

Storytelling tips

Tips for narrators to enhance the storytelling experience

- Before narrating a tale, go through the story-specific learning tools and decide on the activities you want to do in class
- Choose stories that are appropriate for your class. Activity suggestions are given for each story but it is up to the teacher to decide the appropriateness of the activities depending on the age of the class
- Print out the story to use as a memory aid while narrating. Use the pictures in the story to familiarize yourself with the scenes and to add more detail. Colorful illustrations can also capture the attention of children
- Before you start narrating, position yourself so that all the children can hear you and see your expressions and gestures
- Make sure you know the story very well. In some cases, it might be worth memorizing the sequence of events or specific phrases
- Listen to the audio versions of the stories for help with character voices
- For folktales from different cultures, give an introduction about where the story is from and explain the meanings of any words that the children might not know
- Asking questions to the children and having a small discussion before starting the story can stimulate interest and involvement. However, once you start narrating, keep questions to a minimum so the flow of the story isn't affected
- For flannel board storytelling, memorize the stories and practice them. Ensure that you choose appropriate colors for the flannel board and the characters
- If there are new or unfamiliar words that the kids can learn from the story, teach them the words. Look for adjectives they can learn or verbs they can enact
- If you are not comfortable doing gestures or character voices, try playing the audio version of the story in class. Very expressive and clear, it will help children and new language learners learn pronunciation too
- If the story is more of a poem, you could read it out loud and ask the children to repeat after you
- Get the children involved in the storytelling process by asking them to guess the ending, repeat certain words, make gestures, fill in words when asked, etc.
- Kids find some words, phrases, or actions hilarious. Watching their reactions during and after narration can make the reading experience very rewarding for both the narrator and the audience
- Get creative in how you enact the story and how you say certain phrases and watch the kids' reactions to get clues on how they like the story
- Younger kids enjoy expressions, gestures, songs, and dance. A little song here, a hand and leg movement there could go a long way in helping kids remember the story. If they are looking at your face in rapt attention, you know you've got a winner
- Where appropriate, ask students to suggest endings before you reveal the ending in the story
- Each kid would most definitely imagine the characters, places, and settings of the story differently. Ask them to describe how they imagine the settings before you share the illustrations with them
- Try to make the story as lively as possible

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- If there are requests to repeat the story, try adding different details to it every time you say it so the kids don't get bored. But kids might want to listen to certain phrases again and again, hence the request. So give them what they expect and then, some more
- After reading the story, follow up with discussions
- Extended activities such as flannel board storytelling, stick puppet shows, enacting, and illustrating the story can be done by the children in pairs or teams and will serve as team-building activities. Make sure all the children get to talk in front of the class about what they helped put together. This will help improve their presentation skills and build confidence
- Older children can say the story on their own with flannel boards to younger kids. Use the illustrations from the stories to cut out characters for flannel board figures and shadow puppets