

Ways of Using Your *StoryTent*

Storytelling

Bags of Story Props

Put a collection of small objects in to a drawstring bag. The objects can be chosen at random or be linked to a particular theme, going on holiday or shopping, for instance. The bag can also include names of characters from a story that the group are familiar with, or figures who can become characters in the story.



Begin by taking an object out of the bag and using it as the starting point for telling a story. Each person in the group contributes to the story in turn as the bag of story-props is passed around the group.

As the story is told the props can be placed on the floor in a line. When the story is finished children can be asked to re-tell the story/ or part of the story using the props as a visual reminder.



The re-telling described above can be developed into a piece of writing by scribing or asking the children to write down the section of the story that they re-told. The story-prop bags can also be used in the tent by individuals or pairs of children to help structure their own stories.

Sentence Stories

This activity is similar to the story props activity, but without the props.



The teacher or a member of the group begins by telling the group the opening sentence of a story. The next person in the circle must then continue the story by adding the next sentence (which must follow on from the first sentence), each person continues the story by adding a sentence in this way, the last person in the circle must use their sentence to finish the story. This activity can be given more structure by passing around a box of words. Each person must use the word they pick in their sentence. The words can be a mixture or based on a specific theme or part of speech - verbs, adjectives or nouns, for instance.

Sentence Stories continued...

Shared writing:



The teacher writes up the sentences, as the children compose them, onto a white board/flip chart so that a whole group story is created. The story can then be written up and illustrated to create a class book.

Independent/paired writing:

Initially the teacher models a sentence, then using mini white boards - children write down the sentence/sentences they come up with.

Children can also work in pairs to think up their sentence with one child acting as a scribe.

Children can then write up and illustrate their sentences on paper. The pages can be stapled together to create a book or mounted on the wall as a frieze.

NB

Unit 2 of the NLS *Developing Early Writing* document clearly sets out the process of progressing from talk for writing to shared writing and then to independent work. This format is useful for many of the activities listed below.

Fortunately, Unfortunately



Another variation on the two previous activities: sit in a circle, each person in the circle is alternately given the word *fortunately* or *unfortunately* on a piece of card. A member of the group begins by giving the opening sentence of a story, the story then continues around the circle with each person starting their section of the story with either *fortunately* or *unfortunately* depending on which they were originally given like this:

Fortunately.....

Unfortunately.....

Fortunately.....

Unfortunately.....

This activity can be focused around a character from a text that the class/group are familiar with - *Maisy the Mouse* - for instance.



Following the activity children can write the sentences they have come up with by sticking the word-card they have into their book and then writing the sentence they have thought of. For instance:

Unfortunately

Maisy fell over a stone.

Poem Bags

You need:

Laminated words (even numbers of nouns and adjectives)

Two small cloth bags



1. Sort the laminated words into two bags (Bag 1 = nouns, Bag 2 = adjectives)
2. Tell the children that they are going to play a game. The objective is to make a short poem / rhyme using the words chosen from the bags as the title.
3. In pairs or small groups, ask children to select one word from Bag 1. They can stick with this word as their poem title or choose to select an additional word from Bag 2.
4. Explain to the children that they can change the order of their words and make sure they can read their title.
5. Now give the children a set time to discuss their poem. What does the title make them think of? What do the words sound like? How do the words make them feel?
6. Ask children to feed back their ideas so far. Then give them a set time (you could use a timer) to come up with their poem or rhyme.
7. At the end of the session children share their poems and perform them to the class using the tent as a performance area. You may want to open some of the side panels to make a suitable space.
8. Once children have the idea of the game they can start to make their own word bags.


NB

Children could pass the poem around the circle adding to it as they go. Remember that nothing should be written down. They may find it easier to repeat lines and words or work with a rhythm.

We would love to hear some of your poems. Please record or write them for future *StoryTents* users.

Magic Box Stories

Show the group a small box. Ask the children to imagine the contents of the box.

 The group need to clearly describe the object - giving the size, and explain what it is used for. Then use the imagined objects to construct a story around them.



See NLS *Developing Early Writing* document. Unit 8 for Y1 Term 3 - 'The Magic Box', clearly set out making the progression from talk for writing to shared writing and then to independent work.



The poem 'The Magic Box' by Kit Wright (See NLS document listed above)

Story Cards

Design story cards that feature characters, settings and a plot or situation.

 These cards can be used to structure a story told orally by a pair of children.



These story cards are also useful for structuring paired and independent writing, for example:

Story Card 1
Characters: Larry the Lorry and Tina the Train
Setting: At the train station
Plot: Larry thinks that he is faster than Tina.



The stories composed can be exchanged and read by other in pairs or shared with the class

Re-Tellings



Share a text with the group



- a) Children take it in turns to re-tell different sections of the narrative
- b) Re-tell the story from the point of view of a different character



The re-telling of the story described above can then be transferred into a writing plan the teacher which can form the basis of a piece of shared or paired writing.

Prequels and Sequels



- a) Share a text with the group
- b) Thought shower ideas for what might have happened before the story in the text began or after it ended.



Shared writing:

Use the notes made at stage B to elicit sentences from the group and write these on to a white-board or flip chart describing the events that took place before, or after, the story told in the text.

Using Puppets

Puppets can be used to help children with their storytelling and role-play activities.



Children can compose questions that they want to ask a character from a particular story with which the group are familiar. In pairs one child has the puppet and taking on the character from the story answers the question that the other has composed. For example if the character was Rosie from *Rosie's Walk*, a question might be: 'Why did you go for a walk?'



Puppets can be used to re-tell and re-enact stories that have been shared with the group.

Children can also make their own puppets that can be used to tell stories the group have invented themselves or create puppets for stories they are familiar with.

Story Chains

(This activity may be more suitable for older children, or a mixed age group or may need an adult to assist each group)



- 1) Divide the class into four groups and give each group a short story book
- 2) Ask one person from each group to read the story aloud to the others in the group
- 3) Each group now puts the written version of the story away. They must re-tell the bare bones of the story as a group (a talking stick can be useful for this to ensure that one person speaks at a time)



It may be useful for the children to use mini white-boards or a piece of paper to make notes on the key events in the story to help them remember it.

You need to make sure that every person in the group has a clear idea of what happens in the story - (another way of re-capping the events of the story is to do a storyboard to record the main events of the story).



- 4) Give each of the groups' story a number - 1, 2, 3, 4
- 5) Then give each group a letter - A, B, C, D
- 6) Now re-group the children into groups of four so that each group has one child from group A, one from group B, one from group C and one from group D.

Round One

- A tells story 1 to B
- B tells story 2 to A
- C tells story 3 to D
- D tells story 4 to C

Round Two


- B tells story 1 to C
- A tells story 2 to D
- C tells story 3 to B
- D tells story 4 to C

Round Three

- C tells story 1 to D
- D tells story 2 to C
- B tells story 3 to A
- A tells story 4 to B


This activity can be simplified by putting the children in pairs rather than groups. This means that two children from one group tell their story to two children from another group.

Recording Talk

 A tape recorder can be used as a means of recording the speaking and listening activities carried out using the tent. Recordings of talk are a way of sharing the work of a pair or small group of children with the rest of the class. Recordings can also be used for assessment purposes.

Describe...

Tent Panels

 Ask children to describe the images that appear on the tent panels. Focus on adjectives which describe the colour, texture, size, style etc of the images on the tent.



Children can write labels for the different textures they notice on the panels. The labels can then be pinned or stuck on to the panels temporarily.

Children can also write sentences describing the images on the side of the tent. For example: The sequins look shiny. The cloth feels soft. The felt feels warm. etc.

Sections of Cloth

 Use a piece of cloth to begin a storytelling session by asking questions such as:

- To whom do you think this piece of cloth might belong?
- Where do you think this cloth might have been found?
- Do you think this cloth is part of another piece of cloth?
- What do you think this piece of cloth might have been - a dress, a tablecloth, a duvet cover, for example.
- Who do you think made this piece of cloth?
- Where do you think this piece of cloth was made?



- a) Write responses to these questions
- b) Children compose questions they would like to ask about the cloth

Vocabulary Cards

The resource box contains a set of laminated vocabulary cards which cover target language associated with the theme of tent. These cards can be hung onto the buttons on the side panels of the tent.



On one side of the tent there is a line of ten buttons which can act as a sentence maker on which the cards can be hung. The cards provided in the resource box can be supplemented by making other word-cards that could be used to make sentences.



Children can make their own signs to hang on the buttons. The signs could be linked to the theme of the tent or to a text or a piece of work the class are focusing on.

Postcards that have been written and decorated by the children can also be hung on the tent along with photographs and pictures.

Drama Activities

Using the tent as a performance space

The side panels of the tent can be rolled up to create as large or as small a performance space as is necessary. The tent can be used as a Mini theatre/stage for performing:

- Puppet shows
- Performance poetry
- Songs
- Plays and dialogues
- Acting out the story from an original text or a story that they have told, or written themselves.
- The tent can also be used as the scenery for a drama activity, or as an imaginative play area

Working in Role

- Children enact a day in the life (or an aspect of daily life - e.g. having breakfast) of a child from a chosen country.
- The tent is used as the centre of the performance space. Side panels can be removed to allow an audience to see the performance.
- As the children mime the story a narrator tells the story of the day from a position in front of the tent.
- Children can use movement and song to tell their story.

Resources:

For ideas and information on a day in the life of a child in a developing country browse the diaries on www.ontheline.co.uk and www.oxfam.org.uk/coolplanet

Photo packs can provide the information and inspiration for role-play and movement. Look at photo-cards of people at work / at play and agree on a movement which shows this action. String a series of actions to form a day in the life dance.

Working in Role continued...



Writing role-play scripts as a follow up to working in role
Drawing a scene from their role play with speech bubbles



Enact a scene from a story with which the group are familiar

Home-Stay

Tell the children that they are going to visit a relative in your chosen country, for example, Kenya. Children must pack five things they think they will need during the stay and make sure their passport is stamped with the appropriate visa.

Clothes from different parts of the world and for different types of weather can be packed into bags and suitcases to help children imagine what they might need to go to a particular place.



Model a sentence that each child can follow when it's their turn to say what they will bring with them, for example: I'm going to Mexico and I'm going to take a...



Write a list of the things that you will need to bring with you on your trip.

The children travel by imaginary plane to Kenya and are met by their relatives (other children in the group). Before the arrival you should talk to the Kenyan relatives about what their home will be like.

The Kenyan relatives invite the children into their home and act out a day in their home. Where will the guests sleep? Where will they get water to wash? What will be prepared for dinner? Does the family keep any animals? What leisure activities do they engage in?

You may ask older children to play the 'Kenyan' family working in role to present their research on the country and its people and ask younger children to respond to the experience.




You might want to look at photocards, books and videos to help children to understand the contrasting locality.

A Community Debate

Set up as a circle time activity. A child or teacher leads the discussion. Each child is given a role card, e.g. a mother, father, child, elderly person, teacher, nurse (shown in text and pictures, photographs or vocabulary card). All roles are people in the community. The leader then briefs the participants on details they will need to know for the discussion. You may want to use photocards here to show children where they are imagining where they are, the type of environment, housing, schools etc. Begin the discussion with a statement such as - The school is going to be closed down.

Going around the circle children respond in character to why the school should / should not be closed.

 This activity is useful for developing language used for discussion. Cards with suggested ways of expression their opinion can be used to help children structure their sentences. For example: I am a teacher and I don't think the school should be closed because...



Children write down the sentences they have composed using the discussion cards.

Telling Stories



Children act out a traditional story from a chosen country incorporating music and movement.



Involve all children by including narrators and a chorus who sing the songs, in addition to the children playing central characters.

Tableaux

Children are shown a photograph of a scene in a developing country and re-create the scene in tableaux. One child can act as the photographer and positions the other children to make the scene. They then pretend to take the photograph, after which the scene comes to life.



Children can also create tableaux in response to a piece of text, a story, a piece of music or poetry.

You may want children to explore the differences and similarities between the distant location and their own locality. An effective way to do this is to select a number of themes such as education, shopping, food and play and to create tableaux to illustrate these in both contrasting localities. Ask children to explore what they think will be the same and what will be different. This activity needs to be carried out when the children have done some work about life in a distant locality.



Shared or Paired writing

Divide a sheet of paper or white-board in half. On one side write 'What is the same?' and on the other 'What is different?' elicit children's responses and write them down.

This activity can also be done in pairs or individually.

Responding to Performances

After performing in role / creating tableaux children can be encouraged to respond to their performance by taking part in a variety of creative follow up activities:



- In role children telephone a friend in the U.K. and talk about their day thinking about similarities and differences.
- Using a tape recorder make a soundscape of two contrasting localities. What would you hear in an Indian village / in your own town?



- Create a family tree collage showing members of your character's family and the jobs they do.
- Create a map of your character's village / community in 2D or 3D
- Create a travel agent shop in the Home Corner where children can book a holiday to a chosen country. Children can create their own Eco-tourism brochure using digital images of their tableaux and simple labels.
- Respond in role to an interview by a visiting news reporter. What is it like to live in your community? Where do you get your water? How do you travel around? Do you go to school? In Year 2 children can think about where they will find information to answer these questions, e.g. using ICT, information books, writing to agencies and charities.
- Write a daily diary as your character.
- As a class, write down your role-play as a big book script and illustrate it with photographs and drawings using art techniques from a chosen country, e.g. African batik or Indian block print.
- Audience members send a postcard home in response to the performance seen. Their postcard should reveal what they have learnt about the community and environment through the performance.

Music Activities

The StoryTent can act as a creative and focused space for children to develop musical ideas and listening skills.

In small groups children can explore the sounds of instruments from a range of cultures outlined in the supporting resources. The tent can be made into a comfortable listening space where children can hear a range of recorded music from different cultures.

Some ideas for musical activities are:

SOUNDSCAPES

- Ask children to create a soundscape, e.g. building a home in Bangladesh. The sound of trees being cut down and logs fixed together. The sound of mud paste being smoothed onto the surface. Now create a soundscape of a home being built in the U.K. thinking about the sound of machinery, tools and materials. You could use instruments and recorded / invented sounds as well as voices.



This activity can be carried out after looking at a picture of a locality in a non-fiction text.



Shared writing: children think of adjectives that describe the sound of the music

- Create a vocal soundscape of environments. Take a journey from the East End to Bangladesh.

Ask the children to create a soundscape for a story. You could develop and create illustrated cards and diagrams to orchestrate the piece of music.

- Start a chain-song / piece of music, for example by starting a story soundscape. Include this work in progress when you return the StoryTent with an invitation for other schools to add to, and complete, the music.

COMPOSITION

- Create a piece of music to accompany a role-play or dance.



Learn a traditional song, chant or rhyme from a distant locality the class are learning about

INSTRUMENT MAKING

- Ask children to make their own instruments from found materials and to create a piece of music with these. You could use household objects and materials such as cutlery, bricks and wooden beaters, saucepans and dustbins. Children may also want to make instrument chains or mobiles that can be hung inside the tent for an extra sensory dimension.

RECORDING

- Record your music and songs on cassette and add this to resource box with an explanation and comments about your work. This music can then be shared with other schools who borrow the tent.