

## CREATING AND GRADING VERB STORIES

Verb stories are one way of getting students to restore or create meaning that has been removed from a text. At the same time, students need to produce the proper form of the verb; however, meaning is paramount.

When creating verb stories, please try to include (and then omit)

1. as many newly learned verbs as possible;
2. as many forms (indicative, imperative, interrogative, negative) as possible;
3. as many persons as possible (especially 3rd person singular)
4. as many participles (past, present, perfect);
5. as many adverb + verb combinations as possible; and
6. as many tenses and aspects (simple or continuous) as possible.

Please examine the sample exercises on our wiki carefully with regard to format, etc.

In terms of grading, 2.5 points per blank is often suitable, with up to 1.5 points given first for the correct meaning, followed by 1 point for the correct form. Obviously, a response with a meaningless verb, earns no points at all (despite having proper form). Another possible allocation of points is out of 1.5, with up to one for the correct meaning, and then 0.5 for the correct form.

An example of "partially" meaningful would be "say" instead of "tell" --or, for example, "didn't say" instead of "didn't tell" (the tense marker is part of form). Don't let the structural differences in the sentences fool you - the collocations indicate a semantic difference: we tell the time, tell the truth, tell a secret = a kind of "reveal to the world"; however, we say goodbye, say the right thing, and use it's safe to say that...= more like "speak or enunciate."

Negatives and modals (but not always "will") definitely affect the meaning. "Remember"= negative "forget" and vice versa. "Can swim," for example means something entirely different than "must swim" or "swim" and deserves NO CREDIT.

The passive versus the active voice is a meaningful distinction, NOT one of form. Consider:

A) Such animals eat frequently in cold weather. AND B) Such animals are frequently eaten in cold weather.

The difference in meaning is remarkable. It's simply a coincidence that English uses a form of "to be" to mark the passive - the difference is NOT grammatical.

Consider:

She was born around the turn of the century.

Students learn to say when and where they were born quite early in their experience with English. Students more than likely NEVER encounter "bear" in the active form. "To be born" is a single word in Turkish. Emphasis on the constituent parts in English causes confusion; the meaning changes.

Consider:

A) He is eager to please. AND B) He is easy to please.

On the surface, the sentences look very similar - just a change in adjectives. But sentence B is actually rather passive (i.e. "he" is not the actor in sentence B as the "he" is sentence A is.) Nearly everything pleases him. / He is pleased by nearly everything. = It is easy to please him.

All in all, we first consider how much sense the word makes and how closely it fits common usage; then, only if there is a fair amount of sense there, we consider how accurate the form is.

This basic distinction, the process by which we arrive at a grade per item, is applied to longer answers in a similar way.