



Authoring Suite modules: _____ Storyboard



Storyboard has proved to be one of the most popular and useful CALL programs ever devised. It is based on a simple principle: a short text is entirely obliterated on screen, each letter of each word being replaced by a 'blob', leaving only the title, punctuation and spacing intact. The learner is invited to restore it by guessing single words. When a word is found, it is printed in place wherever it occurs in the text. If they're stuck, learners can ask for various levels of help, including individual letters, whole words and even the complete text, and they can also try affixes like *un-* and *-ing*. Certain words may have hints attached to them (these appear as rounded "blobs") which solvers can look at, and the teacher may also have decided that students cannot reasonably be expected to guess certain words and has "given" these. Words can also have pictures or sound clips attached to them. At the end learners can see a breakdown of their performance which includes the number of right and wrong guesses, help features used, and also hints asked for, and a simple score.

Storyboard is a program that can be used with any kind of text: course material, newspaper articles, business letters, stories, poems and songs. Although these can be solved 'cold', the program is best used when it is part of wider classroom strategy. Here are a few possibilities for language learners:

- They are given a picture story, which they 'solve' on screen.
- They read an article, then reconstruct a summary on screen.
- They read/hear a report about e.g. an argument or a meeting, and try to reconstruct the actual words spoken in dialogue form.
- They solve a known news story as told in a particular style by a particular newspaper.
- They reconstruct the original of a story or poem from a translation.
- They write their own stories, reports, jokes, descriptions, letters, etc., for other learners to solve.

Writing new *Storyboard* texts and saving them on disk is easy. You use the built-in text editing program to enter the text. Text written with word processors or other Wida authoring programs can also be imported for use in *Storyboard* without time-consuming re-typing.

