

CHAPTER 7 · KEEPING IT FLOWING

STORIES *people remember*

A short story says more about you than a list of facts, and people remember it.

Name: _____ Date: _____ Interactive version: attenglish.com/talk/7

PHRASE BOX SAY IT

START

You'll never guess what happened...
The funniest thing happened on Saturday.
So, last week...

BUILD

And then...
The thing is...
Anyway, to cut a long story short...

FINISH

So that's why I never...
Lesson learned!
Anyway, what about you? Has that ever happened to you?

PUT THE STORY IN ORDER ORDER

Good short stories have a shape. Put this one in order. Number the lines 1 to 6.

No.	Line
	She made me a cup of tea and we called a locksmith together.
	You'll never guess what happened on Saturday.
	Now we have coffee every Sunday. Best mistake I ever made!
	So I knocked on my neighbour's door for the first time ever.
	I went out to get the post, wearing my slippers, and the door shut behind me.
	My keys, my phone and my coat were all inside.

BUILD YOUR 60-SECOND STORY BUILD

Fill in each part with a few words. The tool joins them into a story you can tell in about a minute.

The hook (the surprising bit)

The problem

What you did

How it ended

A question to hand it back

Put it together and write your line

WHICH OPENING LINE? CHOOSE

The first line decides whether people want to hear the rest. Pick the better opening. Circle your answer.

1. A story about meeting a famous actor on a train.

a) So I got on the train at 8.15 and sat down.

b) You'll never guess who I sat next to on the train.

c) Trains are often busy.

2. A story about a cooking disaster.

a) I set off the fire alarm making toast yesterday.

b) Yesterday I decided to make some food.

c) I like cooking.

3. A story about getting lost abroad.

a) I went on holiday to Portugal.

b) Portugal is a nice country.

c) I once got completely lost in Lisbon with no phone and no Portuguese.

4. A story about a job interview.

a) I had an interview last week.

b) I called my interviewer by the wrong name for the whole interview.

c) Interviews make me nervous.

TELL IT IN A MINUTE PLAY

You'll get a story topic and sixty seconds. Tell a true story about it, out loud. Use the shape: hook, problem, action, ending. Time yourself: 60 seconds each.

- ☐ A time you got lost.
- ☐ The worst meal you've ever eaten.
- ☐ A time something went wrong on holiday.
- ☐ Your first day at a new job or school.
- ☐ A time a stranger helped you.

SAY IT ALOUD SAY IT

Tell your 60-second story three times. It gets shorter and better each time. Tick a box each time you say it aloud.

Line	Said it
I got locked out of my flat on Saturday, and my keys and phone were inside. I knocked on my neighbour's door for the first time. In the end, we ended up having tea together. Has that ever happened to you?	☐ ☐ ☐
My own line:	☐ ☐ ☐

Focus: Pause just before the ending. It makes people lean in.

BEFORE YOU MOVE ON **REFLECT**

What is one funny or surprising thing that happened to you this year?

Where could your 60-second story fit into a conversation?

Who tells stories well in your life? What do they do?

WHAT TO REMEMBER

- ☐ Start with the surprising bit.
- ☐ Scene, problem, what you did, ending, point.
- ☐ Keep it to about a minute.
- ☐ “To cut a long story short” helps you skip details.
- ☐ End by handing the conversation back: “Has that ever happened to you?”