What happened last night? (part II)
The Creative Process


JUSTIFICATION

The grammar lesson done and all the past tenses explained, now the way is paved to put them into practice. The best option is to write a narrative in which the action goes back and forth, like when we remember, like having flashbacks. However, writing has never been a very appealing task for students so we better choose a pretty attractive topic. I tried to inspire myself with movies and I quickly realised that a “Back to the Future” movie won’t be realistic enough to engage my students into the writing procedure. It’s also a feature from the 80’s which it makes quite a ‘vintage’, to not say old, reference for them. So, I went to the Blockbuster’s shelf where I found the ‘Hangover’ trilogy by Todd Phillips. I know it’s very little dogmatic but it’s common knowledge that teenagers over 16 have already got drunk at least once. It’s the ugly truth but it’s the one we’ve got. Let’s keep an open mind about this issue and take this as an opportunity to warn about the consequences of binge drinking and the harms of alcohol.

WARM UP

Ask your students: “What did you do Friday or Saturday night?”

Some of them will tell that they stayed at home studying or they just hang around for a while and came back home early ... Show them that you’re not that incredulous and you want them to tell the truth:

- How often do you party?
- Where do you go?
- Who do you have fun with?
- Any funny or embarrassing anecdotes?
- Has it ever happened to you to wake up the following morning and not be able to remember something?

Tell them about binge drinking and black outs and the long terms harms of alcohol abuse like memory loss, risk of rapping, etc.

Announce that they’re about to write a narrative of a terrible hangover and it will start with: “When I woke up, she was making herself a sandwich...”

PROCEDURE

To make a narrative on pins and needles, they’ll need to know some connectors of sequence and time expressions.
- Connectors of sequence: after that, at first, as soon as, before, during, eventually (finally), in the end, later, meanwhile, next, soon, suddenly, then, while, etc.
- Time expressions: last weekend, three/two years, it was a cold/hot/stormy night, before I knew it, to my surprise, fortunately/unfortunately/luckily, the strange/curious/interesting thing was that, etc.
- Then, do some practice with your students if they aren't familiar with those terms yet

Practice1

Match the expressions with their similar meaning:

as soon as, anyway, when, a little later, finally, for one thing, after that, eventually, then, besides, firstly, just as, after a while, when.

SOLUTION: eventually-finally; a little later-after a while; then-after; besides-anyway; firstly-for one thing; just as-when; when-as soon as.

Practice2

Choose the correct words. The SOLUTION is underlined.

1. After playing / play an online game, I emailed some friends.
2. We saw a film and after / afterwards we went for a meal.
3. Second of all / Secondly the hotel is much too expensive for us.
4. I did my best but at / in the end I had to ask for help.
5. While / When I got home, I had a sandwich.
6. On / At first it was quite difficult but it got easier.
7. As soon as you finish / will finish the work, give me a ring.
8. For a start / beginning I don't think Tanya would be interested in the project.

Before your students lose track of their main aim which is writing the narrative, tell them to follow those instructions:

- To start with: “When I woke up, she was making herself a sandwich”.
- Use each past tense taught in the previous lesson at least once: “used to”, “would”, “be used to + vb-ing”, “get used to + vb-ing”, past simple, past continuous, past perfect, past perfect continuous and present perfect.
- Include three connectors of sequence and two time expressions minimum.
- The minimum length of the composition would be 150 words
- Bonus points will be given to those who use relative pronouns, collocations, idioms and phrasal verbs accurately (lessons previously done in class)
- Follow the timeline given:
1. You woke up and she was making herself a sandwich.
2. You have no ideas who she is.
3. Last night you had dinner with some friends/relatives.
4. Some others joined you.
5. Then you went to a pub.
6. Back to the morning, you asked her some questions in order to discover her identity.
7. Her answers sent you back to the past: you got sick and took a cab.
8. You arrived home. You finally recognised her. Since then, you’ve been friends, couple, enemies or you haven’t seen each other ever since.

Tell them they are free to decide whether the mysterious girl is someone from the pub, a stranger, the waitress. Promote originality and creativity to write a romantic, amusing or/and twisted story.

Bibliografía
Spratt, M; Pulverness, A. &Williams, M. 2011. The TKT (Teaching Knowledge Test) Course. Cambridge: CUP