

My Alibi

By Alexandra Hicks

- Aim:** To practice past continuous interrupted by another action or by a specific time in a business setting.
Level: Pre-Intermediate
Time: Stage 1 and 2 (45 mins)
Stage 3 Activity (45-60 mins)
Materials: A set of role cards for the class and a summary table for each student.

STAGE ONE - Lead-in

A) Introduce crimes with the following matching task. Match the crimes to their appropriate newspaper headline. You could cut them out and have students rearrange them.

Bank robbery	Employee steals 50 laptops from a delivery van.
Hijacking	House emptied of all but a cat.
Theft	Warehouse goes up in flames.
Kidnapping	Pilot forced to land at an unused air field.
Arson	Woman caught signing cheques in her employer's name.
Burglary	Body found dead in an elevator.
Murder	Three injured in hold up, man escapes with \$2,000,000 in cash.
Forgery	CEO found tied to a container at a loading dock.

- B) Put the crimes in order of seriousness.
C) Discuss stories you have heard relating to any of the above crimes. What happened in each case?

STAGE TWO - Grammar review

A) Hand out pictures of business related activities and have students act out the scene in small groups simultaneously in different areas of the room. Make sure they all have an action.

Eg. Introducing a co-worker, giving a presentation, typing an email etc.

- B) After about 20 seconds turn the lights off and pretend there was a blackout in the office.
C) Turn the lights back on and ask each student what he/she was doing when the blackout occurred. Elicit the question for the target sentence.

"What were you doing when the blackout happened?"

D) Elicit a full sentence from each student.

"I was introducing my co-worker when the blackout happened."

E) Using some of the crimes in stage one, make new sentences.

"I was standing at the ATM when the bank robber ran out the front door."

STAGE THREE - Activity

This activity ideally works with 8 students and a minimum of 6. If you have 6 students, remove the SECRETARY role card and the teacher may have to participate. If you have more than 8 you could pair students up.

Aim: To find out who committed a crime by asking various company employees what they were doing when it happened.

Procedure:

1. Elicit the daily activities of the following jobs: *Accountant, Personnel Manager, Sales Manager, Secretary, Production Controller, Marketing Manager and Managing Director.*
2. Set the scene: Somebody has stolen \$100,000 from the company safe. Draw a picture of an empty safe on the whiteboard and ask what crime may have taken place. Ask students which of the employees from the above list may have done it.
3. Pre-teach the following vocabulary: *company tour, conference call, human resource policies, performance appraisal, accompany, figures, interview, stock, look after, reorder quantities.*
4. Each student will play the role of detective when asking questions and then assume the role of a specific company employee when answering questions. Tell students that the detectives want everyone to recount their day and they have the following information:
 - a) It was someone who works for the company.
 - b) It happened between 11.30 am – 2.00 pm.
5. Hand out the role cards to each student and make sure they understand the language. Then hand out the summary table and elicit the two questions they will have to ask as detectives to find out who did it.

“What do you do?”

“What were you doing at _____ yesterday?”

6. Students mingle asking everyone what they were doing yesterday at each of the four times on their role card. Students must change the verb form.

*“At _____, I **was talking** to the Marketing Manager on the phone.”*

7. Fill in the table with all the information including who they were with. The guilty party will not have a valid alibi at one time during the day.

Follow-up:

Who did it? *Production Controller*

Around what time did the crime take place? *1.00pm*

Ask students individually to recount what they were doing when the crime took place?

“I was giving a presentation when the crime took place.”