

KidsTell It Write!

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Storyteller / Teaching Artist

Writing is storytelling on paper.

Storytelling – through example, modeling, and practice – yields enthusiastic story writers.

Human Chain Retell:

- Beginning Middle End
- Add the Details! Details! Details!

Pocket Stories Grades K-2

Tell a folktale, fairytale or fable. Let kids retell orally (whole group). Fold paper into six squares. Kids draw the story in six scenes. Refold paper, put in pocket, take home to point and tell to someone there.

The Folk Tale Model Grades 1-2

Use a familiar folktale as your jumping off point. Change setting, characters, and /or problem. Keep the basic story structure, inserting your new details, adjusting other story details to make sense, and see what you get! (After a rainforest unit in first grade, the kids put their rainforest animal into the story of the 3 Billy Goats Gruff, changed all necessary details based on setting, predator, prey, food, etc, and came up with an awesome story.)

Stool Story

Once upon a time there was a boy. ‘W’ questions bring out the details.

The Importance of Vivid Details

(with thanks to Judy Sima, Kevin Cordi – *Raising Voices*)

- Can you draw what I see?

One Minute Stories

- Find a partner. Decide who will be the storyteller and who will be the listener.
- Storyteller, you get one minute to tell your partner about _____. Don't stop talking – tell your story, non-stop, for 60 seconds.
- Switch – storyteller is now the listener.

(Options: Most important thing, person, place / Embarrassing moment / Mistake / Moving to a new house / How you got a scar / An accident / Worst vacation / A time in the hospital / Secret hiding place / A time you got in big trouble / A bad haircut / A time you were scared / Caught in a lie / Time you got lost / A moment of bravery / A surprise party / A cooking disaster / Day you got your pet / When you learned to: ride a bike, skate, etc.)

Shared – Oral – Brainstorming and Storytelling (with thanks to Tom McCabe)

*Ideas

- Topic/Purpose – Who Cares? Do You?
- Large group brainstorm: Character – Setting – Problem
- Write about what you know about. Rules:
K.I.S.R. = Keep It Simple and Real / D.G.C. = Don't Go Crazy

*Organization

- Making choices
- The power of 3: Beginning – Middle – End
- The power of 3: Details
- Bring out the details with the 'W' questions

Oral/Partner Telling

*Voice – *Word Choice – *Sentence Fluency

- Tell it to a partner; ask for comments and 'W' questions; think about your partner's responses. What does your partner like about your story? Is your partner confused about anything?

*Conventions are Spoken

- Gimme 5! – Can we see it? Hear it? Touch it? Taste it? Smell it?
- How are the characters feeling? D.B.B. = Don't Be Boring! Find another word for good, bad, happy sad, mad, afraid.
- **He/She Said What??** Add Dialogue: What are your characters saying? Choose one character and add dialogue to the story.
- Find a new partner and tell your story again.
- Experiment with strong, interesting beginning sentences – the 'Lean In' factor.
- Experiment with strong endings that wrap it all up (HEA is quite popular in folktales).

The Story Writer's Chant

Who's in the story?

What's the problem?

> (X2)

How they gonna deal with it?

What happens in the end?

We will, we will write it – write it! (X2)

Show vs Tell I

Show the character by:

- What he has
- What he thinks/says
- What he does

Activity: Brainstorm a list of characters they see in their lives.

- Mom
- Dad
- Old man
- Old woman
- Police officer
- Bus Driver
- Baby
- Crossing Guard
- Soldier
- Fire fighter
- Teacher
- Soccer Coach
- Lunch Lady
- Football Coach
- Ice Skater

Challenge: Choose one of the characters above. Brainstorm with a partner or small group what he/she has / thinks, says / does. Create one sentence that SHOWS who you're talking about but never use noun. Rest of group guesses who you are talking about.

Show vs Tell II

Show emotion by:

- What he has
- What he thinks/says
- What he does

Activity: Brainstorm a list of emotions they see in their lives.

Challenge: Choose one of the emotions listed. Brainstorm with a partner or small group what someone experiencing that emotion has / thinks, says / does. Create one sentence that SHOWS the emotion you're talking about but never use word. Rest of group guesses which emotion you are talking about.

ABC Brainstorm

List the letters A thru Z. Choose meaningful nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, or emotions that tell your subject's story.

Lights! Camera! Action! I

Activity: Emotion – Dramatize – Freeze – Spectators use words to describe action depicted.

“My sister has read hair.”

- Heartbroken / Angry / Surprised

“Last night for dinner I had green beans.”

- Tired / Confused / Boasting / Relieved

Lights! Camera! Action! II

- **Show Action:** Brainstorm alternative verbs and adverbs. Choose student actors to depict new meaning based on new word choice.
They walked into the room. > They burst into the room.
She sat on her chair. > She sulked on her chair.

Lights! Camera! Action! III

- **Dramatic Reenactment**

Folk/Fairy Tale Scenes: (provide a short scene from a familiar tale)

- Choose 1 or 2 actor students; they take place at front and freeze
- Spectator kids use words to ‘write them in’
- Actor students dramatize only what is said

One Obstacle Story (with thanks to Michael Parent)

In three sentences, tell a story that contains these elements:

A. I wanted to (do something).

B. But (the obstacle).

C. So I (the action taken to achieve *A).

- Partner – ask a question / ask another question
- Tell again with new details
- Switch – partner tells and you ask questions

The Details in the Middle

Group story:

“Once upon a time there was a queen.”

“Whew, they never went swimming again.”

Story Cinquain

1 main character

2 words to describe character (adjectives)

3 words to describe problem

4 words to describe actions (verbs) or emotions in story

5 words to describe how the problem is solved

Poster Stories

Alliteration

Announcement

Letter

Caption

Dialogue or Thought Bubble

Diary

Exaggeration (Hyperbole)

Excuse

List – worries, etc

News article

Cinquain

Simile – like/as

Metaphor (suggests a likeness or analogy: fire is a dragon)

10 Question Poem Grades 6+

- Close your eyes. Imagine a time, event, person, place – a memory that always seems to bubble to the surface. Take your time. When you're ready, write one word answers to the following questions:

Where are you? When is it? Who is there? What are you doing? Why are you doing that? What do you see? What do you hear? What do you feel? What do you smell? What do you taste? Where are you?

- Share your 11 word story with a partner.

First Line Grades 5+

Students form groups of four. Each group chooses (or is assigned) a first line. Groups brainstorm a four sentence story that follows the first line. Use the Story Writer's Chant (see above) to guide this short story.

First line suggestions:

- We were racing across the lake and, just like that, we stopped.
- We were nearly to the top of the mountain and, just like that, we stopped.
- We were deep inside of the cave and, just like that, we stopped.
- We'd been hiking in for forest for hours and, just like that, we stopped.

- We were in the middle of the desert and, just like that, we stopped.
- We were walking to our table in the restaurant and, just like that, we stopped.

Students orally perform their story for the large group.

Once story has been presented, add challenges – send students back to their group to tell again with various challenges included:

- Include at least two of the senses
- Include dialogue
- Elaborate with details – setting, character description, problem, solution, etc.
- Show, don't tell – replace plain words (ex. angry) with interesting details
- Re-craft first sentence to follow the formula: Character – Setting – Action

Last Line Grades 6+

This is just a little harder than the previous exercise. Follow directions from **First Line** activity, only this time students are given the last line of the story. Their group creates the four sentence story that precedes it. After first presentation, add challenges.

Last line suggestions:

- And there was the bottom of my swimming suit stuck on the top of the water slide.
- After all we'd been through together, I couldn't take that scruffy cat to the pound.
- I'm pretty sure they'll never ask me to sing in the church choir again.
- He's never talked to me again and I don't blame him.
- That's the day I decided I would never go exploring alone.
- Maybe cockroaches with ice cream aren't so bad after all.

Telling Your "Once Upon a Time" Grades 6-12

Once upon a time there was a _____ (name / noun) _____.

She / He / It / They lived _____ (place / setting) _____.

One day _____ (problem) _____.

She / He / It / They _____ (reaction) _____.

And then _____ (outcome / resolution) _____.

Expository Writing:

Hamburger with the Works

A model to follow when writing expository text.

- bun = introductory paragraph / lead
- lettuce = 1st paragraph
- ketchup = transition
- tomato = 2nd paragraph
- mustard = transition
- burger = 3rd paragraph
- bun = conclusion paragraph (note: just as the top bun and bottom bun do not look alike, neither is the concluding paragraph a mirror image of the 1st)

I Was Framed!

Use a picture frame to add a visual to the concept of narrowing your focus.

F*3*E Grades 3+

- Focus + Facts + Feelings = 3
- 3 paragraphs
- 3 details in each paragraph
- 3 turned sideways = E
- E = Elaboration; Details need elaboration
- 3 = 'W' = brainstorm with the 'W' questions to bring out the details

2 Chairs React

An activity designed to give student writers a visual for what a good lead is supposed to do – cause your readers to lean in, get excited, hook 'em, grab 'em or otherwise be curious about what happens next.

- two chairs
- student actors
- actors dramatize scenarios – each scenario starts the same, but ...
the 1st transitions to a boring end – 1st chair reacts
2nd scenario transitions to an exciting/interesting/awesome end – 2nd chair reacts

My Favorite Resources:

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