



Storytelling: Writers' Workshop

Students draw on their understanding of different types of narratives to inspire and enrich their own storytelling. This is one of four storytelling lessons.

Lesson Summary

Overview

This is one of four storytelling lessons. This lesson has students draw on their understanding of different types of narratives to inspire and enrich their own storytelling. It is based on three other lessons that introduce students to narrative traditions and storytelling from Alaska, Hawaii, and other cultures through work with varied narratives, objects, and performance.

Understanding and creating narratives is a fundamental literacy skill—it is also a universal human activity. When students work with written texts, recite or listen to stories, or present narratives through non-verbal means, such as art or dance, they are learning to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate their world. Teachers can build rewarding experiences for students that activate their natural love for and interest in stories. They can do this in a way that expands children's fluency and confidence with language, as well as their respect for the rich diversity of narrative approaches and language use across cultures. As students experience narratives from different cultures, they gain perspectives on people and stories in worlds that may be unfamiliar. This will be valuable to students in many ways, for example by helping them bring a sense of perspective to their own culture and stories.

One theme woven through these four lessons is the diverse nature and form of narratives. All of the narratives presented in these lessons draw on the great range and variety of stories related to cultural resources available to teacher and student alike. Remember that although the term "narrative" is frequently applied to written texts and oral stories, narratives may also be inherent in a painting, a dance, an object, or a historical record.

To check out more storytelling lesson plans, go to:

[Storytelling: Oral Traditions Lesson Plan](#)

[Storytelling: Tales of Everyday Life Lesson Plan](#)

[Storytelling: Performance and Art Lesson Plan](#)

Objectives

- Create original stories; share them with others orally and in writing, employing language arts practices such as pre-writing (gathering and organizing experiences), drafting, revising collaboratively, polishing and presenting work
- Experience stories from a range of cultures and recognize both the commonalities and distinctions in styles and motifs of storytelling
- Begin to identify key aspects of narratives, such as character, setting, action, conflict, and resolution
- Begin to gain understanding of audience, author, and viewpoint in the context of narrative

Grade Level: 4-6

Suggested Time

- One to two class periods

Multimedia Resources

- [Oral Traditions](#) QuickTime Video (optional)
- [The Raven Story](#) QuickTime Video (optional)
- [Maui and the Creation of the Islands](#) QuickTime Video (optional)
- [The Voyage of Kealoha](#) QuickTime Video (optional)
- [The Wreck of the Corinthian](#) Flash Interactive (optional)
- [Art That Tells a Story](#) Flash Interactive (optional)
- [Performing "The Walrus Hunt"](#) QuickTime Video (optional)

Materials

- White board or chart paper

Before the Lesson

- Review all materials carefully. Make adjustments to the lesson as needed to meet your specific goals for your class.

Using Journals

If you will be doing more than one storytelling lesson with your students, it may be helpful to have them use a journal to record their notes and complete their assigned writings. Electronic journals may also be used. When using either printed or electronic journals, integrate the handouts and assignments so that all the written material produced by the students can be kept in one place and be available for reference from one lesson to the next.

The Lesson

Part I: Storytelling Refresher

1. Tell students that they will now begin to work on their own stories. First, they will need to review the elements of good storytelling that they learned about in the other storytelling lesson(s). On a piece of chart paper, write the questions that relate to the storytelling lessons your students completed:

- a. What makes a good story?
- b. How do personal events relate to stories?
- c. How can stories be told with few or no words?

In a large group, discuss the questions to help students refresh their understanding of different types of stories. You might want to refer back to the relevant multimedia resources. Students should also review their worksheets and journal entries from these lessons. You may also want to show the multimedia resources from each lesson again, as needed.

Part II: Writing Your Story

2. Have students begin to work on their stories. They should choose any story ideas that interest them, but their final story will need to include the key elements of good storytelling, such as characters, a problem to solve, a resolution, and a setting. Depending on which storytelling lessons you have already done, you could also encourage students to focus on personal events and/or include components that are told without words or dialogue.

Check for Understanding

After students have worked on their stories for 20-30 minutes, ask them to exchange what they have done with a peer. Ask each student to look at his or her partner's story, sharing observations and questions based on the following list of questions:

1. Does the story have a beginning, middle, and end?
2. Who is the main character?
3. What is the setting?
4. What big events occur?
5. What is the problem to solve?
6. How does the problem get solved?
7. What did I learn from it?
8. What do I still wonder about?

After exchanging feedback with their peers, students should continue to work on their stories. At the end of the day, ask students to continue to complete their stories as homework. Set a deadline for when stories should be completed and handed in. You may choose to read some of the stories aloud. To assess students' progress, ask listeners how

they might extend what they have learned about stories through this experience, and what story topics they might explore next.

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