same for everybody:

I was alone at home on this cold, rainy November afternoon. I was sitting in my room, looking at my maths stuff, but I didn't want to open the book. Mum had said I should do my homework, but why now? What a horrible, boring afternoon. Suddenly the phone rang. ...

Complete this story – write between 100–130 words.

In your story you must write about

- who was on the phone
- what this person said
- where you went then
- what happened at the place where you went
- how you felt at that moment
- why you still remember this day

COHERENCE AND COHESION 1

This is a story a student wrote for her teacher:

I was alone at home on this cold, rainy November afternoon. I was sitting in my room, looking at my maths stuff, but I didn't want to open the book. Mum had said I should do my homework, but why now? What a horrible, boring afternoon. Suddenly the phone rang. It was my best friend Paul. He was very excited and said, "I've got something to show you!" So I wrote a note for my mum to tell her where I was, got my bike and went to Paul. When Paul opened the door there was a big smile on his face. "I've got a surprise upstairs!" he said. There was a baby cat in a basket on the floor. Paul had got it from a neighbour an hour ago. Its name was Kitty and she was so sweet. We played with her all afternoon. I had always wanted to have a cat, but mum didn't allow it because she thought pets were too much work. I came back home at 7 pm and told my mum about Kitty. "Please, allow me to have one, too!" I asked mum. "I'll look after her, I promise." And really – for Christmas I got my best present ever, my sweet Tiddles. She's black with a white spot on her head, and we've been best friends ever since.

With a paragraph you start a new idea, or an important new part of a story. Divide this text into three paragraphs – where would you put them?

COHERENCE AND COHESION 2

The beginning of the story:

I was at home alone. I was in my room. There was my maths stuff. I didn't want to do it now. Mum said I should do it. Not now! This is a boring afternoon. The phone rang.

This text doesn't read well because the sentences don't flow – they are not linked. Look at this beginning of the story:

I was alone at home on this cold, rainy November afternoon. I was sitting in my room, looking at my maths stuff, but I didn't want to open the book. Mum had said I should do my homework, but why now? What a horrible, boring afternoon. Suddenly the phone rang.

This text is much better because there are a lot more details and the sentences are better linked. Highlight the parts of the text (details, linking words and phrases) that make it a better one:

I was alone at home on this cold, rainy November afternoon. I was sitting in my room, looking at my maths stuff, but I didn't want to open the book. Mum had said I should do my homework, but why now? What a horrible, boring afternoon. Suddenly the phone rang.

GRAMMAR

As a rule you tell a story that happened some time ago in PAST TENSE. Sometimes you might want to use PAST PERFECT TENSE for something that happened before a point in the past. When you use direct speech in a story you can, of course, use PRESENT TENSE or PRESENT PERFECT TENSE, too.

Some verbs in this text are missing. Fill in the correct tense from the options in the grid – fill in A, B or C.

This happened when I was ten years old. I was waiting at the bus stop for the number 25 bus when I (1) _____ that my wallet was not in my pocket. I knew that I (2) _____ it on the kitchen table at home. So I ran back and (3) _____ to open the door, but I couldn't open it. There was a key in the lock on the inside. Then I (4) _____ that my stupid little brother had locked the door behind me when I left. I rang the bell but no one (5) _____. Then I remembered I had my mobile phone with me. I rang my brother but again there was no answer! "This is strange. Maybe something (6) _____!" I thought. Then I called my mum at work and told her what the problem was. She (7) _____ after half an hour and opened the front door. Then we (8) _____ my brother in the living room. He had his headphones on his ears and (9) _____ to loud hiphop music. This was why he (10) _____ the doorbell.

	A	B	C
1	find out	found out	have found out
2	put	was putting	had put
3	tried	was trying	had tried
4	remember	remembered	have remembered
5	answered	was answering	has answered
6	happens	happened	has happened
7	came	was coming	had come
8	saw	were seeing	have seen
9	listened	was listening	had listened
10	doesn't hear	wasn't hearing	had not heard

VOCABULARY

Developing a content point:

In your story you must write about

- who was on the phone
- what this person said
- where you went then
- what happened at the place where you went
- how you felt at that moment
- why you still remember this day

Which content point gives you the best chance to write a really exciting story because you can bring in a lot of details? The best answer is content point 4 – “what happened at the place where you went”, and point 5 “how you felt at that moment”. This is the “heart” of your story, and it allows you to say more than for most of the other content points. This means you should plan vocabulary you want to use for these content points carefully. Try to do this with the help of a mind map.

Example:

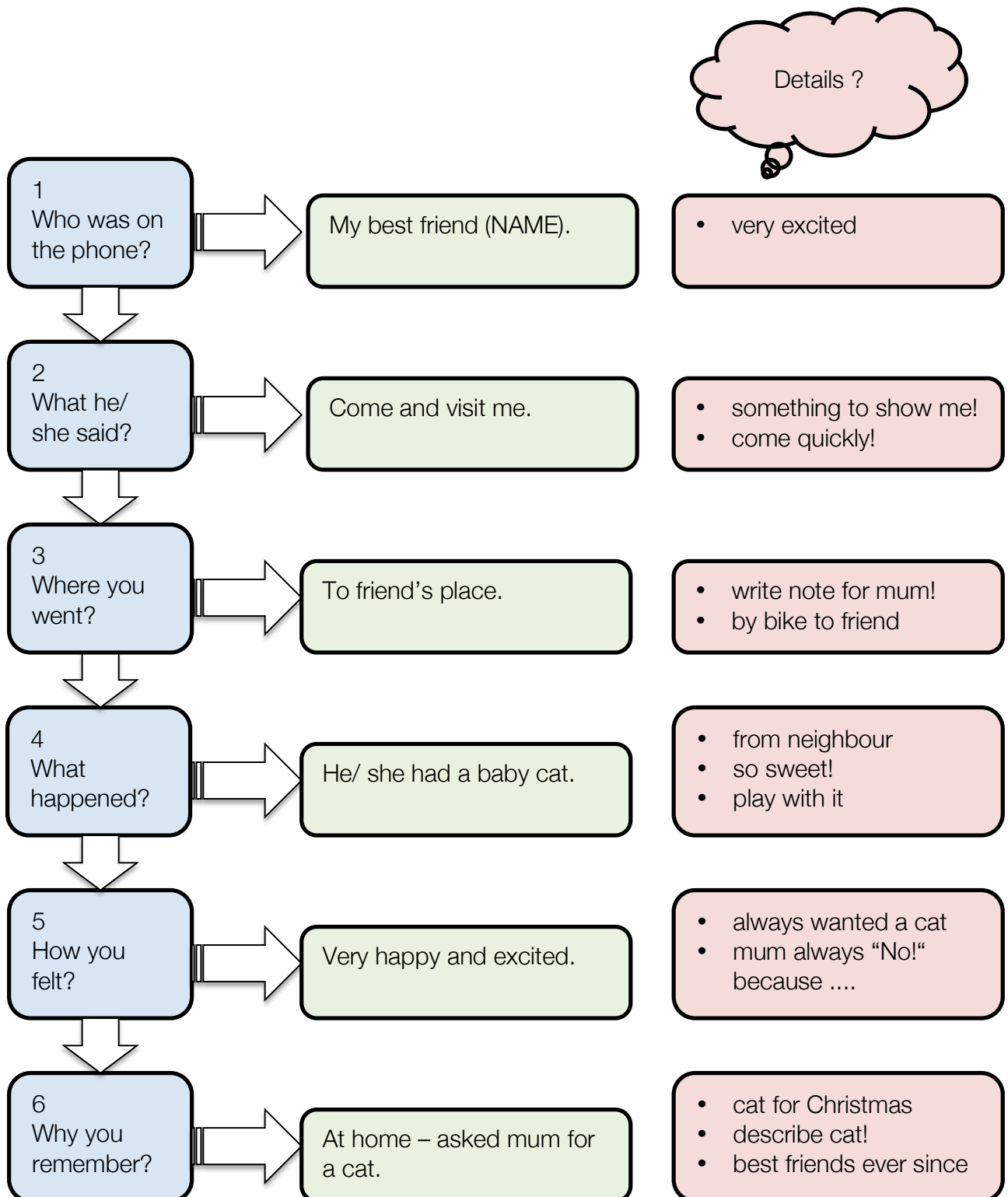
What happened was a quarrel between you and your friend.

Which ideas can you develop – and which words and phrases do you need for this?

KEY – TASK ACHIEVEMENT/A MODEL FOR INDIVIDUAL SOLUTIONS

Of course it is completely up to students how they fill their text fields. What is important is that they add two or three details to their core facts.

This planning task can be set as homework with teacher's feedback on the skeleton of ideas, or various suggestions can be collected and discussed in class.



KEY – COHERENCE AND COHESION 1

Suggested solution – it is important to ask students to state reasons why they would split the text into paragraphs at a specific point:

Paragraph 1:

The situation at home – the phone call – planning to meet Paul

Paragraph 2:

At Paul's place – the cat – my wish to have a cat

Paragraph 3:

Back home again – telling mum – the end of the story → my own cat

I was alone at home on this cold, rainy November afternoon. I was sitting in my room, looking at my maths stuff, but I didn't want to open the book. Mum had said I should do my homework, but why now? What a horrible, boring afternoon. Suddenly the phone rang. It was my best friend Paul. He was very excited and said, "I've got something to show you!" So I wrote a note for my mum to tell her where I was, got my bike and went to Paul.

When Paul opened the door there was a big smile on his face. "I've got a surprise upstairs!" he said. There was a baby cat in a basket on the floor. Paul had got it from a neighbour an hour ago. Its name was Kitty and she was so sweet. We played with her all afternoon. I had always wanted to have a cat, but mum didn't allow it because she thought pets were too much work.

I came back home at 7pm and told my mum about Kitty. "Please, allow me to have one, too!" I asked mum. "I'll look after her, I promise." And really – for Christmas I got my best present ever, my sweet Tiddles. She's black with a white spot on her head, and we've been best friends ever since.

KEY – COHERENCE AND COHESION 2

I was alone at home **on this cold, rainy November afternoon**. I **was sitting** in my room, **looking at** my maths stuff, **but** I didn't want to **open the book**. Mum had said I should do my homework, **but why** now? **What a horrible**, boring afternoon. **Suddenly** the phone rang.

KEY – GRAMMAR

- 1 B
- 2 C
- 3 A
- 4 B
- 5 A
- 6 C
- 7 A
- 8 A
- 9 B
- 10 C

This happened when I was ten years old. I was waiting at the bus stop for the number 25 bus when I (1) **found out** that my wallet was not in my pocket. I knew that I (2) **had put** it on the kitchen table at home. So I ran back and (3) **tried** to open the door, but I couldn't open it. There was a key in the lock on the inside. Then I (4) **remembered** that my stupid little brother had locked the door behind me when I left. I rang the bell but no one (5) **answered**. Then I remembered I had my mobile phone with me. I rang my brother but again there was no answer! "This is strange. Maybe something (6) **has happened!**" I thought. Then I called my mum at work and told her what the problem was. She (7) **came** after half an hour and opened the front door. Then we (8) **saw** my brother in the living room. He had his headphones on his ears and (9) **was listening** to loud hiphop music. This was why he (10) **had not heard** the doorbell.

KEY – VOCABULARY/MODEL SOLUTION

An example:

What happened was a quarrel between you and your friend.

Which ideas can you develop – and which words and phrases do you need for this?

For classroom work a promising approach might be to give students the four main branches of the mind map (and possibly ask them if they can think of one more element) and then collect lexical items for each of them, preferably as a cooperative effort.

