

Setting a context

M. Martha Lengeling



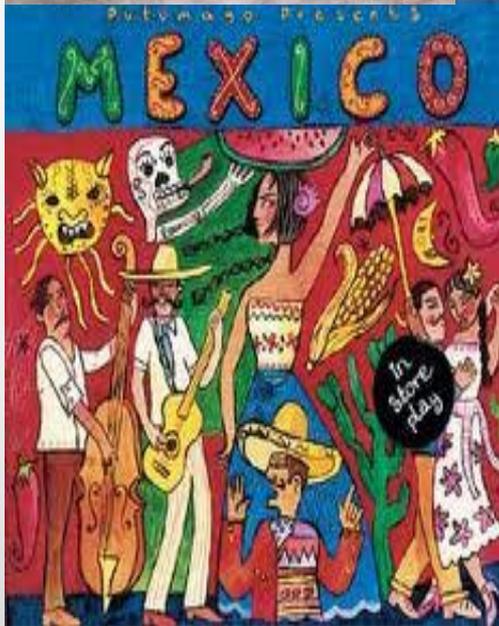
**WHAT COMES TO
YOUR MIND WHEN
YOU THINK OF
MEXICO?**

MEXICO

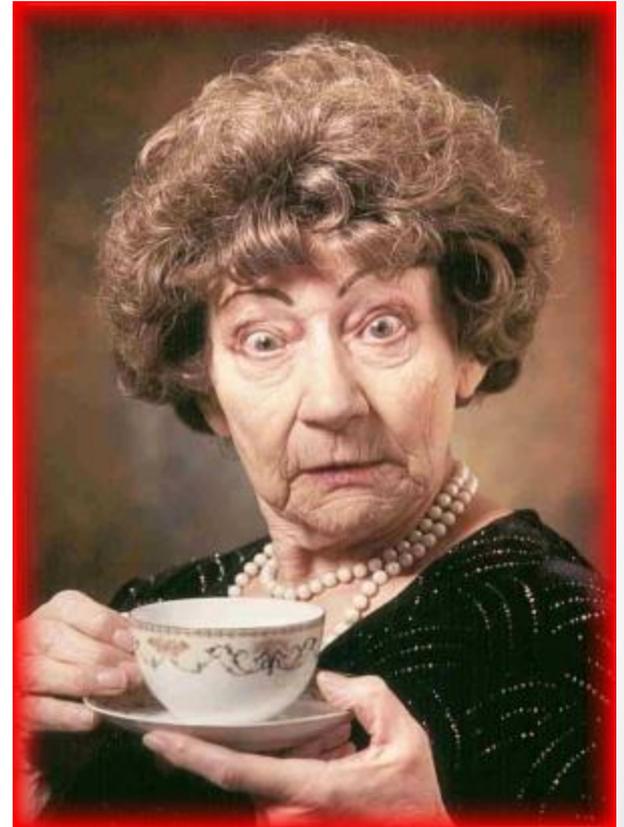




Quetzalcoatl



What is she doing?



She is having a cup of tea.

Yet, when do we really use the present progressive?



**The phone rings and the person
on the other side says:**



**What is
Gladis
doing?
Where
is she?**

PRESENT PROGRESSIVE

She is having a cup of tea in the kitchen.

Or you might use the present progressive in a TV commercial: I am putting in two cups of chiles and I am mixing it with some cheese to make tacos.



Characteristics for setting a context:

- Shows what the language means and how it is used. Many contexts use examples of the language (dialogues or a written text).
- Interesting for the students. Do they want to hear or see the information?
- Provide the background for a lot of language use (model sentences and even for the sts' own use of the language). (Harmer, 1991, 57-58)

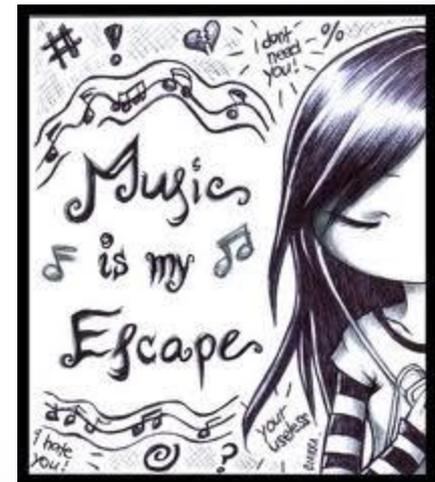
Context means the situation or body of information which causes language to be used. Harmer focuses (1991) on three: the students' world, the outside world, and formulated information.

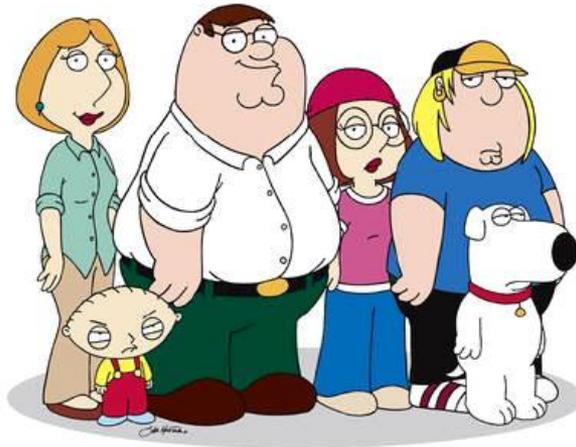
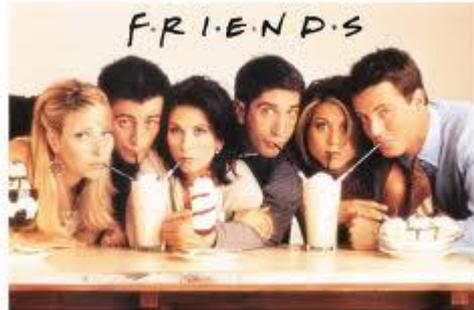
STUDENTS' WORLD

Students' world: **physical surroundings** (the classroom, school, or institution) and **students' lives** (likes, dislikes, families, friends, experiences, opinions, etc.).

The students' world







Family

Children

Parents

Extended Family

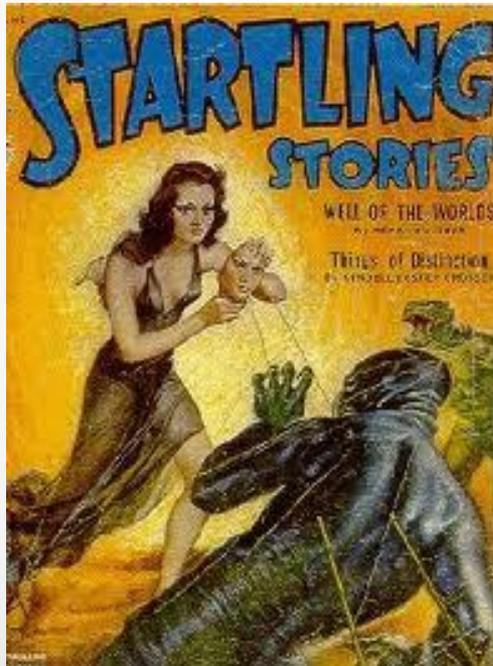


OUTSIDE WORLD

Outside world: stories, situations where language is used, functions of language, examples of language (language in operation, yet sometimes a context is not used).

Language can be stimulated (made up) or real.





Tall stories



<http://www.bingocardcreator.com/pdf/movies-based-on-true-stories-2.pdf>

True life stories of the teacher

A funny thing happened to me on my way to school today.....

You would not believe what happened to me this weekend.....

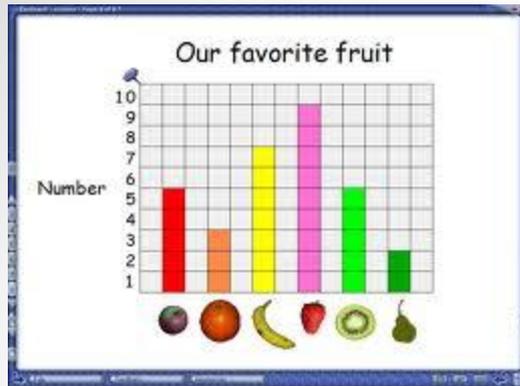
Did I tell you how I met my husband?

Any others?



FORMULATED INFORMATION

All the information which is presented in the forms of timetables, notes, charts, etc.



Social Graphs:

The pattern of social relationships between peo



QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Name: _____ 2. Age: _____
 3. Occupation: _____ 4. Married: YES NO

5. Brothers:

name	age	married	occupation	lives in:

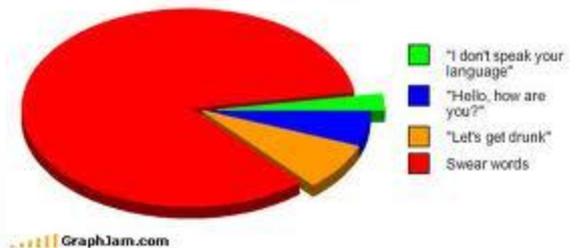
6. Sisters:

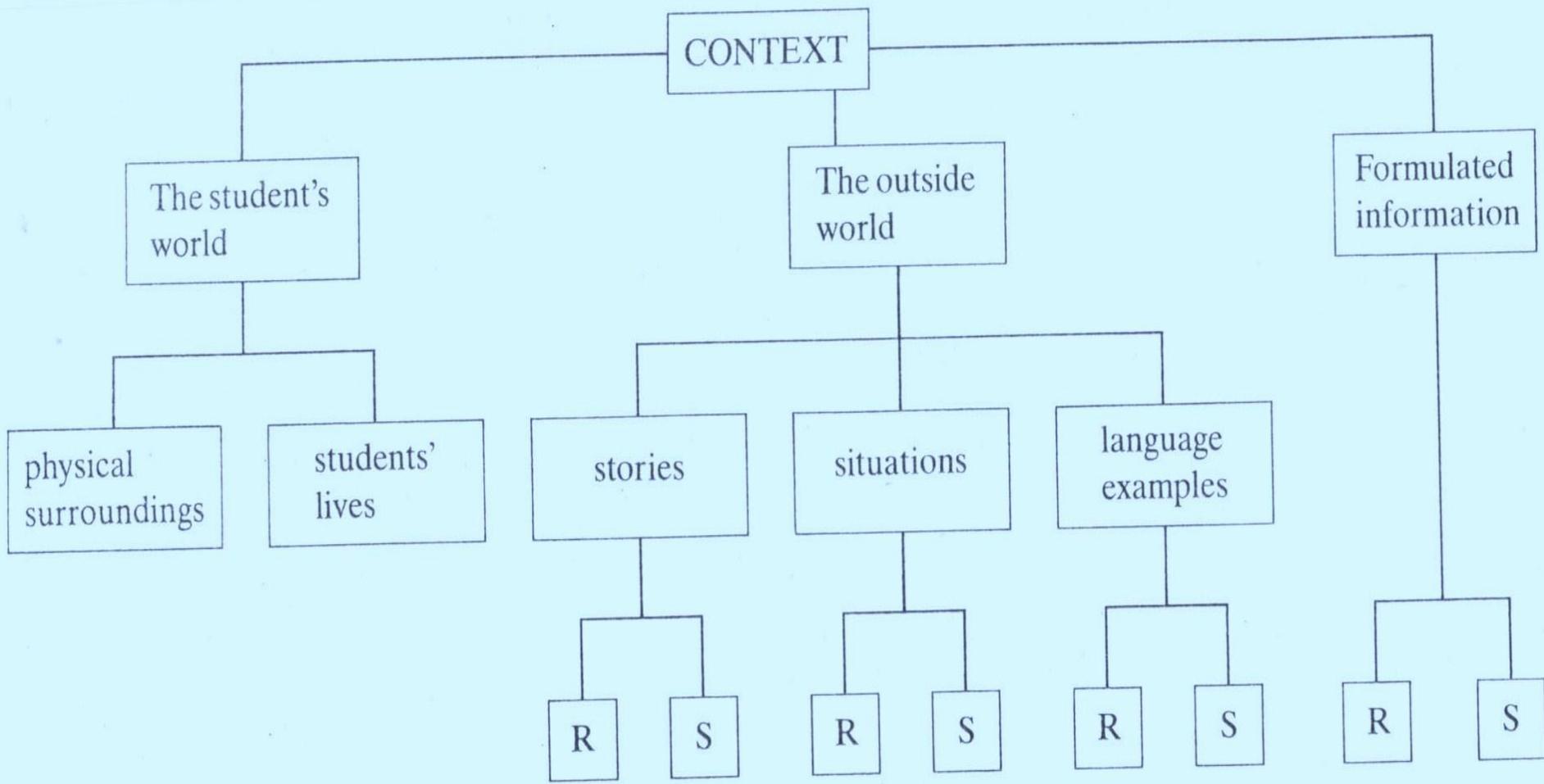
Departing from Cirkewwa

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
	MIA	MIA	MIA	MIA	MIA	MIA	MIA
Trip No							
1	04:15	04:15	04:15	04:15	04:15	04:15	04:15
2	05:30	05:30		05:30	05:30		05:30
3	06:30		06:30	06:30	06:30	06:30	06:30
4		07:15					
5		08:45	08:45				
6	09:30	09:30	09:30	09:30	09:30	09:30	09:30
7	12:30	12:30			12:30	12:30	12:30
8	13:25		13:25	13:35	13:25	13:15	13:15
9	14:45	14:00	14:15	14:45	14:45	14:45	
10						15:30	
11							17:00
12				18:45	18:45		



First words you learn in a foreign language





[R = real/S = simulated]

Figure 9 Contexts for introducing new language

“The context we choose will depend on the type of language being introduced. If we are creating our own contexts, we will have to decide what is right for our students. Will they find that an invented story is not motivating enough? Would they rather have some real information in chart form to play around with? Perhaps our students are in the right mood for a light-hearted simulated situation, however. It is difficult to generalise, and teachers should be sensitive to the varying degrees of motivation that different contexts provide.” (Harmer, 1991, p. 58)

Other tools to help set a context

- Drawings
- Photographs
- Close your eyes and imagine
- Cut outs
- Asking questions
- Use the grammar structure in the context (model it)

A little mental exercises:

What comes to you mind when
I say the following words?

animals

pyramids

mummies

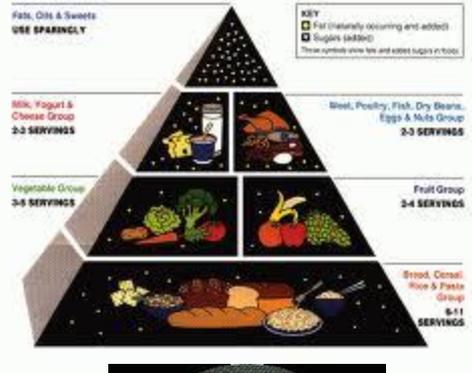
Animals



Martha's cat: Ricki McFluff and her mother's significant other (Louie)

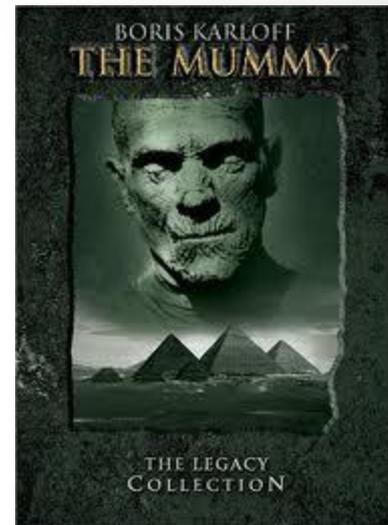


pyramids





Mummies



Mummy discovery
1,300-year-old mummy found in Peru

Wari culture
Predates the Incas,
thrived 700 - 1000 AD

Extent of Wari
kingdom
around 800 AD

PERU

BRAZIL

COLOMBIA

PACIFIC OCEAN

LIMA

LAKE TITICACA

Discovery at
a site in the
suburbs of city

- Carved funeral mask discovered with the mummy in Wari tomb
- Masks common in mummies of noble women

Source: National Geographic

2/7/08 AFP

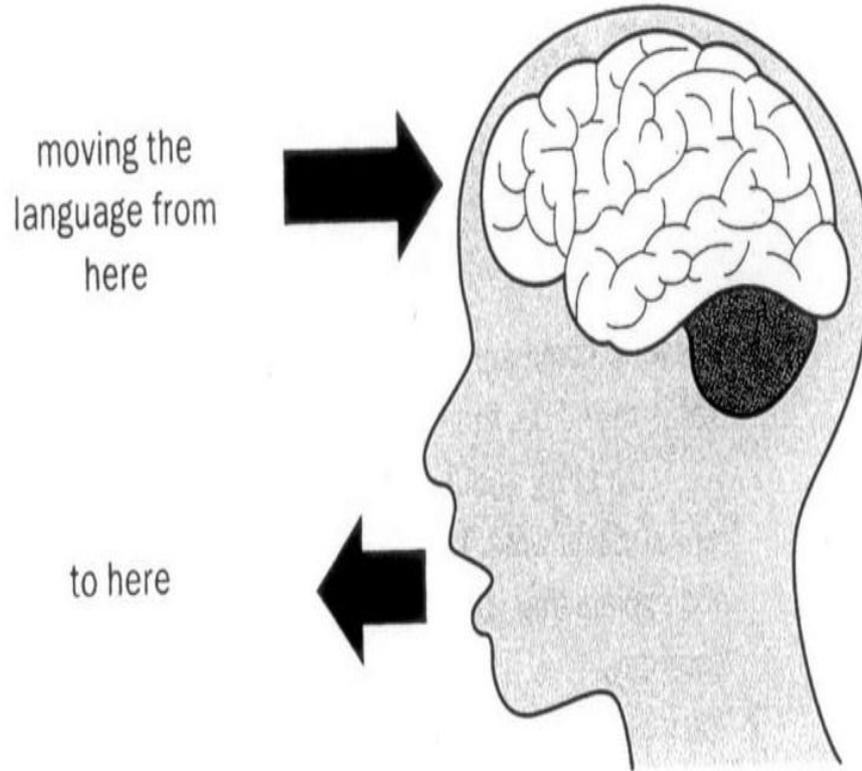


Gingerbread Mummies

Mummies in Guanajuato



Making language more memorable



Can you come up with other uses of how to get across a context when teaching?



Brainstorming of contexts

- Used to
- Second conditional
- Third conditional
- Reported speech
- Embedded speech (Could you tell me....?; I do not know.....)
- Giving directions
- Comparative and superlative

- Harmer, J. (1991). *The Practice of English Language Teaching*. Harlow: Longman.

To learn a language item, learners need to:	It follows that, in class, you probably need to:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be exposed to a lot of language while reading / listening. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • include lots of reading and listening activities. These should include realistic texts a little above the apparent current language level of learners so that learners are exposed to a lot of comprehensible new language (see Chapter 10).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • notice specific items when they are being used, in texts (eg in stories, in conversations). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • provide texts, exercises and techniques that help learners notice specific items. Texts specifically written for learners (eg containing multiple examples of a target item) may be particularly useful (see Section 3 of this chapter).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand the form, meaning and use of an item. Form refers to how the pieces fit together, the endings, etc. Use refers to the typical situations, conversations, contexts in which it might be used. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be informed about form, meaning and use of language (see Chapter 5, Sections 2 and 4). • focus learners' attention on meaning and use by means of exercises, explanations, drills, games, questions, etc (see Section 3 of this chapter).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • try things out in a safe environment with limited other linguistic demands. • have opportunities to practise new language, to 'get their mouths around' new items. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • give many opportunities to practise, speak and write, with encouragement and feedback (see Section 4 of this chapter).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use the new language when speaking and writing to communicate in different contexts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • offer speaking and writing tasks that allow learners to make use of all the language they know (see Chapter 9).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • remember items. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • pay attention to how learners record items; • return to items again and again with revision tasks.