

## Dicto-Comp

The so-called 'dicto-comp' is a simple technique for guided compositions. This technique provides an activity intermediate between completely controlled writing exercises and completely free compositions.

The technique itself is quite simple and requires a short text or story. Although we have chosen a story for our exercise, the news articles from the newspaper often serve as a good source for this type of exercise.

Warn the students ahead of time that you will continue reading until you get to the end of the story. Then, read the text aloud once or twice at normal speed. This is, of course, much too fast for them to write down the whole story word-for-word.

Put some of the key vocabulary items and phrases from the story on the blackboard, and ask the students to write the text down from 'memory'. Naturally, they will not be able to remember the story word-for-word, and thus they will have to write much of it down in their own words.

For a weaker group, put the vocabulary and phrases on the board before reading the story.

It is important that the story not be too difficult, nor too long. Our story, for instance, is for advanced students. For beginning students, the whole text might only be five or six lines long.

### It is in the phone book, silly!

I ran into my good friend Jack the other day. He could see that something was bothering me so he asked, "What is the matter with you?"

"Nothing, really! Well, actually, I am still upset about something foolish that happened at Hank and Sally's party," he confessed.

"What happened?" Jack asked. "You usually don't get upset very easily."

"Well, you know how shy I usually am. At that party, I met the most wonderful girl. I didn't feel at all shy and we were having a marvelous time talking to each other."

"So, what's the problem with that?" Jack asked, obviously a little puzzled. "It sounds like she is very nice! What is her name?"

"That is the whole problem," he answered. "I don't even know her name!"

"What? Why not?" Jack said, surprised.

"Well, we were having a wonderful time talking, when all of a sudden, she looked at her watch and realized that she had to get home. So, I asked if I could see her again and she said that she would like that very much.

Well, just as she started to leave, I realized that I didn't know what her name was, or where she lived, or what her phone number was.

So I asked her if I could call her and when she said yes, I asked her what her phone number was.

As she got up to leave, she answered, 'It is in the phone book.'

I felt embarrassed and said, 'Of course! How foolish of me! What is your name?'

As she reached the door, she answered, 'Don't be silly! It is in the phone book, too!' And, just like that, she smiled and was gone.