



BREAK A LEG

1. Writing Activity: Narrative Retelling

Practice narrative writing and summarizing skills by retelling the story from a different perspective.

Instructions for Students:

1. Imagine you are one of the stagehands who witnessed Thomas Keane's big night. Write a short narrative (150-200 words) retelling the events of the story from your perspective.
2. Include at least two details from the original story (e.g., the lead actor's fall, Thomas's performance) and add one new detail of your own (e.g., something you saw or felt).
3. Use past tense and include at least one example of reported speech (e.g., "I heard Thomas say...").
4. Share your story with a partner and discuss similarities and differences.

2. Speaking Activity: Role-Play Debate

Develop speaking and persuasive skills by debating the use of superstitions like "Break a Leg."

Instructions for Students:

1. Work in pairs. One student is an actor who believes in theater superstitions like saying "Break a leg" to avoid bad luck. The other is a skeptical director who thinks superstitions are silly and prefers saying "Good luck."
2. Prepare a 3-minute role-play dialogue where you debate the value of superstitions in theater. Use at least two details from the story to support your argument (e.g., the lead actor's fall, the phrase's meaning).
3. Perform your dialogue for another pair or the class. After, vote on who made the stronger case.
4. Suggested phrases: "I think 'Break a leg' is important because..." / "Superstitions don't matter because..."

3. Grammar Activity: Past Tense Transformation

Practice converting present tense sentences to past tense, reinforcing narrative grammar from the story.

Instructions for Students:

1. Below is a short paragraph written in the present tense, imagining a modern actor preparing for a show. Rewrite it in the past tense to match the style of the "Break a Leg" story.
2. Underline the verbs you change. Work individually, then compare answers with a partner.
3. Bonus: Add one sentence at the end using reported speech (e.g., "She said...").

Paragraph to Rewrite:

Lila is nervous before her big performance. She practices her lines backstage and hears the crowd murmur. A stagehand smiles and says, "Break a leg!" Lila hopes the phrase brings her luck. She steps onto the stage and feels the spotlight shine.

Teacher's Key

1. Writing Activity: Narrative Retelling (15-20 minutes)

- **Assessment Criteria:** Check for clear narrative structure (beginning, middle, end), accurate use of past tense, inclusion of reported speech, and integration of story details with one creative addition.
- **Sample Response:**
As a stagehand, I'll never forget that wild night in 1865. I was adjusting props when I heard the lead actor bragging again. "He needs to break a leg," I muttered to my mate, meaning we hoped he'd slip up so Thomas Keane could shine. Sure enough, during the big scene, the lead tripped on a rope I'd warned him about, spraining his ankle. The crowd gasped, and Thomas, wide-eyed, stepped into the lead role. I watched from the wings as he delivered lines with fire, earning roars of applause. Backstage, I told Thomas, "You stole the show!" He just grinned. I felt proud, knowing our cheeky wish had sparked his triumph.

Tips: Provide sentence starters for lower-intermediate students (e.g., "I was working backstage when..."). Encourage peer feedback focusing on creativity and grammar accuracy.

2. Speaking Activity: Role-Play Debate

Develop speaking and persuasive skills by debating the use of superstitions like "Break a Leg."

- **Assessment Criteria:** Evaluate fluency, pronunciation, use of story details, and persuasive language. Ensure both students speak equally.
- **Sample Dialogue** (abridged):
Actor: We must say "Break a leg"! It's tradition. Remember Thomas Keane? The stagehands said it, and when the lead fell, Thomas got his chance!
Director: That's just a coincidence! Saying "Good luck" is clearer. Thomas succeeded because he was talented, not because of some phrase.
Actor: But superstitions keep us focused. The story proves it—saying "Break a leg" brought good fortune without jinxing the show!
Director: Talent, not words, makes a performance. Let's focus on skill, not old sayings.

Tips: Model a short dialogue to demonstrate tone and structure. For shy students, allow practice in small groups before performing.

3. Grammar Activity: Past Tense Transformation

- **Corrected Paragraph:**
Lila *was* nervous before her big performance. She *practiced* her lines backstage and *heard* the crowd *murmur*. A stagehand *smiled* and *said*, "Break a leg!" Lila *hoped* the phrase *brought* her luck. She *stepped* onto the stage and *felt* the spotlight *shine*. She *told* me later, "I felt unstoppable that night."
- **Assessment Criteria:** Check for correct past tense forms (regular and irregular verbs), underlined verbs, and proper use of reported speech in the bonus sentence. Common errors may include forgetting irregular verbs (e.g., "bring" → "brought") or incorrect reported speech structure.
- **Common Irregular Verbs for Reference:** is → was, hear → heard, say → said, bring → brought, feel → felt, shine → shone.

Tips: Provide a list of irregular verbs for support. For advanced students, ask them to add a second reported speech sentence.