

“Imagination is more important than knowledge. For knowledge is limited to all we now know and understand, while imagination embraces the entire world, and all there ever will be to know and understand.” — Albert Einstein

- How do I use storytelling in the classroom?

Storytelling is woven through much of the school days' activities.
Several specific activities stand out:

1. Neighborhood stories are created and updated constantly. The students keep all of their drafts and updates in their writing notebook for reference. We will occasionally have a class telling time for new stories. Students are constantly reading and observing and journaling for “story scraps”.

2. Recitation: is a year-long, ongoing, weekly activity. The students begin the year with a teacher selection of **nursery rhymes or short poetry**, from which they choose, memorize and recite for the class. They choose a new poem to memorize and recite each week. When every student has recited 3-4 times, we move on to **fables**. www.aesopfables.com becomes an extremely popular website. The fables must be learned, but **not** memorized. These take longer to get through, so each student can only tell their fable every other week. Next we move on to **Tall Tales, Myths and Legends**, which again are learned but not memorized. We finish out the year with **student created tales**, either new neighborhood stories, personal narratives, creative Tall Tales, and occasionally, fantasy.

3. I use stories to **introduce new topics/concepts** in social studies, science, sometimes even in math.

4. Students are cross-grade **tutors** in reading and math. The classes correspond pen-pal style.

5. We are constantly telling/writing for the Young Authors night, **making books** (blank books), and every **field work or special program** is always capped with a **report** in illustrated booklet style. (Show: 8 page booklet)

6. I **read aloud** after lunch every day. I choose books and stories that the students might not pick up on their own. When I have a class set of books, the students follow along while I read. (Teacher models fluency)

7. Student tellers preparing for the Festival **practice** on the class 5 or 6 times, as well as being invited into the Kindergarten classes to practice.

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8. To escape information overload and test anxiety. Telling stories before tests calms, refocuses, and redirects the brain into familiar pathways. **Q.** Where do they go when they daydream? **A.** Into a safe place, a refuge of their own creation. Go there with them, they will go easily and comfortably. **CAUTION,** children may not feel safe at first going there with a grown-up.

9. Once Upon a Wednesday. Weekly gathering 3,4,5th grades. Teach and Sing Folk Songs (genre). Year-long course in Nursery Rhymes, Mother Goose, Fables, Fairy Tales, World Folk Tales, Myths and Legends, Personal or Historical stories

Applications across the Curriculum

Math: **Tell** "Mr. and Mrs. Meter"

Science: **Sing** "Water travels in a Cycle" "3 kinds of Rocks Create the Surface"

Writing: Compose, Compare selections by same author (series), Author's purpose, Non-fiction narrative (reports, true events), Structure/Organization (premise/support, get to the point, conclusion), Descriptive language (idioms, dialect), Public Speaking skills (presentation), Poetry, etc not just once, but ongoing, year long

Tell: "Gecko" Same story, different levels
Elementary, food web
Middle, interdependence, civic responsibility
High, ethics of environmental activism

Mostly English Language Arts, (4 strands: Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking)
Storytelling addresses ALL of these strands.

Reading to find stories that appeal to you and exploring cultures.

Writing as stories are created and structured, written and revised and elaborated.

Listening for style and structure, and pleasure.

Speaking in public with skill and intention.

Tech use. It's in the Core!!

Basic Storytelling Skills

1. **Voice(s)** sound effects, pauses, clarity, emotion, character voicing, microphone use
(*I can't pay the rent) **option:** (**Play** emotion cards) groups of 3-4 use a card pack of various emotions to show with face, voice, body (**option:** Call one group to present their interpretations)

2. **Body language** (vital) 90% of communication is non-verbal, gestures, facial, appropriate uses (avoid over acting/under using) *"**My brother had a problem...**"
option: (**Play:** Action cards) groups of 3-4 use a card pack of various actions to show

3. **Eye contact** presence, confidence, inclusion, personal attention

(**Play:** "You" in a circle)

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4. **Visualize** know your story walk around in it set storyline benchmarks add details to descriptions (**Image Riding**) build the bridge half-way

5. **Audience participation** (sparingly) to invite the audience to be a part of the story, songs, repeated lines, cheer/boo/hiss, (*No! Don't do it!) (*I can't pay the rent) **Fe-Fi-Fo-Fum.....**

6. **Match the story to the audience** age (young, older), gender, setting (outdoors, gym, home, school, special interest group), purpose (training, entertaining, fund raising) *(**Women's Solstice, strong women, astrology**)

7. **Style** music, props (careful), costumes, chataqua (1st person),*puppets (aggression, never argue)

8. **Learning a story** dominant learning modality visual? auditory? kinesthetic? the bones, storyboard, visualize, read multiple times silent and aloud, bookmark the pathways (**Show**: basic Fairytale structure, use the Normal, Trouble, Help, New Normal cycle)

9. **Presence** confidence (preparation) own the space, you are giving a gift

1. **Voice**: follow the story, differentiate characters (attributes), empathy

2. **Body Language**: extra communication, silent telling, (pantomime)

3. **Eye contact**: inclusion, personal attention, (Maslow's Basic Needs)

4. **Visualize**: notice ALL the details, and only use SOME. Build the bridge half-way, audience fills in their own details. It is now their own experience.

5. **Audience participation**: skin in the game, being needed, team work (Maslow's Basic Needs)

6. **Match the story**: ease of entrance, comfort level with content, relax

7,8,9 are for the teller. Preparation and attitude

Finding Stories: Most will be retold stories. Avoid over used tales, Disney versions, Dr. Seuss, the latest Scholastic pick, and published storybooks. Best bet: explore old, old, untold Folk or Fairy Tales, go for the uncommon, something we haven't heard before.

1. **Read, Read, Read...** widely. 398.2 in the library. Collections, Grimm, Andersen, Aesop, B.A.Botkin, Fox Fire, history.....

2. **Remember...** you have experiences to share.

3. **Listen...** to other storytellers, the news, conversations all around you, you've heard Grandpas, Uncles and Aunts tell about their lives.

4. **Look...** be an observer of the human condition.

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How to get the students telling/writing:

1. **YOU** tell stories. They will love it and want to try it. Encourage them to try it. Show other storyteller videos. Bring in a storyteller. (**Play:** "Change one Thing")
2. Use deliberate strategies in your teaching. Read to the class every day. Write non-fiction narrative (personal stories) not just reports. Practice spelling by using all the spelling words for the week in a short story. Have them interview an older relative, and write it up. (or bring them in to tell their story!)

Cooperative Writing Process, the Neighborhood Story

Parameters: event must be true, you participated or saw the events, any neighborhood you have lived in

Teacher model first (do one yourself to model)

Writing process: Prewrite....draw a Neighborhood map, 1 minute each to tell their story with a partner, then each tells partner's story to the class

Draft...write your own story, the one you just told (just write **all** the words you just said)

Revise...tell around, get peer feedback, use adjectives, rewrite

Illustrations (Art connection) sketch preliminary storyboard

Edit... spelling, usage, grammar

Publish... make the books, read at Young Authors Night, donate to the library

Ask several participants to share their stories on the projector

Coaching student tellers: Appreciations, teller self evaluation, 2 (max!) suggestions, practice.

Most common suggestions:

1. Fiddling vs Gestures
2. Dead pan vs Eyebrows UP
3. Mistake recovery
4. Over acting

Submissions: most any camera will do. Upload in your favorite format, Drop Box, Google Docs, or other, ...send LINK. WSU tech will be formatting submissions for web use.

1. Permission for WSU to publish online (Legal is working on permission form)
2. First name ONLY. No identifiable info
3. Any video recording format except MOV.
4. One whole take without editing
5. Blank background
6. Standing, with no microphone
7. 5 minute limit

Improv and games: You, Greeting circle, This is Not, Change one Thing, 15 seconds, What's my Connection, Ed Stivender's Format,

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Let's Look at CCSS:

State Core Standards, Utah, ELA

<http://www.uen.org/core/languagearts/>

Sample of 3rd grade ELA CCSS met through storytelling

English Language Arts Grade 3

Reading: Literature Standard 2

Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message, lesson, or moral and explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text.

Reading: Literature Standard 3

Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and **explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.**

Reading: Literature Standard 4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, **distinguishing literal from nonliteral language.**

Reading: Literature Standard 5

Refer to parts of stories, dramas, and poems when writing or speaking about a text, using terms such as *chapter*, *scene*, and *stanza*; describe **how each successive part builds on earlier sections.**

Reading: Literature Standard 6

Distinguish their own **point of view** from that of the narrator or those of the characters

Reading: Literature Standard 9

Compare and contrast the themes, settings, and plots of stories written by the **same author** about the same or **similar characters** (e.g., in books from a series).

(Can we say Aesop's Fables, Lemony Snickett, FableHaven ?)

Reading: Foundational Skills Standard 4

Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension

- a. Read grade-level text with purpose and understanding.
- b. Read grade-level prose and poetry **orally** with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression. (DIBELS is an ORAL reading test)

Writing Standard 3

Write narratives to **develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.**

a. **Establish a situation** and introduce a narrator and/or **characters**; organize an event **sequence that unfolds naturally**.

b. Use dialogue and **descriptions** of actions, thoughts, and feelings to **develop experiences and events or show the response of characters to situations**.

Writing Standard 8

Recall information from **experiences** or gather information from print

Speaking and Listening Standard 1

b. Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (**audience manners**)

Speaking and Listening Standard 2

Determine the main ideas and supporting details of a text **read aloud**

Speaking and Listening Standard 4

Report on a topic or text, **tell a story, or recount an experience** with appropriate facts and relevant, **descriptive details, speaking clearly** at an understandable pace.

Language Standard 3

Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, **speaking**, reading, or **listening**

a. Choose **words and phrases for effect**.*

b. Recognize and observe differences between the conventions of **spoken** and written standard English.

Language Standard 5

Demonstrate understanding of word relationships and **nuances in word meanings**.

a. Distinguish the literal and **nonliteral meanings** of words and phrases in context (e.g., *take steps*).

c. Distinguish **shades of meaning** among related words that describe states of mind or degrees of certainty (e.g., *knew, believed, suspected, heard, wondered*).

SELECTED RESOURCES

Children Tell Stories, Teaching and Using Storytelling in the Classroom,
Martha Hamilton and Mitch Weiss (2005)
<http://www.beautyandthebeaststorytellers.com/>

The Power of Story, Teaching Through Storytelling,
Rives Collins and Pamela J. Cooper (1997)

The Storytelling Classroom, Applications Across the Curriculum,
Sherry Norfolk, Jane Stenson, and Diane Williams (2006)
<http://www.sherrynorfolk.com/>

A Beginner's Guide to Storytelling,
National Storytelling Press, NSN (2003)

Improving Your Storytelling, Beyond the Basics for all who tell Stories in Work or Play,
Doug Lipman (1999)

The Power of Personal Storytelling, Spinning Tales to Connect with Others,
Jack Maguire (1998)

The Storyteller's Guide
David Holt and Bill Mooney (1996)

The Storyteller's Start-Up Book,
Margaret Read MacDonald (1993)

The Call of Story,
A production of KBYU-TV (2002) (DVD or VHS)

Make it, Tell it, Write it,
Donald Davis (2012) DVD, Timpanogos Storytelling Institute and the City of Orem

WEBSITES

<http://community.weber.edu/storytelling/application/AuditionInformation.htm>
Information about the Weber State University Storytelling Festival, audition info,
application

www.kbstoryteller.webs.com
My home page. Look through the list on the right side, especially the "links" for
story sources

Find local storytellers at: www.utahstorytelling.org Search the Directory

Find the National Storytelling Network at: <http://www.storynet.org/>

<http://www.timsheppard.co.uk/story/>
Literally, the largest site on storytelling on the internet, SUPERB

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