

STORYTELLING

TIPS & TALES

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by

Mark Pierce with Karen Jennings

 GOOD YEAR BOOKS

Acknowledgments

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Table of Contents

About this Book	1
Introduction: The Importance of Storytelling	3
Chapter 1: Where Do You the Storyteller Begin?	9
Step One: Create a Story Journal	
Step Two: Immerse Yourself in the World of Stories	
Chapter 2: Tips for Telling: Basics for the Beginning Storyteller	13
1. How to Pick a Story	5. Use Objects Creatively
2. Look for Meaning in Stories	6. Visualize Your Story
3. Give Stories a Personal Touch	7. How to Start a Story
4. Walk Through the World of Your Story	8. Ways to End a Story
Chapter 3: Storytelling As Gossip	18
Storytelling Technique: Think Like a Gossip	
Tale: "How Elephant and Hippo Got Mud on Their Faces"	
Fun Follow-up Activities:	
1. Language Arts: Sequence the Story	
2. Creative Writing: Turtle Hits the Headlines	
Chapter 4: The Storyteller's Instrument: Warm-up Exercises	22
Loosening Your Body with Tension Releasers	
Get Your Air Flowing: Breathing Exercises	
Using Your Voice: Vocal Warm-ups	
Reduce Stress by Knowing the Story	
Chapter 5: A Simple Story with Lots of Suspense	26
Storytelling Technique: Design Your Own Story	
Pre-story Warm-up: The Blindfold Game	
Tale: "Long, Long Fingers and Ruby, Ruby Lips"	
Fun Follow-up Activities:	
1. Art Project: Illustrate What You Saw	
2. Creative Dramatics: Create a New Story	
3. Creative Writing: The Element of Surprise	
Follow-up Exercises for the Storyteller: "Bloody Fingers" and "The Ghost with One Black Eye"	

Table of Contents

Chapter 6: Adding Audience Participation 31

Storytelling Technique: Encourage Audience Participation with Actions and Song

Pre-story Warm-up: Learn the Peanut Song

Story Background: What Are “Brer Stories”?

Tale: “Brer Bear and the Peanuts”

Fun Follow-up Activities:

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. Cooking: Make Homemade Peanut Butter | 4. Sensory: Explore Texture and Appearance |
| 2. Art Project: Create Peanut People and Peanut Shell Boxes | 5. Math: How Many Peanuts? |
| 3. Language Arts: Design a Story Map | 6. Science: Peanut Oil |

Chapter 7: Using Riddles with Stories 41

Storytelling Technique: Use Riddles As Part of the Storytelling Experience

Pre-story Warm-up: Riddle Guessing Game

Tale: “The War for the Skies”

Fun Follow-up Activities:

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| 1. Science: Learn About Rainbows | 3. Art Project: Make Riddle Cards |
| 2. Language Arts: Share Riddles | 4. Creative Writing: Write a Story Based on a Riddle |

Chapter 8: Let the Listener Create an Ending 48

Storytelling Technique: Tell an Open-ended Story

Pre-story Warm-up: Jump, Freda, Jump

Tale: “Freda the Frog Won’t Jump”

Fun Follow-up Activities:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Art Project: Freda and Her Family | 4. Science: Fun with Frogs |
| 2. Creative Movement: Hippity-Hopping | 5. Topic for Discussion: Being Afraid |
| 3. Creative Writing: A How-to Story | |

Chapter 9: Going on a Journey 53

Storytelling Technique: Take Your Listeners on a Journey

Pre-story Warm-up: Circle Journeys with Drum Music

Story Background

Tale: “The Elephant’s Magic Drum”

Fun Follow-up Activities:

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1. Creative Dramatics: Explore Your Environment | 3. Art Project: Create Your Own Instruments |
| 2. Language Arts: Write About a Journey | 4. Music/Social Studies: All About Drums |

Table of Contents

Chapter 10: Letting Your Listeners Perform with You..... 63

Storytelling Technique: Act out of the Circle

Pre-story Warm-up: From Seeds to Tree

Story Background

Tale: "The Tree of Life"

Fun Follow-up Activities:

1. Geography: Look at the World
2. Art Project: Make Maps and Animal Drawings
3. Language Arts: Write a Story About Your World

Chapter 11: Bilingual Storytelling..... 69

Storytelling Technique: Try Using Different Languages in a Story

Pre-story Warm-up: Review Spanish Phrases

Story Background

Tale: "La Cucarachita Bonita"

Fun Follow-up Activities:

1. Creative Dramatics: Act in Pairs
2. Art Project: Character Masks
3. Language Arts: Write a Marriage Proposal Song
4. Supplemental Activities: Spanish Around the World

Chapter 12: Exploring the World with Stories..... 75

Storytelling Technique: Learn the Culture and Then Use It in Your Story

How to Use Cultural Knowledge

Pre-story Warm-up: The Statue Game

Story Background

Tale: "The Lampstand Girl"

Fun Follow-up Activities:

1. Social Studies: Study Vietnam
2. Creative Dramatics: The Mirror Game
3. Language Arts: Tell the Story As the Prince
4. Topic for Discussion: Sibling Rivalry

Table of Contents

Chapter 13: How to Develop Characters and Make Your Listeners Jump 85

Storytelling Technique: How to Create Characters and Suspense

Rehearsal Versus Performance

Creating Suspense

Pre-story Warm-up: Life Without Electricity

Tale: "George the Lamplighter"

Fun Follow-up Activities:

1. Language Arts: At Home with George
2. Art Project: Philadelphia Before and After
3. Topics for Discussion: Talking About Tolerance and Winter Light

Chapter 14: How to Create a Unique Holiday Story..... 95

Storytelling Technique: How to Create Your Own Holiday Tale

Pre-story Warm-up: The Animal Game

Tale: "The Antler Party"

Fun Follow-up Activities

1. Creative Dramatics: Attitudes and Emotions
2. Art Project: Recycled Decorations
3. Dance: The Polka
4. Language Arts: Point of View
5. Research Activities: All About Antlers and the Arctic

Chapter 15: Create Story Recordings..... 105

Storytelling Technique: Creative Uses for Storytelling

Pre-story Warm-up: Get Ready to Record

Story Background

Tale: "Goodfellow and The Fairies"

Fun Follow-Up Activities:

1. Making Radio Plays: Experiment with Sounds
2. Creative Writing: What Do You Wish For?
3. Art Project: Fairyland Creations
4. History: It's Tea Time

Recommended Reading 115

About the Authors..... 117

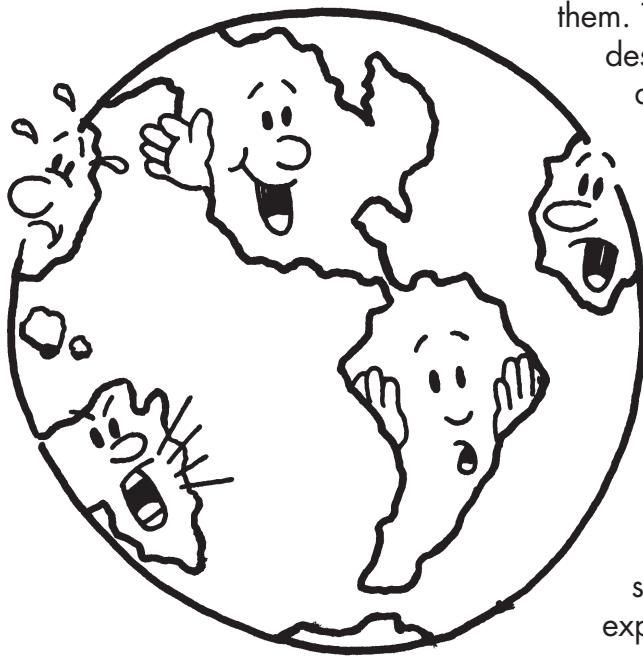
About This Book

This book offers an approach to storytelling for teachers, parents, grandparents, and anyone who works with or just plain loves children. It is designed to make storytelling accessible to the beginning storyteller by providing storytelling tips, tools, exercises, and stories. The stories in this book include adapted versions of folk and fairy tales from around the world. These stories have been tried and tested with children in classrooms, after-school programs, and libraries, so it is certain the children in your life will savor listening to them too. Included with the stories are background information about the tales and accompanying activities in subject matters such as writing, arts, creative dramatics, science, social studies, and math.

Everybody is a storyteller. We tell stories every day when we describe and share the events of our lives with friends and family members. This book encourages you to expand your personal skills and tell all types of tales, to the delight of yourself and your listeners.

Many people are worried that they do not have enough time in their busy lives to learn to tell a tale. What you will find, however, is that time learning a story is time well spent. It is a personally rewarding and enjoyable process. You do not have to memorize a story from a book word for word, which can be both prohibitively time-consuming and difficult. Learning a story involves making a tale your own, and you can do this by using the tips and techniques in this book to guide you.

The versions of the tales that are included in this book were molded by the attitudes, ideas, and input of the children who have experienced them. The tales from around the world reflect the desire to use stories to initiate appreciation and tolerance of different cultures, and encourage children to explore the stories of people from different lands.



Telling stories from other cultures does require an ample amount of sensitivity and respect. Stories told from other countries and ethnic backgrounds should only be told with the purpose of celebrating the culture of the story rather than belittling it. It is also a well-known custom among professional storytellers that sacred Indian stories should not be told by non-Indians without expressed permission.

In terms of changing tales, folk tales have historically been distorted to some degree by cultural mutation and the storyteller's skill at improvisation. You may find that you need to change a story because of the children you are working with, or because of the creativity you bring to the process.

The positive effect that becoming a storyteller can add to your life is extraordinary—you are entering a world that is filled with wonder, laughter, learning, and pure entertainment. Stories have it all, and they are waiting for you!



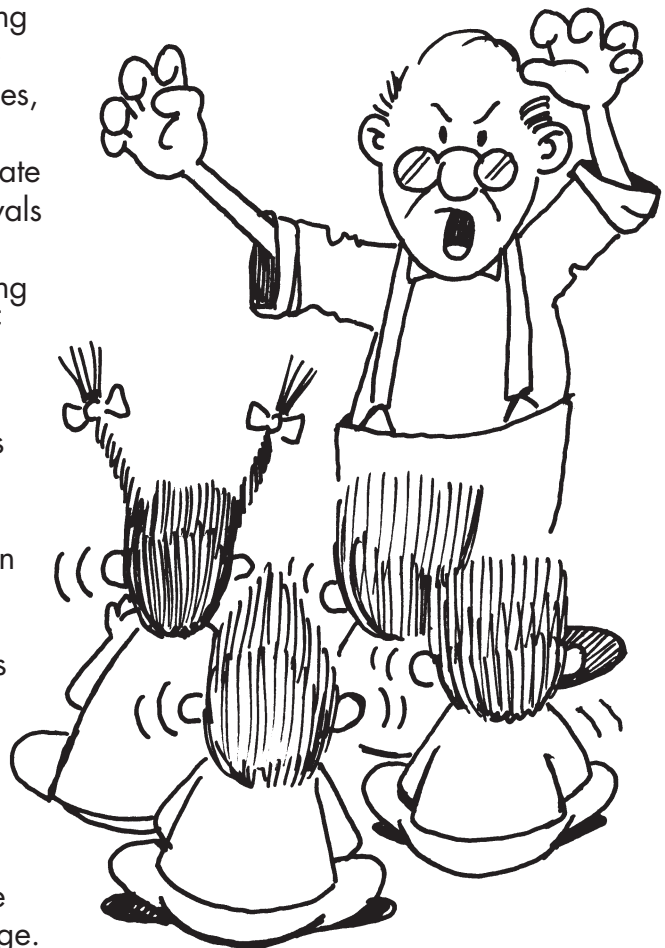
The Importance of Storytelling

Who doesn't love a good story? For many of us, they are part of our earliest memories. Stories are central to who we are. They connect us to the past and lead us to our future. They offer lessons, spark our imagination, create a sense of friendship, and offer sheer enjoyment. Children instinctively and profoundly respond to stories. They appreciate the prize the storyteller gives to them—a story well told. Luckily for children and adults, the storytelling movement is flourishing. Now is a great time to be a storyteller. The art of storytelling has gained respect and admiration as a vital and valuable art form used to educate, entertain, and foster a sense of community.

Educators are actively seeking out storytelling experiences for their students. Schools are using storytellers to help supplement curriculum in areas such as social studies, history, language arts, and creative dramatics. Teachers are also being encouraged to use storytelling themselves in the classroom. They witness the power of their own voice to expand the abilities and interests of their students and to create a community of active listeners and creative thinkers.

Storytelling is also experiencing growing success as a community event. In these hectic, and, sometimes, impersonal times, people have discovered the power of storytelling to enrich their lives and create a sense of fellowship. Storytelling festivals are enjoying increased popularity and growing audiences, and new storytelling festivals are cropping up in all parts of the country. Storytelling events held at local libraries are also quite popular, as children gather around to hear tales told by an experienced children's librarian or visiting storyteller. Families too are creating storytelling traditions in their own homes.

What is a story's power? Storytelling is not an isolated, passive pursuit. It is dynamic and engaging, and it is rewarding for both the teller and the listener. Storytelling gives the teller the chance to make direct contact with the listener. It is an intimate connection that creates a positive charge. Stories also connect us to our past, to a



time when stories were an integral part of daily life. They give us a sense of who we were and what we might become.

The telling of stories allows young listeners to enter new worlds simply by hearing the words of the story spoken. They create mental pictures of the tale, and their powers of imagination are heightened. They also learn new words, phrases, and ideas, increasing their writing, vocabulary, and communications skills.

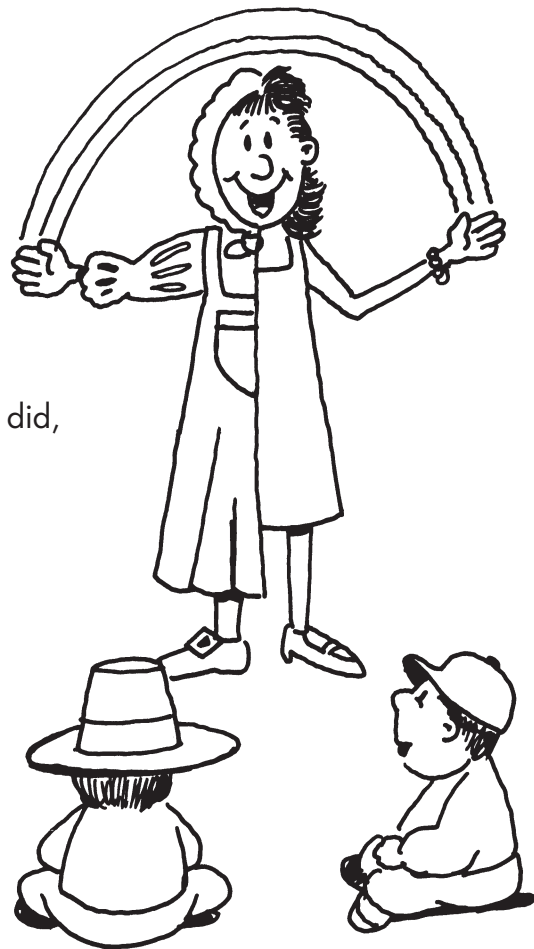
Children also take great comfort and delight hearing an adult tell them stories. Not only are they willing to accept the messages of the tale, but by hearing stories from someone they love and respect, they feel the validity of the world of fantasy is both accepted and shared. This can be quite comforting and positive.

The hearing of stories helps to make reading a more vivid experience for children. They begin to see that the stories they read are as rich as the stories that they have heard. Also bear in mind that storytelling does not replace reading aloud to a child. It complements their interest in stories and the pleasures of reading.

With the popularity of TV and video games, children today are often blamed for having shortened attention spans, and it is sometimes assumed that they wouldn't be interested in hearing stories. Not true. If you have a good story to tell, they are eager to listen and learn. It is all up to you. To get you started, this book provides you with a number of stories, tips, and follow-up activities. You have at your fingertips everything you need to start telling. The children in your life will be glad you did, and so will you.

Storytelling Past and Present: Traditions and History

Storytelling has a history as rich and diverse as the stories themselves. Different cultures have had distinct ways of experiencing the power of stories and the story itself fulfilled a wide variety of needs. Stories all share several common elements, however, including the spirit of community they engender and the enduring power of the stories themselves.



The legends and tales of Native Americans have been told for thousands of years, and for them it was and is a means of defining their world and their place in it. They have always believed in the power of story. Storytelling has been used in ceremonies, around campfires, and as a gift given to children from family and friends.

Legends were created from spontaneous contributions each storyteller brought to a tale. Tribe members invented stories such as: creation myths, coyote tales, and sacred stories. They lived in an atmosphere of creativity and respect for the laws of nature and man. Tribe members also used stories to teach children the lessons of their tribes and ways of living. Storytelling in Indian communities has retained its power in present times despite considerable odds.

In Ireland, tales were told after long days of hard work. These tales helped lighten the load of the daily task of living and eliminated a feeling of loneliness and isolation among those who gathered to tell tales. In cottages throughout western Ireland, storytellers entertained women as they did their spinning. Work and tales were being spun at the same time. These Irish stories were also deeply enjoyed by the children. They went to sleep hearing about the enchantments of fairies, giants, heroes, kings, princesses, and simple folk. These stories were filled with mystery, wit, and charm, just as they are today.

Much storytelling in Ireland was told at the hearth, similar to the Indian tradition of telling tales around the campfire. People filled the night hours with firelight and stories.

Nighttime was the best time for stories in Arab countries as well. The storyteller prefaced their tales with: "There was, there was not, shall we tell stories or sleep in our cots?"

Arab women and children told tales while working on their stitching. Stories were told of princes, princesses, and fantasy, with each woman sharing a tale. The most accomplished of these tellers were urged to continue to entertain the others well into the evening.

Arab men heard their stories apart from the women at local coffeehouses. Professional storytellers would share stories in exchange for room and board. These storytellers wandered the countryside and were said to be a welcome addition to any coffee shop they entered.

Jewish folk tales claim a long and continuous history, as tales were passed throughout different geographical areas for more than twenty-five centuries. These stories include tales of humor, survival, and religious teachings. Their folk tales reflect the full nature of their experiences. Storytelling was a means of bringing people together and offering lessons for living, as well as providing laughter and joy. These stories continue to bring great insight and pleasure to those who share them today.

Approximately 300 years ago, the folk tales that were being passed around when people gathered together were collected by the renowned writers who put them down on paper in folk-tale collections. One of the first and best-known collections was by the Frenchman Charles Perrault (1628–1703) who gave us *Cinderella*, *Little Red Riding Hood*, and *Tom Thumb*, among others.

The 1800s saw a great resurgence of interest in folk tales, especially in Europe, due in large part to the enormous popular and literary success of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm. They collected their tales from native storytellers in Germany, and their work had a striking, immediate effect on the rest of Europe and indeed the world.

The people of Germany showed the Brothers Grimm great appreciation by seeking out their books in droves. They loved the stories, and the Brothers Grimm spent the rest of their lives taking the stories they heard from storytellers and publishing them for popular consumption. Their most popular tales include *Snow White*, *Rapunzel*, and *The Golden Goose*. The Brothers Grimm were significant not only for their literary accomplishments, but also as the recognized founders of folklore study.



Perhaps as a result of their work, folklorists throughout Europe sought out their local storytellers and put their native tales into print. Eventually, this practice of collecting the tales from storytellers spread, and now you can find collections of stories from most cultures.

It is interesting to compare stories from different cultures. There are striking and notable similarities among many tales found in different regions around the world. For instance, *Cinderella*, arguably the most famous fairy tale, has more than 300 versions. Where did *Cinderella* begin?

It is speculated that *Cinderella* was first written down in China during the ninth century. Even then it had already been told for quite some time. It is a tale that has achieved immortality. It seems that children around the world never tire of hearing it, and comparing the different versions is a fascinating study. There are folklore indexes available in libraries that compare and categorize stories and themes found throughout the world. Look for it some time.

Even though there was great interest in stories as folklore during the 1800s, the role of the storyteller became less important. This occurred in many parts of the world, especially those that were moving toward a more industrialized society. As the structure of community life changed, storytellers were sometimes viewed as pleasant reminders of a simpler past, even as writers continued to collect and document their stories for reading pleasure. The education of children was also more rigid as a result of industrialization. Emphasis was on mastering skills rather than developing the imagination, which, tragically, was sometimes considered a trivial and perhaps even detrimental pursuit. As a result, storytelling was largely ignored in the field of education and child development.

Some storytellers continued to share their tales, however, and once again the value of stories and storytelling is being recognized and celebrated. The twentieth century is witnessing a storytelling revival. People are turning to stories as a means of returning to the ways of their ancestors and celebrating their heritage, as well as learning about and celebrating other cultures.

Storytelling was bound to find its way back. The direct contact between teller and listener, which brought people together in ancient times, has found potency in our modern lives. We gather as our ancestors did, with the words of the story to enrich our lives.

Storytelling in the Classroom: Making Stories Work for Your Class

Teachers will find that storytelling is a terrific tool to use in the classroom. Kids are delighted to see their teacher tell a story that entertains them, and you can use their enthusiasm to your advantage. Stories provide a solid basis for developing attention and concentration, which can make the teacher's job more enjoyable. The process of listening to a story focuses and interests children, allowing them to be more prepared for all general learning, which can be invaluable to any educator.

Stories from different parts of the world can introduce students to traditions, customs, and ideas of people from many lands, and can be used to generate interest in topics such as geography, social studies, science, and math.

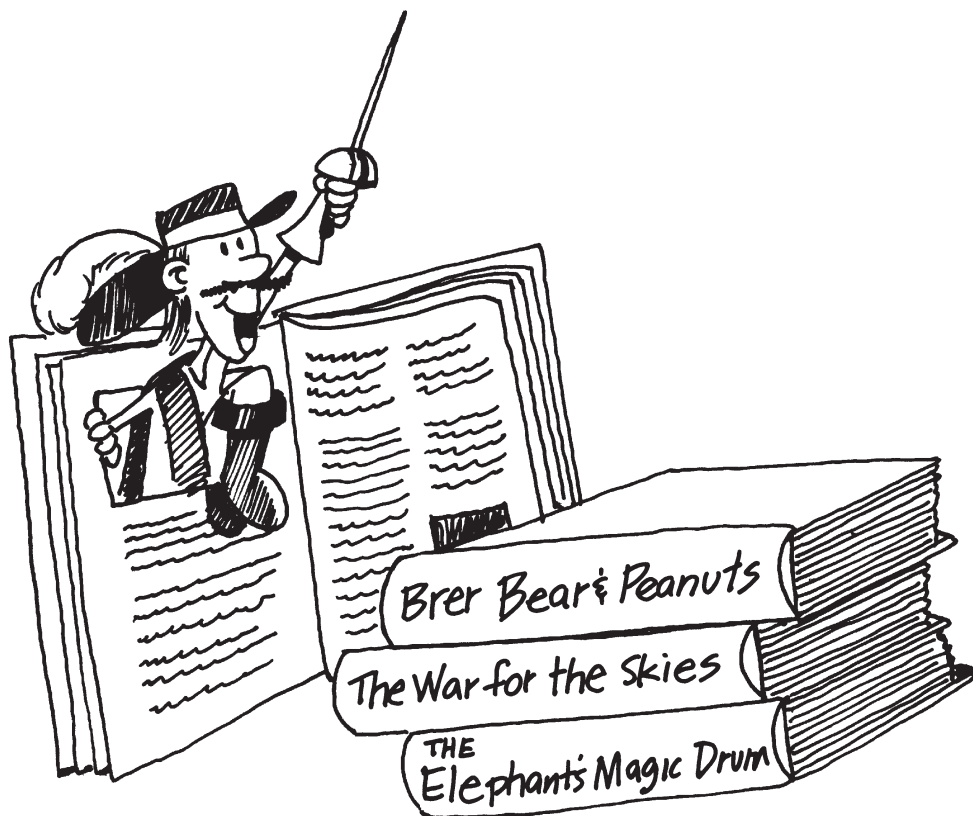


Storytelling also offers a level of control and flexibility over the learning experience. When you are telling the story, you can adjust it in ways that you find necessary—speeding up tempo, changing language, responding to the interests or needs of the students. Many teachers enjoy the freedom storytelling allows them, which they do not always have when reading printed material.

Encouraging children to tell stories themselves also has positive results. When children repeat a story they've heard, their communication, language, and story comprehension skills increase immeasurably, as does their self-confidence.

A creative writing curriculum can be enhanced with storytelling. You can use stories to analyze plot development, common themes, character journeys, creative language usage, dialogue, story structures, and the element of surprise. The stories you tell can be an inspiration for your listeners to create and write tales of their own.

Storytelling also affords great opportunities for creative dramatics activities, as children love to act out stories. This provides a creative outlet as well as encouraging group cooperation and interaction. There are a number of creative dramatics activities in this book to guide you in this area.



Where Do You the Storyteller Begin?

Step One: Create a Story Journal

You are about to embark on a journey into the world of storytelling. Before you is a road you have never traveled. Your first step is to take stock in what you have and what you will bring with you. To do this, begin a personal story journal.

Start writing about your experiences from childhood. What sort of stories did you like to hear? What stories did you hear only once and never forgot? What kind of stories did you make up? Did your dolls or stuffed animals take part in the stories that you made up? Did you have imaginary friends? Were there any stories that scared you? What stories made you laugh? Was there a member of your family who told family stories?

Remember the stories of your youth and consider why they were important to you as a child. Record your memories of these stories.

Use your story journal to relive the life of the child you once were and find what it was that drew you to the stories of your childhood. Try writing a paragraph or two about your favorite story. Write the details of your life at the time. Does this story come into play at any other time in your life? How do you feel about this story now?

If you remember and write about the stories from your past, you become aware of how important they were and are to you and to your growth. You will feel how special, vital, and immediate they were. You will also discover how meaningful it is for you to give this gift to other children. This process of personal exploration should ease some of those fears you may have about becoming a storyteller. When you write about your childhood stories, you will feel the enthusiasm you had when you first heard them, and discover the power of story in your own life.

Step Two: Immerse Yourself in the World of Stories

Once you have written about your past experiences with stories,

you will want to enter the storytelling world anew. You can do this by exploring the rich world of stories that is available at a local library.

You will find folk-tale collections in the 398.0 section, which includes folk and fairy tales from around the world. Collections are located in both the children's and adult's sections of the library.

When you examine collections of folk tales, the best place to start is with the table of contents. Most folk-tale anthologies are divided into story types, typically beginning with creation stories and tales of wonder. Compare the table of contents of two or three anthologies, and notice the similarities among story types as well as the differences. For instance, in some cultures, tricksters figure prominently, while in other cultures the role of the lucky fool is dominant. Some have fairies, and others have sky gods.

After you have taken time to examine the table of contents, pick a story from one of the title headings and read it. When you have finished, read another story from the same collection but from under a different heading or read the same kind of story from another culture. Note in your journal the similarities and differences. You will start to discover how much can be learned about a culture from their traditional tales, and you will notice many similarities in tales told from different cultures all around the world.

Sample Story Types

Fairy Stories

Fantasy Stories

Fools

Funny Stories

Ghost Stories

How (and How Not) to Act

Legends

Life Lessons

Monster Tales

Mystery Stories

Nonsense Tales

Riddle Tales

The Strong and the Clever

Tales of Wonder and Creation

Tall Tales

Three Brothers

Trickster Tales

The Warrior

The Wise and the Foolish

Why Things Are

Read as many stories from varying collections as possible. Your goal is to become immersed in the world of stories. Do not limit yourself to a single culture or type of story. Take in as many stories as you can. As you do, start to evaluate the elements of story structure in different types of folktales. Write about your findings. Then when you make the stories you tell come alive, you have a storehouse of knowledge to guide you.

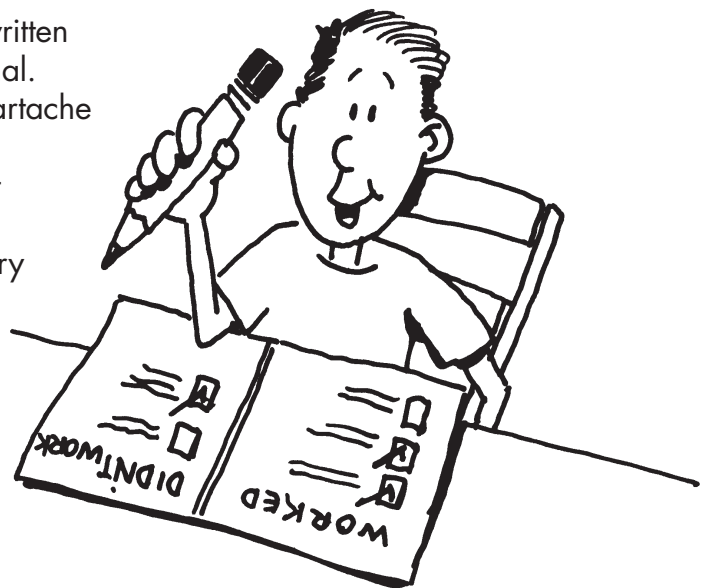
A librarian will be able to help you locate story collections to fit your needs. You may also want to examine the resources available that index story types and motifs. These reference materials provide information about types and variants of folktales throughout the world. The most popular of these indexes are: D. L. Ashliman's *A Guide to Folktales in the English Language: Based on the Aarene-Thompson Classification System*; Margaret Read MacDonald's *The Storyteller's Sourcebook: A Subject, Title and Motif Index to Folklore Collections for Children*; and Antii Aarene and Stith Thompson's *The Types of the Folktale*.

If you wish to start your own folk tale library, there are many wonderful books on the market right now. Check the bibliography in the back of this book. You may also wish to check your library's audio-visual department for stories on cassette tape and videotape. The Internet is also a good resource for information on live storytelling shows, conferences, and articles, as well as story resources.

During your initial exploration into the world of stories, use your journal as a place to record outlines of stories you have found and enjoyed. Make notes about the stories so you have a place to turn to when looking for something new to tell. You can also use your journal to record information about stories you recall from your own memory or imagination that you would like to develop.

After you have told a story, keep a written record of the story in your story journal. It can cause much headache and heartache when you haven't told a story for a while and you can't find it anywhere. Use a journal as your memory. Record the details of the story and any personal touches that you added to make telling it more fun. You may also want to note certain sticky parts of the story where you tend to confuse events or forget small details that can make a big difference.

That way, when you choose to tell it again, you can avoid these problems.



You can also use a story journal to make notes about how your telling affected the audience, interesting discussions that took place, or ways of improving the story in the future.

Often after telling a story, a listener will have a question about it or an idea that you will want to add to the next telling. Make note of this. Your story journal is a place for you to reflect, connect, and collect stories.



Tips for Telling: Basics for the Beginning Storyteller

1. How to Pick a Story

How do you determine if a story will work for you? As a beginning storyteller, you must go through the exciting but time-consuming task of finding a story you want to tell. There are thousands to choose from, so how do you narrow your search? Begin by seeking out a story with a simple, straightforward narrative and few characters and plot devices. Make your approach to these first stories straightforward and simple so that you and the listener have fun. Make sure that the story is not so long that it will be difficult to tell it well, and remember that children enjoy stories with lots of action.

In your search for stories to tell, seek out stories that surprise you. You will find that what surprises you can vary. Sometimes it might be a unique retelling of a familiar tale or perhaps a wild twist in the plot. Surprise endings are always fun. Whatever it is that surprises you about the story is what is going to help make telling the story enjoyable for you.

Conversely, if you know a story's ending from the very beginning, it will be difficult to create excitement in your telling. If you were not dazzled by some aspect of the story, your listeners won't be either and your performance may be listless.

Never tell a story you don't like. There are enough stories out there that you will eventually discover one you are drawn to and wish to share.

Think of stories like jokes—if you heard a joke that you didn't think was funny, you wouldn't pass it on, would you? But if it made you laugh, you can't wait to tell it to another person. A story is a gift you can't wait to share.

2. Look for Meaning in Stories

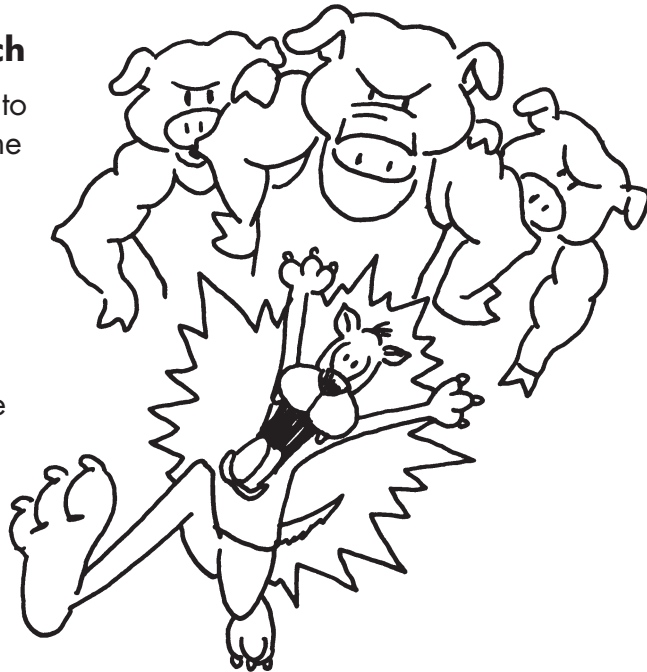
When you have found a story you would wish to tell, write down your impressions of the story. Specifically, "Why am I telling this story? What is it about that tale that makes me want to tell it?" It may be the sense of humor, the characters, or the twists and turns in the plot. It may also address issues that you have

confronted in your life. Ask yourself what it is about this story that speaks to you. A story is both an independent entity and a part of you. Let each story you tell display who you are.

3. Give Stories a Personal Touch

So who says the three little pigs have to live and the wolf has to get burnt in the chimney? Given the state of the wolf population these days and the overabundance of pigs around here, maybe we should sympathize more with wolves than pigs!

As a storyteller, you will want to make the stories you tell your own by giving them your own personal touch or twist. To make them personal, you need to know them first.



Don't rush into the story and change everything before you know what you are changing. Remember that most of the stories have survived for thousands of years, so they should be respected for their longevity as well as the oral tradition that they sprung from.

When you are familiar with the story, you can adjust its execution to fit your individual needs and style. You can add whatever you are comfortable with, such as repetitive phrases, characters, and physical gestures. You may want to delete unnecessary violence or add details to sparse stories. You might want to change an ending to reflect the modern times we are living in.

If you do change a story, check to see if you have changed the story's focus. It is vital to know the main focus of any story, so that you can be clear in your telling from beginning to end.

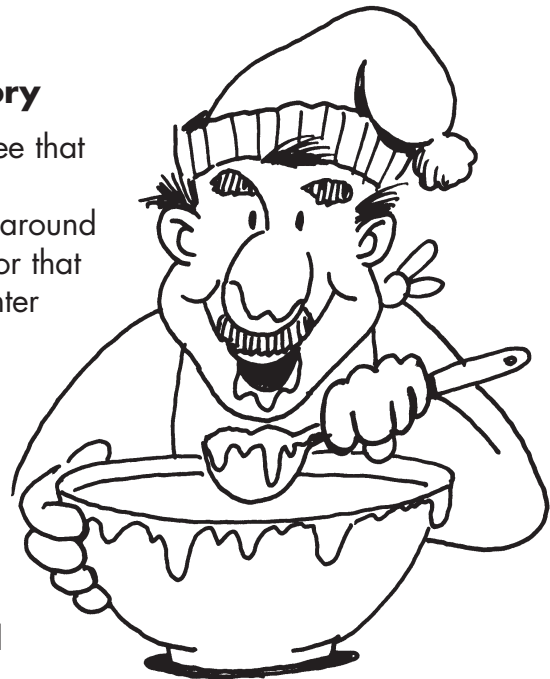
Read the story once out loud to hear what it sounds like being read. You may find phrases that read beautifully, and others that you will instinctively know to change.

Don't feel the need to memorize stories. Stories are for sharing, books are for reading. You should prepare and rehearse each tale, but the process of memorizing text is not mandatory and can make the storyteller appear stilted and unnatural. Storytelling is an evolutionary and creative process that has for centuries allowed each storyteller to shape and craft each story to his or her own liking.

Bruno Bettelheim says in *The Uses of Enchantment*: “The folk fairy tale, as distinct from more recently invented fairy tales, is the result of a story being shaped and reshaped by being told millions of times, by different adults to all kinds of other adults and children. Each narrator, as he told the story, dropped and added elements to make it more meaningful to himself and to listeners....”

4. Walk Through the World of Your Story

Every story has a landscape. The best way to see that landscape is to walk through it. As part of the rehearsal process, create the world of the story around you. Touch it, hold it, and don't forget to duck for that low beam in the woodcutter's house. Pull a splinter from his table. Lift the wooden bowl and slurp some of his porridge. If you can see the story, then your listeners will be able to see it too. Once you have walked through the world, invite a friend to come with you. Show them the world. Sit together and eat porridge.



Walking through the landscape of the story will make the environment of your story specific and vivid. If you are telling a story that is set in a landscape you cannot readily visualize, go to the library and find pictures from the land the story came from.

The process of walking through the landscape is one that will fill your mind with rich images, as well as allow you to physically become involved in the land of the story so that it is out of your head and into your bones. It is a rehearsal technique that will affect your telling. Don't feel, however, that you have to physically describe the action while telling your story. Do what feels natural and comfortable.

5. Use Objects Creatively

Consider the objects within your story. Objects are very important, and in many stories they play a central role. They are real and magical, and easy for a child to imagine and attach significance to. Consider Cinderella's glass slipper, the beans in *Jack and the Beanstalk*, the apple in *Snow White*, and the rose in *Beauty and the Beast*.

The following exercise may help connect you to the rich significance of the object world.

Think of your family.

Think of an object that best describes your family. What object would it be and why?

For instance, you may think of your family as a diamond, because it is beautiful and multifaceted.

Think of your job.

Think of an object that best describes your job. What would that object be and why?

Think of your best friend.

Think of an object that best describes this friend. What would that object be and why?

What object best describes you and why?

What object best describes your mood today?

Ask a few more questions on your own and answer them.

Objects can be powerful symbols. When working on stories, notice the central objects. What do they represent? Remember that the object world provides a concrete base for the story, as well as symbolic or magical significance.

6. Visualize Your Story

After you have learned your story, “see” it by visualizing it in your head. This is best to do right before you tell the story to an audience. Let yourself walk through the events of the story in your mind. It is a good way to review the events of the story, and it places you mentally in the world of the story.

7. How to Start a Story

Curtain up. Play begins. Sorry folks, most storytellers don’t get curtains. Only eager little faces staring up at you. So how do you start a story? Create a curtain for yourself. An “intro” to your story will serve as your curtain. First, take time to calm yourself. Breathe deep. Say hello. Tell them your name. You may want to let them know where the story is from. Keep it simple. It is often fun to explain a little part of the story that the listeners will need to know at some point during the tale. Make eye contact with your audience; let them know a story is about to begin and that they will want to listen. You may wish to set the mood for the story. For instance, if it’s a scary story, turn off the lights and whisper.

The actual first lines of a story are also important. Begin with what will be the main focus. For example, the story “Brer Bear and the Peanuts” begins with: “Everybody knows Brer Bear loves peanuts,” letting us know, right off the bat, this is a tale about Brer Bear and his peanuts. A story about the Baker’s Daughter may begin with “Oh, the Baker’s Daughter was clever!” Start your story with the main character or theme of the story. Many classic folk and fairy tales begin this way.

Also, make sure that you have your listeners set up in a way that is conducive to listening and as free from distractions as possible. If two children will not be able to pay attention while sitting together, separate them. Try to create an intimate environment so that all of your listeners are close enough to both hear and see you.

When performing for children, it is wise to have certain cues that will get their attention. You can teach them a signal that lets them know to be quiet, such as, "Hands up mouths closed."

Essentially it works like this: Raise your hand and say, "Hands up mouths closed." Then they raise their hands as well and quiet down. That is the signal. You can do this without interrupting the flow of your story. If you are telling at a school you can ask the principal or a teacher if there is a signal used that the children are familiar with. Either way, you may want to practice this with each group before you begin telling. You may never have to use it, but it's a great tool to have at your disposal.



8. Ways to End a Story

Your ending is the last thought you leave your listener with, so leave a memorable impression. Listeners don't like to be left hanging. You need a solid ending. Just as the beginning is the curtain rising on a world of imagination, the ending can transition them back into the world of reality, leaving them with ideas to consider. Don't rush into this. Tell the story out loud several times before you decide what the ending is, as it may not be what you originally expected. Like life, you never know what the ending is until you get there. After you have told the story's ending, you may want to reiterate the name of the story, its origin, and, if applicable, the writer. If you do this, the very last thing your listeners hear is "and that was the story of ____ from ____ written by ____."

After you've finished telling your story, don't rush into other activities or another story. Give your listeners a moment to relax, consider what they have just heard, and then move on. You can also take a few moments to relax and congratulate yourself on a great job sharing your tale.

Storytelling As Gossip

Storytelling Technique: Think Like a Gossip

Storytelling as “gossip”? What does that mean? What could storytelling and gossip possibly have in common? Thinking of stories as gossip will help make you a better storyteller, because gossip is storytelling too, but with a bad reputation. One of the secrets to becoming a storyteller is knowing that we all have natural born storytellers inside us. All of us tell stories almost every day. The work of the storyteller is to let this storyteller out to tell. That’s why whenever you work on a story, work on it as gossip. Gossip is something we feel compelled to tell; the sheer enjoyment of telling the story drives us to share it. You may even be surprised to find that many folk tales are a lot like gossip. After all, they are often based upon other people’s misfortunes or indiscretions.

Try starting your story with a simple, “Hey, did you hear what happened to Brer Rabbit the other day? You won’t believe what Rabbit did this time.” Soon a folk tale that once seemed distant and remote is an exciting and immediate event.

Here’s a step-by-step approach to telling your story as gossip.

Step 1: Pick a story that intrigues you. Begin with a simple tale that has a clear, interesting story line.

Step 2: Read the story from beginning to end at least twice, and then read the story aloud at least once.

Step 3: Write the major events of the story on a note card. You may do that as an outline or as a numbered list. Remember: It is important to know the events of the story and not to memorize the story word for word as written. Know enough so you can tell the story your own way.

Step 4: Tell the story to a friend. Imagine you are telling that person an amazing piece of gossip you have just heard. Refer to the note cards if necessary.

Step 5: Ask the listener if they have any questions about the story or sequence of events. Be open to their feedback.

Step 6: Try this process a few more times. Each time you will feel more confident in your ability to share your story.

Step 7: Guess what? You are ready to find an audience. Start small. Try offering to tell the story at a library during their story hour or in your classroom. Rehearse as many times as you need to before telling it to a group.

Thinking of a story as gossip allows you to give that story your own twist. You can emphasize what you find interesting and become a direct participant in the story rather than an outside observer.

Below is a story to practice with. It is a traditional trickster tale from Africa written as gossip.

How Elephant and Hippo Got Mud on Their Faces

A Trickster Tale from Africa

Did you hear what Turtle did this time? No? It's great! I was down at the watering hole yesterday and Snake told me all about it. You know Elephant—he's always bragging about his strength, trumpeting all day long, "I am the mightiest animal on land!" You know Hippopotamus—he's always bellowing day and night, "I am the mightiest animal in the water!" Well, Turtle decided he was going to do something to end their bragging. He told Miss Lizard, "I am going to teach them both a lesson. Just you wait and see!" So the very next day Turtle strolled down to the mudhole where Hippo basks and bellows. Turtle turned right to Hippo and started singing quite loudly, "I am big, I am strong, I am tougher than ol' King Kong, and I can take you on. Ha Ha!"



That lazy old Hippo just laughed at Turtle. "Oh Turtle," he said, "what are you going on about?"

"You think you're so strong, Hippo! What would you say if I told you a little Turtle like me could pull you from the mud?"

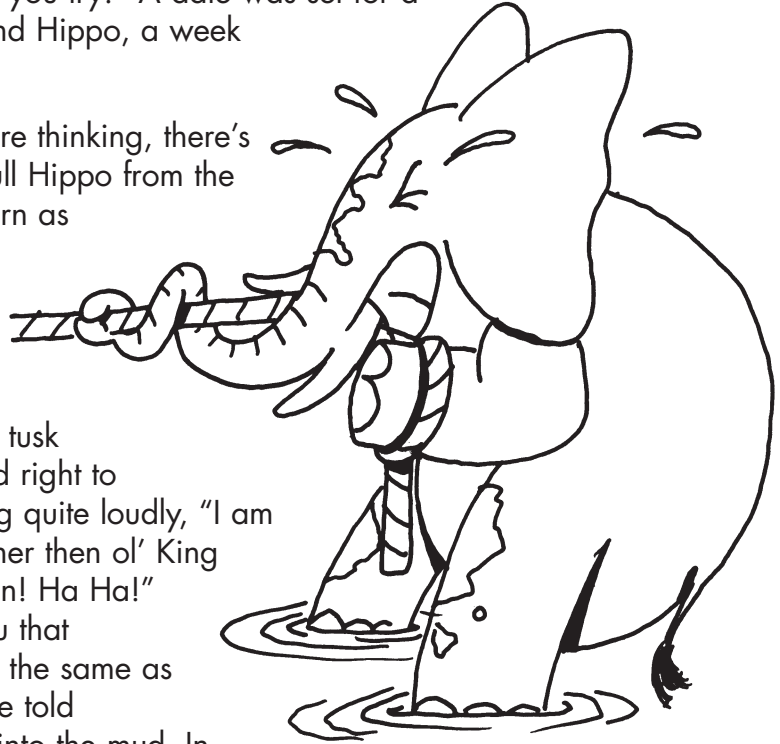
Hippo lay there and laughed. "Oh Turtle, you have gone mad. You can't pull me from the mud."

"I can too," Turtle said.

Hippo started getting madder and Miss Deer said he screamed so loudly the earth shook, "I'd like to see you try!" A date was set for a tug-of-war between Turtle and Hippo, a week from that very day.

Oh yeah, I know what you're thinking, there's no way Turtle could ever pull Hippo from the mud—as strong and stubborn as Hippo is. Just wait!

Right after setting the date with Hippo, Turtle ran over the hill to where Elephant hangs out with his tusk buddies. Again Turtle turned right to Elephant and started singing quite loudly, "I am big, I am strong, I am tougher than ol' King Kong, and I can take you on! Ha Ha!" Now I don't need to tell you that Elephant's reaction was just the same as Hippo's. And get this—Turtle told Elephant he could pull him into the mud. In only a few minutes, a date was set for a tug-of-war between Turtle and Elephant, a week from that very day.



Now I don't know how we missed it, but all the other animals heard about it. On the date of the challenge, a week from that very day, they gathered at the hill to see who would win. Turtle brought a good strong rope with him and he gave one end of it to Elephant and the other end to Hippo. Elephant and Hippo were so far apart on their ends of the rope they couldn't see each other, and they had no idea what Turtle was up to.

When Turtle gave the signal, the tug-of-war began, and Elephant and Hippo pulled with all their might. Miss Hen told me Hippo was straining himself something awful, and Mr. Jackal said Elephant had his trunk all stretched out and his big old feet dug deep into the dirt. Elephant and Hippo could not get that rope to budge their way. Both became convinced Turtle had to be up to something. So they both stopped pulling at just the same time and circled around to see if they could sneak up on Turtle at the other end of the rope.

Hippo climbed out of the mud and found the other end of the rope near the trees where Elephant lives, but no Turtle. Elephant found the other end of the rope in the mud, but no Turtle. Do you know Elephant climbed right into the mud looking for Turtle in case he was hiding? That's when Turtle jumped out from behind a tree and declared himself the winner. Elephant and Hippo stared at Turtle in disbelief. Elephant was in the mud and Hippo was out of the mud. They both said, "How humiliating. Losing to a Turtle."

Mrs. Jaguar said everyone near split their sides they were laughing so hard. Laughing so hard 'cause Elephant and Hippo looked so silly. Turtle certainly tricked those two, didn't he? I believe little Spider was right when he said, "Strength may lie in wits as well as in muscle."

There you have it. Storytelling as gossip. Now you try it with this story or pick a story of your own.

Fun Follow-up Activities

1. Language Arts: Sequence the Story

Give listeners a sheet of paper divided into eight squares. Have them draw the action of the story in each of the squares. Younger children may need you to tell them which pictures to draw, but have older children decide what to draw themselves.

Have them make a list of what they will be drawing before they begin, and if they need more than one sheet, that's fine. This is great to do with all stories. It shows that the listener has an understanding of the sequence of a story, and it gives the child a way to tell the story to a relative or friend in the future. As they tell the story they can look to the action they drew in their story squares.

Always encourage your listeners to pass on the stories that they hear from you by creating story squares, collages, pictures, homemade books, or comic strips. Urge your listeners to share the stories that they hear from you, so that they become storytellers too.

2. Creative Writing: Turtle Hits the Headlines

Have your listeners write a newspaper article about what happened after Hippo and Elephant were defeated. Think of them as two big stars being tricked by a nobody. What would their comments to the press be? What dirty little secret could have been uncovered about them? Headlines could be: "Hippo's had it up to here. Vows revenge on Turtle." "Elephant is so depressed he can't hold his trunk up anymore." The article should be all about the aftermath of the tug-of-war.

The Storyteller's Instrument: Warm-up Exercises

Anytime you are speaking in front of a group of people, you may experience some anxiety. This is perfectly natural. There are simple, easy ways to help calm yourself before you perform. Professional actors and storytellers generally warm-up their bodies physically and vocally to combat stress and allow them to be free of tension for performances. This chapter includes some of these techniques.

All of these exercises can be used in the moments before a telling. If you take a few moments to relax, you will feel much better and be able to enjoy your storytelling experience more.

Loosening Your Body with Tension Releasers

1. Tense and Release

While sitting in a chair, lift one leg, tense and squeeze it as much as possible for ten seconds and then release. Continue with the other leg, tense and release. Notice the experience of "letting go" when you release the tension. Continue this process throughout your body. Tense your bottom and relax it. Tense your back and relax it. Tense your arm, relax it. Push your right shoulder up to your right ear. Tense and relax. Tighten the muscles of your face and release. Tense your scalp and release. Tense your eyes and release. This exercise can also be done while lying down.

2. Neck and Head Rolls

Drop your head over to one side. Touch your ear to your shoulder. Breathe deeply. Now drop your head down to your chest. Breathe deeply. Roll your head up to the other shoulder. Continue to breathe deeply as you roll your head back and around. Don't be surprised if you hear some cracking sounds. You are loosening your neck muscles, which bear a lot of daily tension. Continuing this smooth, slow, rolling motion ten times.

3. Roll Down from a Standing Position

From a standing position, let your head bend forward, placing your chin against the front of your throat. Let the weight of your head pull you slowly downward, vertebra by vertebra. Keep the muscles of your hips loose and your knees bent. Let your arms, shoulders, and head hang heavily. Hang for a few seconds and then slowly roll up, vertebra by vertebra, finally allowing your head to rest in place.

Get Your Air Flowing: Breathing Exercises

Get in touch with your breathing. Nervousness and anxiety make us breathe faster, erratically. Gaining control of your breathing can help you to relax. The following breathing exercises will help control breathing.

1. Fill and Release

Fill your chest with air. Like a balloon let your chest expand on all sides pushing out your ribcage. Let all the air out through your mouth. Repeat this five times, continuing to fill and release.

2. Yawning

There are two ways to induce a yawn. You can massage your jaw muscles. When they relax you will probably yawn. The other way is to relax and let the soft pallet at the back of the mouth soften. You will yawn. Yawning relaxes the vocal chords, mouth muscles, and soft palate. Let your chest and stomach expand and your mouth open so that the air can get right down to the bottom of your lungs. Afterward, blow it out in a wide-mouthed yawn.

3. Breathing and Counting

Take in a deep breath from your diaphragm while counting slowly to ten. After you have reached ten, slowly blow the air out while counting slowly to ten again. Repeat five times.

4. Panting

Panting is a great, quick way to get in touch with your breathing and center yourself. Place your hands on your diaphragm and pant like a dog for thirty seconds. Take one last deep breath.

Using Your Voice: Vocal Warm-ups

There are many vocal exercises performers use to focus on different aspects of their vocal abilities and create a limber vocal instrument. This is just a sampling of some of them.

1. Humming

Feel the vibrations in your face and your lips as you hum scales up and down.

2. Try Tongue Twisters

Tongue twisters make the tongue limber and less likely to trip over words. Here are some of our favorites. Of course you know they have to be said ten times fast!

Billy Button bought a bunch of beautiful bananas.

The sixth sheik's sixth sheep is sick.

Unique New York

A big, black bug bit a big, black bear.

Six slippery snakes slid slowly south.

Red leather, yellow leather

Good blood, bad blood

Shy soldier

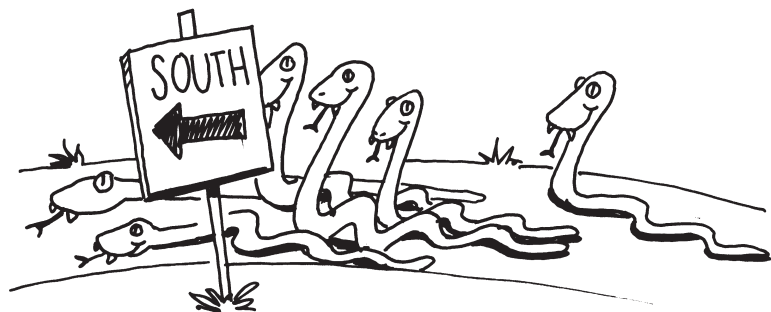
Kick six sticks quick.

Silly Sally Simpkins sold six shy seashells at the seashore.

The sinking ship sank.

Thirteen taxis took the tots to the train that took them back to Templeton, too tired to talk.

Six thick thistle sticks



*Betty Botter bought some butter.
"But," she said, "this butter's bitter.
If I put it in my batter
it will make the batter bitter.
But a bit of better butter
will but make my batter better."
So Betty bought a bit of butter
better than the bitter butter
and made her batter better.*

*Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers;
a peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked.
If Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers,
where's the peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked?*

Reduce Stress by Knowing the Story

One of the best ways you can reduce anxiety is to keep running through your story. Tell it or run through it while exercising or when you are out for a walk or run. Rehearsing the story while doing something physical frees up your mind and makes the telling more spontaneous. Also, make sure that you tell your story at least once right before you tell it to others, either the night before or the day of. If you have another person to run through it with, that is even better. Or run it by your own children or those of relatives. They'll love it, and it will help you. You can also tell it in the shower or on the way to work. The more prepared you are, the less nervous you will be. Always keep in mind that your audience is probably going to be a lot more forgiving of you than you

are of yourself. They want to hear a good story, and they want to hear it from you. Know that and it may ease any stage fright you could experience. Remember to have any aids—cards, notes, or outlines—that you need to make you feel more comfortable to jog your memory if necessary.



A Simple Story With Lots of Suspense

Storytelling Technique: Design Your Own Story

Every year, in towns all across America, children go to the local fair where a popular attraction is the haunted house. The idea is always the same. You go in one side. You then continue down a long, dark corridor filled with spooky lights as things leap out at you and shrieks fill the air. When you are finished, you come out the other side where the air is filled with the scent of popcorn and cotton candy and Frankenstein is only a faint memory. Wasn't that fun? All haunted houses are essentially the same. Whatever happens between the two doors is up to the designer.

Pretend you are now a designer of haunted house stories. You are going to take your audience on a ride, opening the door and exiting at the end. What happens between the entrance and exit is entirely up to you.

Most scary tales work on a structure that is similar to a joke. Certain elements are important to the setup, but it is the punch line that makes the joke or scary story work. You can design your story however you like, just as long as you remember the ending you are shooting for.

Using the simple structure of a story like *Long, Long Fingers and Ruby, Ruby Lips*; *Bloody Fingers*; *The Ghost with One Black Eye*; or *The Golden Arm* will give you an opportunity to shape and create a story all your own. Try telling one of these stories using the techniques we have recommended so far. Included in the chapter is an example of how the authors like to tell *Ruby, Ruby Lips*.

Pre-story Warm-up: The Blindfold Game

Since this story takes place in a dark house, and so much of the action is about finding your way in the pitch-blackness, have your group try this game. Pick two people. One will be the leader, the other will be in the dark. Blindfold one and place

them on one side of the room. Have the leader go to the other side of the room. Then have everyone else lie on the floor with space between them. Now have the leader orally direct the blindfolded person across the room around the bodies over to where the leader is. You can have the bodies on the floor make scary noises within reason. One important rule is that the people on the floor are not allowed to move at all or touch the blindfolded person.

Long, Long Fingers and Ruby, Ruby Lips

Origin Unknown

Every day Eddie and I walked by the old Perkins house on our way home from school. The old Perkins house had been abandoned for years. All the windows were boarded up and the shingles were peeling. Everybody said the Perkins house was haunted.

One day Eddie and I were walking by the house when Eddie said, "I dare you to go into that house." I said, "I dare you to go into that house." He said, "I dared you first," and I said, "Well I dared you second." Then he said, "We'll both go in together." I said, "Okay, we'll both go in together. Come on."

Slowly we pushed open the gate—EEEEEEKKKK. We walked down the path that led to the front porch. All around us were weeds that had grown as

tall as we were. We climbed the steps to the front porch. Loose boards creaked beneath our feet—erk erk erk. We walked up to the front door and turned the knob—click, click, eeeerrrrkkkkk. We stepped inside. As we got inside, the door slammed behind us—Boom! It was so dark we couldn't see our hands in front of our faces. We reached for the door but it was locked. We were trapped. We started feeling our way



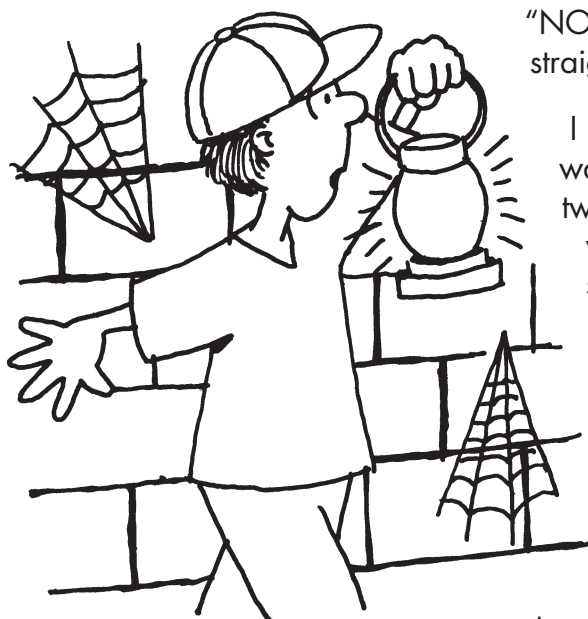
along the wall when we heard someone breathing behind us. "Haahh . . . Haahh . . . Haahh . . . Huuhh." Then a voice somewhere said, "Do you know what I am going to do with my long, long fingers and my ruby, ruby lips?"

"NO!!!!" Eddie and I screamed. We ran and tripped into the staircase. We ran up the stairs.

When we got to the second floor, we saw light pouring out from below the doors in the hall. We went to the first door and opened it. Most of the boards in the windows had broken off.

We pushed the rest of the boards out. We were looking down onto the roof of the porch. I climbed out and started to crawl across the porch when *BANG*, my foot went through the roof. Eddie reached out and pulled me back in.

We went out of the room and down the hall to the next room. Light was leaking through the window. Most of the boards had been knocked out and a branch stretched across the window. Eddie climbed out this time and grabbed the branch. *BANG!* The branch snapped. I pulled him back in through the window, and we ran out to the hall again. There in the darkness again when we heard somewhere in the distance "Haahh . . . Haahh . . . Haahh . . . Huuhh!" Someone said, "Do you know what I am going to do with my long, long fingers and my ruby, ruby lips?"



"NO!" Eddie and I screamed, We ran straight into a wall.

I fell and grabbed a light on the wall to pull myself up. The lamp twisted in my hand, and as it did the wall slid open to reveal a secret staircase leading down to the basement. "Maybe there's a way out through the basement," we thought. The floor of the basement was all mud. Our feet went *squee squee squee* as we groped along the wall searching for a way out. The walls were wet with moss. The

door upstairs opened. Someone came down the stairs. *Erk erk erk*. Feet *squeed*

across the muddy floor. *Squee squee squee*. We felt someone's breath on our faces—*AAAHHHHHHUUUAAAHHHHHHUUU*. Eddie and I said, "No, what are you going to do with your long, long fingers and your ruby, ruby lips?!!!" And he said, "This. *Blublublublubu*." (For the final *Blublublublubu* run your fingers over your lips and make the sound.)

Fun Follow-up Activities

1. Art Project: Illustrate What You Saw

What does the man or woman with the long, long fingers and ruby, ruby lips look like? Have your listeners draw what they think this person looks like. Have them work in a group silently. Encourage each member of the group to take a turn adding details to the picture of the person with the long, long fingers and ruby, ruby lips.

One of the things that storytelling does is to create vivid images in the listeners' minds. You can always allow children to freely illustrate the world they see.

2. Creative Dramatics: Create a New Story

Have listeners create their own versions of the story in groups of two or three, changing the premise of the story. Their character can say, "Do you know what I am going to do with my lightning fast hands?" and then clap, "Do you know what I am going to do with my long arms and sharp teeth?" and then shiver from the cold, and so on. Have each group act out their version.

3. Creative Writing: The Element of Surprise

Discuss the idea of using the element of surprise in stories. This story really does have a surprise ending. Were you surprised? Are there any other stories they have read that have surprise endings? Have the listeners write a story of their own with a surprise ending.

Follow up Exercises for the Storyteller: "Bloody Fingers" and "The Ghost with One Black Eye"

Trying telling one or both of these stories. They are well-known kids' favorites. Here are the bare bones.

“Bloody Fingers”

An old woman with no place to go stops at the haunted hotel. She is given the only room vacant, room 23. While she sleeps, a ghost emerges from the closet and says, “I have bloody fingers. I have bloody fingers.” The woman screams and runs away.

The next day a lawyer goes to the hotel and is given room 23. The same thing happens. He screams and runs away.

On the third day, a boy rents the room. The same thing happens only this time when the ghost appears the boy says, “So get a bandage.” He goes back to sleep. The End.

“The Ghost with One Black Eye”

“The Ghost with One Black Eye” is essentially the same format, including the haunted hotel, except that the ghost says in this story, “I am the ghost with one black eye” and at the end the boy says, “If you don’t keep it down, you are going to be the ghost with two black eyes.” The End.

These are a few details but you don’t have to use any of them. Create the story anew. Set it anywhere you want to. You can weave a history around the place or the ghost. Take the idea and do whatever you want with it and see what you can come up with. Go for it and have fun.

Adding Audience Participation

Storytelling Technique: Encourage Audience Participation with Actions and Song

One of the best things you can do to keep your listeners alert and interested is to include them in the story. You will never lose an audience if you allow them to participate. Participation can take many forms. You can select a line that is repeated throughout the story and have your listeners say it with you. For instance, in the story *The Gingerbread Man* "Run, run, as fast as you can, you can't catch me, I'm the Gingerbread Man" can be repeated by all. Listeners can also re-create sounds with you. If your story has the sound of a train, have the listeners make train sounds every time that locomotive passes through the story. You can also encourage them to act out any physical gestures that go with the story. You may choose to teach them a song, as in the story that follows called "Brer Bear and the Peanuts."

Some storytellers, Valerie Tutson, for instance, puts a song into almost all of their stories. Valerie tells one story about a woman who sings her way to the market. The song becomes a part of the story, and because it is so fun to sing, soon the audience is singing with her. Now when Valerie continues the story, they are captivated because they have been allowed into the tale.

Songs, rhythms, and rhymes are a storytelling tradition as old as the hills. Some stories come with songs or rhymes or repetition built in. Some don't. If you feel a story could use a song, put it in. If you are a musician, make up your own melody. Let your instincts guide you.

Pre-Story Warm-up: Learn the Peanut Song

If you are telling a story with a song, try teaching it to your audience before you begin so that they can sing it with you. Some storytellers prefer to tell the story and when the line, gesture, or song comes up in the story, then invite participation. Use whatever method works for you.

The story of “Brer Bear and the Peanuts” has an easy, straightforward song in it about Brer Bear’s love for peanuts. It goes like this:

I love peanuts

Lots and lots of peanuts

I love peanuts, every day.

I love peanuts

Lots and lots of peanuts

I love peanuts, in every way.

Brer Bear sings this song throughout the story, but he especially sings it when he is picking peanuts. You can demonstrate how peanuts are picked and act this out with your listeners when it comes up in the story.

For the melody of the song, any tune will do, as Brer Bear doesn’t really have much of a range, and he sings it rather ploddingly and Brer Bear-like.

Story Background: What Are “Brer Stories”?

Brer Rabbit is a trickster, which means that he uses his wits to achieve his ends. Brer Rabbit stories were based on traditional African trickster tales and folklore that slaves told on the plantations. The clever and enterprising Brer Rabbit exemplified survival for slaves in the South. Brer Rabbit is the cunning underdog who spends his days outwitting his opponents, and children readily identify with and laugh at his exploits. In Brer stories, animal characters act like human beings, teaching children and adults alike a variety of lessons for living.

You can find Brer Bear stories in a number of African American folk-tale anthologies, as well as in picture-book form. You are undoubtedly familiar with the Joel Chandler Harris stories told by the character of Uncle Remus. Joel Chandler Harris (1848–1908) was a writer who lived in Georgia and collected and adapted the Uncle Remus stories from former plantation slaves. He used the character of Uncle Remus as a storyteller to his master’s children. These are more nostalgic versions than what you would find in more current collections, but his work does illustrate the lasting popularity and great interest in Brer stories when he presented them almost one hundred years ago. Brer stories were a hit as soon as they were introduced to the general public, and they continue to be favorites of storytellers and listeners.

Brer Bear and the Peanuts

An African American Story

Everybody knows Brer Bear loves peanuts. He loves peanuts so much that he has his own secret peanut patch hidden deep in the woods where no one can find it. Every morning Brer Bear gets up early in the morning and picks peanuts all day long. And as he picks he sings this song:

I love peanuts

Lots and lots of peanuts

I love peanuts, every day.

I love peanuts

Lots and lots of peanuts

I love peanuts in every way.

Now one day, Brer Rabbit was sitting around with nothing to do. "I am so bored," he said. "I haven't fooled anyone in days. That's not like me. I know what I'll do. I think I'll find Brer Bear's goober patch."

So he set out deep into the woods. He hopped over roots and ducked under vines, looking this way and that for Brer Bear's peanut patch. He even climbed a tree to survey the landscape. Up on the highest branch he peered out over the trees. There he saw nothing. But he heard something—off in the distance—someone singing this song.

I love peanuts

Lots and lots of peanuts

I love peanuts, every day.

I love peanuts

Lots and lots of peanuts

I love peanuts in every way.

"Aha!" he said. "I would know that voice anywhere. That's Brer Bear." He followed the voice to Brer Bear's peanut patch. Hiding behind high grass and prickly weeds he watched Brer Bear pick goobers and sing,

I love peanuts

Lots and lots of peanuts

I love peanuts, every day.

I love peanuts

Lots and lots of peanuts

I love peanuts in every way.

"I've found it," Brer Rabbit said. "Now to trick that old Brer Bear. It's terrible the way I'm always tricking that Brer Bear out of his food, but someone has to do it." Brer Rabbit disappeared into the woods.

Brer Bear was still picking peanuts and singing his song.

I love peanuts

Lots and lots of peanuts

I love peanuts, every day.

I love peanuts

Lots and lots of peanuts

I love peanuts in every way.



Then the sun started going down. The fur on Brer Bear's skin started to ruffle. "Brr," he said. "It's getting cold; time to go home and bring my wife all of these peanuts. Then she can make me goober stew for dinner tonight." Brer Bear tied off the bag, threw it over his shoulder, and put it in his wagon. On his way home he sang—you know what he sang—

I love peanuts

Lots and lots of peanuts

I love peanuts, every day.

I love peanuts

Lots and lots of peanuts

I love peanuts in every way.

Just then he spied something in the middle of the road. He stopped and looked and said, "Hey, that looks like Brer Rabbit," he said. "And hey—he looks dead. Poor Brer Rabbit." He hung his head sadly. "If there is anything in this world that I love almost as much as I love peanut stew, it's rabbit stew. I'm gonna bring Brer Rabbit home and then my wife can make rabbit stew for dinner tonight. Maybe she'll put peanuts in it too. First I'd better check this out." He went over to Brer Rabbit and looked at him very carefully. "Sure looks like a dead rabbit. I think what I've got here's a dead rabbit. I'll just bring him on home along with the peanuts." He put Brer Rabbit into the back of the wagon and started singing his song.

I love peanuts

Lots and lots of peanuts

I love peanuts

And rabbit stew too.

I love peanuts

Lots and lots of peanuts

And rabbit stew too.

Now do you think Brer Rabbit was really dead? Of course he wasn't. He was just pretending. As soon as Brer Bear started singing his song, Brer Rabbit jumped right up and he took the bag of peanuts, threw them over the side, jumped off the wagon, and ran all the way home with Brer Bear's peanuts over his shoulder.

When Brer Bear got home, he called out to his wife, Mrs. Brer Bear, "Hey, honey, I'm home. Come see what I got for you." Mrs. Brer Bear came out and walked over to the wagon. "Where have you been all day Brer Bear?"

"I have been picking peanuts, and I have a surprise. Who should I find on the way home but Brer Rabbit lying in the middle of the road, dead. May he rest in peace. I brought him home so we could have rabbit stew for dinner tonight. Take a look." She looked up and down that wagon.

"Brer Bear," she said, "maybe you better take a look yourself." He looked into the wagon, and it was empty.

"I don't understand," he said.

"Well I do. How many times do I have to tell you not to trust that Brer Rabbit, no matter what he does? Even if you think he is dead he's probably tricking you again. Now you'll have to eat cabbage stew for dinner tonight."

"Ooh, I detest cabbage stew. Except the way you make it dear." They went in and had cabbage stew for dinner, prepared by Mrs. Bear.

The next day Brer Bear got up early in the morning and went to his peanut patch.

Downtown Brer Rabbit saw his ole pal Brer Fox. He told him how he'd taken Brer Bear's peanuts.

"Hey Brer Rabbit, you think he might fall for that deception a second time?"

"I don't know. Why don't you try?"

"I reckon I will." So Brer Fox set off into the woods to try and find Brer Bear's peanut patch.

He hopped over roots and ducked under vines, looking this way and that until he found Brer Bear picking goobers and singing his song.

Brer Bear sang differently today. He kept checking over his shoulder to make sure there wasn't anyone sneaking up on him to steal his peanuts. He'd sing a little and look around to make sure everything was okay.

I love peanuts

Lots and lots of peanuts

I love peanuts, every day.

I love peanuts

Lots and lots of peanuts

I love peanuts in every way.

"I've found it," Brer Fox said. "Now to carry out Brer Rabbit's plan."

Brer Fox disappeared into the woods. Brer Bear was still picking peanuts and singing his song.

I love peanuts

Lots and lots of peanuts

I love peanuts, every day.

I love peanuts

Lots and lots of peanuts

I love peanuts in every way.

When the sun went down, the fur on Brer Bear's skin started to ruffle. "Brr," he said. "It's time to go home. Peanut stew for dinner tonight. Instead of cabbage stew. Yuck! Cabbage stew." Brer Bear tied off his bag and threw it in the wagon. Then he started on his way home singing.

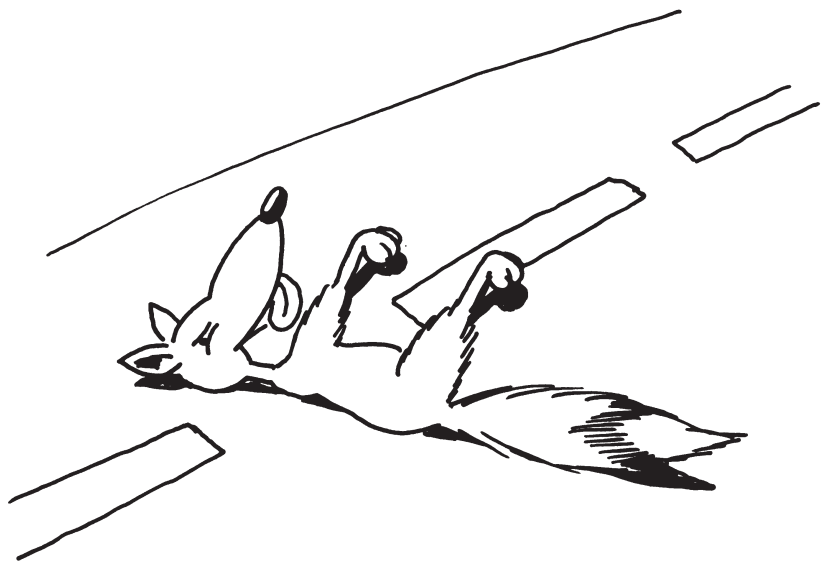
I love peanuts

Lots and lots of peanuts

Just then he spotted something in the middle of the road. "Hey, that looks like Brer Fox. He looks dead. Poor Brer Fox." Sadly he hung his head and then he smiled. "If there is anything in this world that I love almost as much as I love peanut stew, it is fox stew. I am going to bring Brer Fox home and then my wife can make me fox stew for dinner tonight. Maybe she'll put peanuts in it too. First I'd better check this out."

He went over to Brer Fox and looked at him carefully. "Looks like a dead fox. Wow! I think what I got here is a dead fox. I better make doubly sure he's amongst the dearly departed. I think what I'm gonna do is swing Brer Fox over my head a few times and then fling him."

Just then Brer Fox leaped out of Brer Bear's paws as fast as he could. "No!" he screamed and ran all the way home. Brer Bear laughed a hearty laugh and said, "You can't trick this old bear the same way twice." And he sang,



I love peanuts

Lots and lots of peanuts

I love peanuts, every day.

I love peanuts

Lots and lots of peanuts

I love peanuts in every way.

That night Brer Bear and Mrs. Bear had peanut stew for dinner. They loved every bite.

Fun Follow-up Activities

1. Cooking: Make Homemade Peanut Butter

Brer Bear loved peanut stew, but today's kids love peanut butter. About half of all the peanuts grown in the United States are made into Peanut Butter. Peanut butter is popular because it is nutritious, high in energy, and tastes great. Most people buy their peanut butter at the store, but others make it from scratch. Here is a recipe for peanut butter. Compare it to store-bought and see if you notice any difference in the taste. (Remember to check for food allergies before letting children handle or taste the peanuts.)

Blend in an electric blender until the mixture reaches the desired consistency. Add more oil or salt to taste. When it's done, spread it on crackers, celery, or bread. Eat it after singing the peanut song.

Homemade Peanut Butter

3 c fresh roasted or salted peanuts
6 T safflower or vegetable oil

Blend in an electric blender until the mixture reaches the desired consistency. Add more oil or salt to taste. When it's done, spread it on crackers, celery, or bread. Eat it after singing the peanut song.

2. Art Project: Create Peanut People and Peanut Shell Boxes

Use peanuts to make peanut people. Peanut people are really cute, but it requires a lot of patience to make a person out of a very small peanut. Here are some suggestions. Take a peanut and draw features on it with a fine point magic marker. Glue on arms

made out of pipe cleaners, and use small scraps of fabric or construction paper to make clothes, hats, shoes, and so on. You can also use a shoe box to create the peanut people's home—a peanut panorama.

Peanut shell boxes are easy and fun to make. Use the shells left over from making peanut butter, and glue them onto any size box. After you finish, you can spray-paint the shells or leave them plain. You can put your peanut people in your peanut box. You could even make some peanut butter cookies, put them in your box, and give it as a gift to someone when you tell them Brer Bear's story.

3. Language Arts: Design a Story Map

Story maps are an excellent tool for the listener to re-create the events of the story and to illustrate the sequence of events. You can create a story map for virtually any story, and "Brer Bear and the Peanuts" works particularly well.

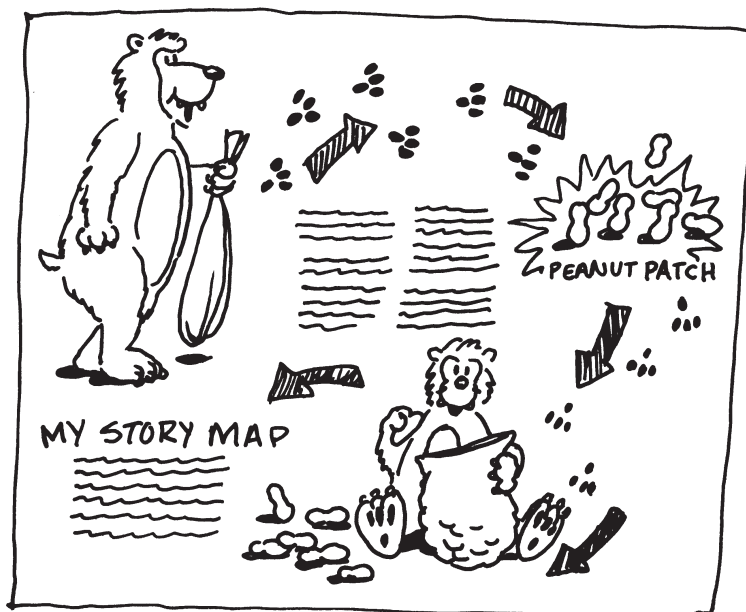
There are different ways of creating a story map. Here is just one version: Draw a map that shows the action of the story from beginning to end. For instance, begin with a picture of Brer Bear at home and then continue with him walking to the peanut patch, indicating his travels with arrows. He then arrives at the peanut patch, which is well hidden. Draw a picture of Brer in the peanut patch picking peanuts. While he is picking his peanuts, show Brer Rabbit hunting through the brush looking for the peanut patch, and so on.

Have your listeners record all the action from the beginning to the end of the story. They can even add dialogue if they wish. Make sure they are following the story sequence correctly. They may need your assistance.

4. Sensory: Explore Texture and Appearance

Bring in a bag of peanuts for the children to feel and hold, and then ask them to describe the texture, color, and feel of the peanuts. Use these descriptive words in the peanut song.

For example, a child might describe the peanuts as rough, so sing:



*I love peanuts,
rough, rough peanuts.*

I love peanuts, every day.

After they have described the color and feel, let them eat the peanuts and describe their taste or texture and substitute those words in the song as well. For example,

*I love peanuts,
crunchy, crunchy peanuts.*

I love peanuts, every day.

5. Math: How Many Peanuts?

Bring in a big bag of peanuts, and have your listeners guess how many are in the bag. Have a contest, with the person guessing the closest amount winning a small prize.

Give listeners a small bunch of peanuts and have them predict how many peanuts they will have when they remove the shells. Most peanuts have two nuts per shell, so they would be multiplying the number times two. Have them remove the shells and see how close they are.

6. Science: Peanut Oil

Peanuts contain 40 percent to 50 percent oil. How do you get the oil out of the peanut so you can see it? Answer: Rub the peanuts against a piece of paper and you will see the oil rub off and make the paper look greasy.

Ask your listeners: Are there any other foods that you can see the oil from on your napkin?

Using Riddles with Stories

Storytelling Technique: Use Riddles As Part of the Storytelling Experience

When told at the beginning of a story, riddles are highly useful as a way of focusing, relaxing, and engaging the listener. The practice of telling riddles before a tale has its roots in the ancient storytelling tradition of many cultures. Before beginning his or her tale for a group of children, the master storyteller would tell a number of riddles that the listeners would try to solve. In an atmosphere of lighthearted fun and learning, the master presented his or her riddles. After this was done, the tale began. What is the objective? Ask a riddle and the mind begins to work. Once the mind is working, it is open and ready for a story.

This technique can be great for both the storyteller and the listener. Not only does it focus the group, it also relaxes the teller by providing a transition time before beginning a tale. The thing that's best about it is that children love it. Children love hearing and trying to guess riddles. So you automatically have their interest, which is great. Telling riddles beforehand works extremely well when telling "How and Why" stories.

"How and Why" stories explain the way things are and why, and often answer the riddles of life. They also answer riddles that scientists have been trying to solve for years. Why is the sun in the sky? Why is grass green? Why are there rainbows? To answer those questions, storytellers created tales of gods and animals and people to try to explain why things are the way they are. Naturally, the riddles continue. These stories offer a way into the riddles of science and nature.

Comparing the way things were explained thousands of years ago to the way scientists go about finding answers to our riddles and questions today provides for fascinating study. It helps to define the scientific process, which in turn defines our world.

The story of "The War for the Skies" gives one culture's explanation of why rainbows exist. If possible, after the story, ask children if they know of any other stories that explain why rainbows exist. Accept all answers. This story is based upon a tale

that author Mark Pierce heard throughout his childhood. The authors have tried to find the cultural origins of the tale, but have come to the conclusion that it may be a parents' creation to explain the origin of rainbows to their child.

Pre-story Warm-up: Riddle Guessing Game

Share riddles with your listeners. You can prepare for this by writing a number of riddles on note cards, possibly relating to the theme of your story. If you have the time to collect specific riddles, do so, but don't worry if you don't, any kind of riddle will do. Tell your group that storytellers in the past used riddles before they told a story, and that after they hear and try to guess the riddles, they will hear a story. Be patient while they try to guess, and offer them clues to solving the riddles. Allowing time to try to solve the riddles encourages them to see a problem from all sides while maintaining a sense of humor. That is a great skill to have.

Below is a short list of some sample riddles we have used. With older children you can include more complicated "problem-solving" riddles.

What never gains weight no matter how big it gets?

A hole

What has teeth and can't eat?

A comb

What has ears but can't hear?

A stalk of corn

What is lighter than a feather, yet you can't hold it for ten minutes?

Your breath

What runs but has no legs and has a mouth but cannot swallow?

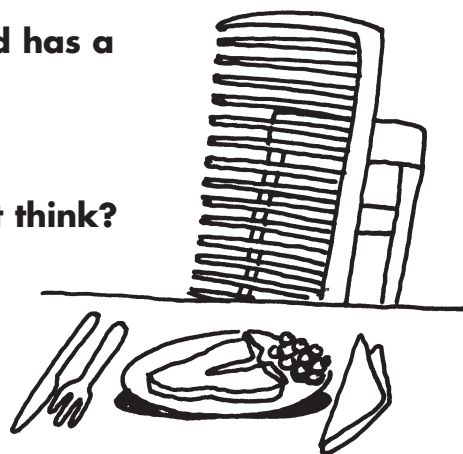
A river

What has a big head but can't think?

A cabbage

What goes up every time rain comes down?

Umbrellas



What does a cat have that no other animal has?

Kittens

Which side of an apple is the left side?

The side that hasn't been eaten

What flies forever and never rests?

Wind

The War for the Skies

A "How and Why" Tale

Back when the world was new, the sun and the clouds shared the sky equally, but never at the same time. Each had their own day alone in the sky.

The people below knew when the rains would fall or the sun would shine. Until the day of the fight.

One morning the Sun forgot which day it was. He woke up believing it was his day to shine, so he went to take his place in the sky.

To his surprise, the Clouds were already there. When the Sun saw the Clouds all around him he was furious. He roared, "Go home Clouds. I must take my place in the sky."

The Clouds yelled back, "This is our day to rain. Go back to sleep."

"I will not!" cried the Sun. "And don't you dare tell me what to do. I will dry all of you with my heat."

The Clouds were not afraid. They laughed at the Sun. "There are too many of us. You can't dry all of us up."

The Sun wouldn't budge and the Clouds wouldn't either. The Sun blazed fiercely as the Clouds grew dark with anger and threw torrents of rain at the Sun.

Down below on the Earth the people were terrified. They had never seen a war in the sky before. Soon the lands became flooded with water from the

rains, and lightning crashed, burning homes and trees. The people tried to find shelter from the winds and the rains, but there was nothing that could save them. Soon the waters were so high, their homes began to wash away.

Nothing was safe from the terrible battle raging in the sky. The people cried out to the skies, "Please stop this war Father Sun and Sister Clouds. Can't you share the sky the way you always have?" The noise from the raging war was too loud for the Sun or Clouds to hear the people's cries. So the people asked the Earth to intervene and stop the war.

When the Earth saw what was going on above her, she became angry and yelled at the Sun and the Clouds, "Stop your bickering. Can't you see you are frightening everyone?" The Sun and Clouds stopped fighting. "What are you fighting about?" the Earth asked.

"It is our day to rule the sky," the Clouds said. "Sun thinks it is his day, but he ruled the sky yesterday."

"I am not wrong," said the Sun.

"It does not matter who is right or who is wrong. You must stop all this fighting before you destroy everything that lives upon me."

"But who will rule the sky today?" asked the Clouds.

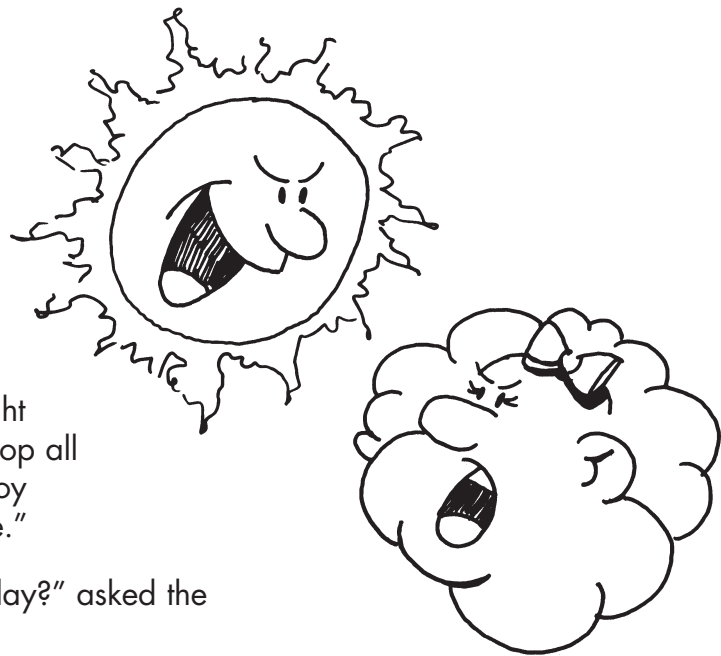
"We will let the Sun come out today because the rain needs to be dried up from your fighting."

"What shall we do from now on," asked the Sun, "if we cannot remember which day is our turn?"

"I do not know," said the Earth. "Perhaps from now on when the Clouds are in the sky, you will just have to wait until they are gone, Sun."

"But that could be every day," cried the Sun.

"Oh, no," said the Clouds, "we don't have enough rain for every day. We will share the sky fairly with you if you will not fight with us."



So they agreed, and for the time being they stopped fighting. To apologize to all the people on Earth, Sun and Clouds wove a multicolored blanket and draped it across the sky for everyone on Earth to see. The blanket they made together was a rainbow. Still to this day the Sun and Clouds sometimes battle to rule the sky. But when they end their battle, they give the world a rainbow. This is so we can see the fighting is over and they are again friends.

Fun Follow-up Activities

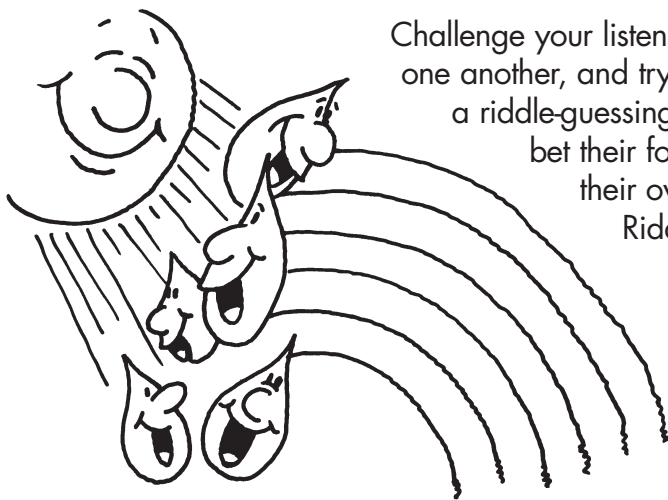
1. Science: Learn About Rainbows

You can use this story as a starting off point for the study of rainbows. Study prisms, the color spectrum, and the scientific explanation for why rainbows occur. You may even want to compare the scientific explanation for rainbows with the reason provided in the story. Interestingly, there are similarities between the story's explanation and the scientific explanation for rainbows.

A rainbow forms when raindrops refract, or split up, sunlight. The clouds create the rain, and the sun shines through the raindrops. In the story "The War for the Skies" the rainbow resulted from a conflict between the sun and the rain-producing clouds.

Many times traditional "how and why" stories were the precursors to what would be formulated into scientific fact. The concepts were not fully comprehended, but instinctively people understood the dynamic relationships of phenomenon in the natural world. Years later this phenomenon would be investigated and understood through scientific methodology.

2. Language Arts: Share Riddles



Challenge your listeners to share their favorite riddles with one another, and try to write their own. You can even have a riddle-guessing contest! In ancient times men might bet their fortunes, wives, daughters, and even their own lives on their ability to guess riddles. Riddle contests were serious business.

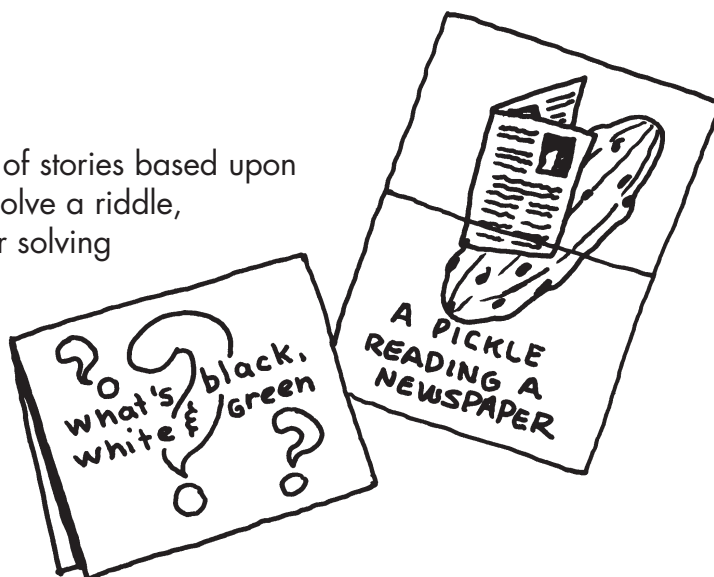
For your riddle contest have groups of listeners try to outwit each other at solving riddles. Have a timer handy and give them a specific amount of time to try to work out an answer. Don't forget to give them some hard ones.

3. Art Project: Make Riddle Cards

Give listeners construction paper or card stock folded in half. On the cover of the card have them write and illustrate the riddle question. Encourage them to illustrate what the riddle is describing. Inside have them write the answer and draw an illustration of the answer. For this project they can choose joke riddles, standard riddles, or riddles they have written themselves.

4. Creative Writing: Write a Story Based on a Riddle

Storytellers have created a variety of stories based upon the ability of a main character to solve a riddle, and the consequences of his or her solving it. One of our favorites is the well-known Yiddish tale called *The Clever Daughter*. In this story, a poor landowner's daughter is to greet a nobleman, but only under the conditions he imposes: when she visits him she must be neither dressed nor undressed, neither walking nor riding, and bearing a gift that is not a gift at all. She solves the riddle by wrapping herself in only a fishing net so that she is neither dressed nor undressed, she rides on a goat with her feet dragging, so that she is neither walking nor riding, and presents the nobleman a dove that flies away when she hands it to him so that it is not a gift at all. Because she has solved the riddle, the nobleman marries the clever daughter. This theme shows up in quite a few riddle folk tales: the sharp underdog defeating the wealthy person in a position of power and being rewarded for his or her wits. A solver of riddles held great status in times past.



Riddle solving also figures prominently in many other stories as a path to a happy marriage. Many stories involve riddles being solved as a prerequisite for winning the hand of the coveted bride or groom. This may have encouraged young couples to take on and solve the many riddles of married life.

Another famous tale is the tale of Oedipus and the Sphinx. To save Thebes, Oedipus solves the well-known Riddle of the Sphinx: "What walks on four legs in the morning, and on two at noon, and on three in the evening?" Oedipus gives the correct answer: "Humans, who creep in infancy on all fours, walk erect on two legs in the prime of life, and hobble with a cane for a third leg when old."

Challenge your listeners to create their own stories based upon the central theme of solving a riddle. You may want to do some research into more riddle tales to aid you in your quest. You will notice that there are different types of riddles in folk tales as well. Some are questions with a number of answers, as in "The Clever Daughter" story, and some, like the Riddle of the Sphinx, have only one answer.



Let the Listener Create an Ending

Storytelling Technique: Tell an Open-ended Story

One of the many valuable skills storytelling brings to its listeners is problem solving. The listener follows the chain of events and makes assumptions based upon the details provided in the story. A listener will also make predictions. As a storyteller you can check in with your listeners periodically by asking them to forecast events. You can take this technique even farther by letting the listeners create the ending to your story.

Look for stories with a problem to solve for open-ended tales.

This chapter's story is entitled "Freda the Frog Won't Jump." Can you guess what the problem is here? Freda won't jump. How do you make a frog who won't jump, jump?

Start an open-ended story by letting your listeners know they are going to hear a story you are having a problem with. You don't know the ending, and you're hoping they can help you find it. Then begin telling the story. Stop when you reach the problem to be solved and ask for their suggestions. How should we end this story? For instance, how are we going to get Freda to jump?

Listen to the answers. Have them justify their ideas. If their suggestions are appropriate, let the group act them out in the circle. Usually one or two answers will stand out as the most inventive. Once you have found those answers, you can vote as a group on which one is the best. You can even act out the entire story with the new solution and together end the story.

You can make numerous stories open-ended, allowing your audience to create their own solutions to story problems and develop their own endings. You should have an ending ready, just in case you need one, but this is rarely the case.

Pre-story Warm-up: Jump, Freda, Jump

Throughout the story, the listeners repeat this simple line, prodding Freda to get on with it and jump.

Teach it to your listeners beforehand.

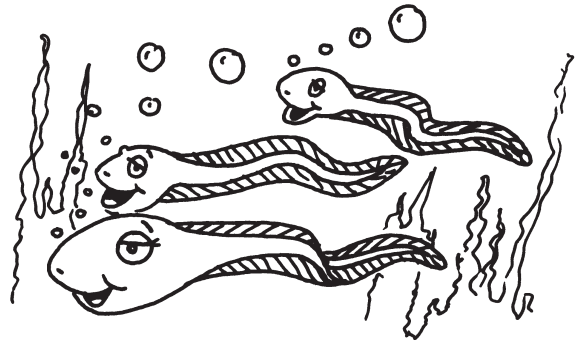
Jump, Freda, jump (clap)

Jump, Freda, jump (clap)

We're waiting for you,

All you gotta do is

Jump, Freda, jump (clap).



(Have them say the line while acting like frogs.)

Freda the Frog Won't Jump

A Problem-solving Tale

Hey, everybody, I have a problem. There's a story I know, but I don't know how it ends. It's like a dog without a tail. A story without an end. I was hoping you could help find an ending for the story. What do you think? All right—the story goes like this.

Freda the Frog was the youngest in a family of seven frogs. There was Mama Frog, Papa Frog, Freddy Frog, Francine Frog, Frip Frog, Frip Frog, and then came little itty-bitty Freda Frog. Freda didn't really like being the youngest. She was always the last to do everything. She was the last to burst out of her froggy egg. She was the last to learn to swim. She was the last to lose her froggy tail. She was also the last to come up out of the water and join her mama and papa on their lily pad. She was always the last one to eat. Soon she was going to be the last one to learn how to jump. It was awful.

Freda watched everybody in her family hop around all the time. She couldn't hop. She had just turned into a frog from being a tadpole. She wasn't even used to her legs yet. All she wanted to do was swim.

When she was a tadpole she would see her brothers and sisters hopping above her from lily pad to lily pad. Sadly she watched their sleek green bodies stretch out over the water as they leapt through the air. She wondered how they did it. She wondered if she would ever learn to jump.

The more she thought about it, the more she worried about it. "What if everybody in my family can jump, and I never learn? I am never going to learn to jump." She made up her mind she was never going to jump. Then the day came when Freda was no longer a tadpole, she was a full grown froggy, and she had legs. She knew what that meant. That meant they would expect her to jump.

Freda was so scared she wouldn't even try. Her whole family went hopping around in the swamp, and Freda waddled behind them like a duck. Everyone in her family shouted to her:

Jump, Freda, jump (clap)

Jump, Freda, jump (clap)

We're waiting for you,

All you gotta do is

Jump, Freda, jump (clap)

Jump Freda jump (clap).

But Freda wouldn't jump. She kept on waddling. All the other frogs in the swamp thought it was the strangest sight they had ever seen, a waddling frog, and they all called out to her:

Jump, Freda, jump (clap)

Jump, Freda, jump (clap)

We're waiting for you,

All you gotta do is

Jump, Freda, jump (clap)

Jump, Freda, jump (clap).

But Freda refused. Her family became more and more frustrated. They gathered with some of their friends and decided that they had to find a way to make Freda jump.

They talked. They made plans. They argued. They just couldn't figure out what to do. Maybe you can help them. How can we teach Freda to jump? What would you do?

Fun Follow-up Activities

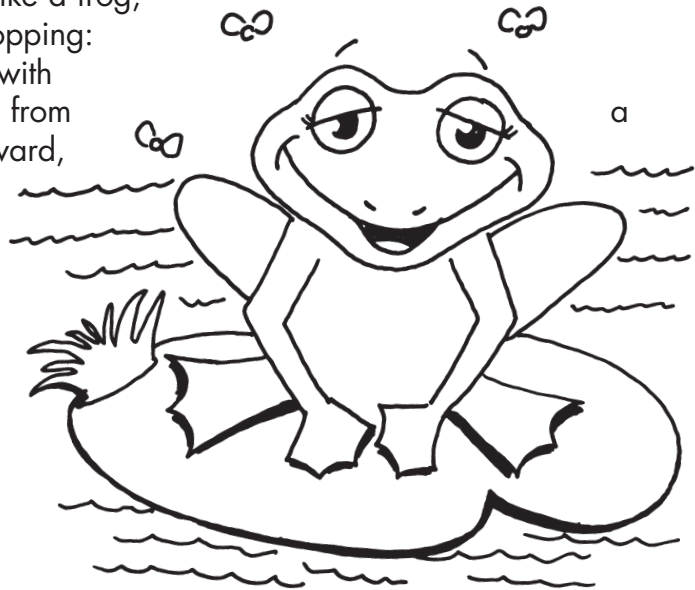
1. Art Project: Freda and Her Family

Have your listeners create a picture of Freda and her family when Freda was a tadpole. The bottom half of the paper would be undersea life, with Freda swimming underwater. The top half of the picture would be life above water, with the rest of her family on lily pads. They can include other sea creatures and insects, as well as some of the frogs swimming underwater.

2. Creative Movement: Hippity-Hopping

Explore hopping. Begin by hopping like a frog, and then explore different ways of hopping: hopping on one foot, with both feet, with feet together, with feet spread apart, from standing position, while bending forward, while bending backward, on your toes, on your heels, with hands in the air, with hands to the side, with knees bent, with knees straight. Have a hopping relay race, and then discuss which way was the easiest to hop, and why.

Create a dance from all the different types of hops or teach children the Bunny Hop.



3. Creative Writing: A How-to Story

Have your listeners write a story about what it's like to learn how to do something. Encourage them to describe what the process was like, how they felt, and the steps they went through to master their skill. Brainstorm ideas for topics to write about. Suggestions include riding a bike, cooking, walking home alone from school, sports activities, reading, and writing.

4. Science: Fun with Frogs

Have your listeners research frogs by having them write down what they already know about frogs and what they want to learn. Then get some frog books to use for research. Have them write and present a report about frogs. The report should include an illustration of the life cycle of frogs and what frogs look like in different parts of the

world. You may also have children write about famous frogs found in stories, songs, film, and television. There are quite a few examples of frog characters in a variety of sources.

5. Topic for Discussion: Being Afraid

Freda didn't hop at first because she was afraid she wouldn't be able to. Ask your listeners: Are there any things in your life that you have been afraid to do? How did you get over being afraid? What made you afraid? How does it feel to be afraid to do something? What can you do to make yourself feel less afraid?



Going on a Journey

Storytelling Technique: Take Your Listeners on a Journey

As a storyteller, you can take your listeners on a journey with you, both literally as well as figuratively. In this chapter it is a physical journey. You and your audience will move from one part of the room to another as you tell the story. This turns your story into a cooperative experience for your group, as you lead them to become part of the tale itself. When you tell the story, you physically describe and act out what is going on, and direct your listeners to follow you. You create a magical spirit of collective expression, as your group becomes a community participating fully in the land of story.

Start by getting everyone on their feet. You will lead them through the story the way a scout leader leads his or her troop.

This chapter's story, "The Elephant's Magic Drum," is a journey, or travel, story. These tales are commonly "coming of age stories" where a young son or daughter goes on a journey to find his or her place in the world.

Here, the young prince leaves his home in search of the musical instrument he will play for his father's birthday. On his way he comes across many things that your audience can portray. For instance, when he enters the forest they can transform themselves into the trees of the forest. When the birds come to ask for food, they can act as the many birds hopping around him. When he sees the dancing elephants, they can become the dancing elephants.

For the chase scene at the end of the story, you can all run around together in a circle being both the chaser and the chased. At the point at which the prince takes out his bag of seeds, have everyone say the magic words together and then as a group become the forest or the swamps that grow between the prince and the elephants.

This is a very active way of telling a story. Think of it as a dance piece during which your audience plays a variety of animals, objects, and environments throughout the story. You will need plenty of room to bring your group from site to site, so a large room, gym, or outside area is recommended.

Pre-story Warm-up: Circle Journeys with Drum Music

This story is about a journey and a drum, so to set the mood, send your listeners on a journey accompanied by drum music. Have them get into a circle. Begin beating your drum lightly and briskly so that it sounds like light rain. Have your listeners pretend that they are moving through light rain and lead them in moving this way around in the circle. Change the drumming and tell them that they are: climbing a large mountain, jumping over streams of running water, making their way through thick jungle brush, walking in a hot desert, battling a thunderstorm, wading through thick mud, crawling through a dark cave, and lying under a tall evergreen.

Keep in mind that when you go to end your journey you will want to end on a calm note. That way your listeners are ready to hear a story.

Story Background

Because of their rich storytelling tradition, many African countries provide wonderful examples of stories and are an inspiration for all storytellers. Although Africa is a vast continent with varying storytelling practices, there are notable characteristics found in a wide variety of African communities.



For instance, in many parts of Africa, storytelling plays a vital role in community interaction and education. Storytelling is a way of uniting and instructing the community about modes of behavior and expectations. Many of the stories the storyteller tells in a village or community setting are known already by the listeners, and can be embellished to include local “gossip” and to educate listeners about life issues. Storytelling is a way of getting personal without being personal and dealing with community and individual issues and concerns. The story here could be told to remind its listeners of the importance of sharing.

Along with their reputation as great teachers, African storytellers are great entertainers. They dance, drum, and pantomime in a way that delights and entertains the community of listeners. Part of what also makes African storytelling so fascinating is the vitality described by people who have witnessed the event. Not only are the storytellers

mesmerizing, the listeners are highly active participants. There is great noise as listeners shout or sing with the tellers and join in the drumming.

Keep this tradition in mind when you tell the following story. Have your listeners participate by using the technique described earlier and acting out anything that you can think of: the sounds of the instruments, the walk through the jungle, the elephant chase, the parade. Be noisy!

The Elephant's Magic Drum

An African Tale

A long time ago, in a kingdom far away, there was a King who had three sons. Every spring the King celebrated his birthday with a joyous parade.

Everyone joined in the King's birthday parade, singing, dancing, and playing instruments. Everyone, that is, except for his third son, who was too young to play an instrument, so he just watched. The oldest son played a zanza, or thumb piano. When he played his zanza it sounded like this,

Zimma zimma zanza,

Zimma zimma zanza,

Zimma zimma zanza,

I play my zanza.

The second son played a wooden flute. When he played his flute it sounded like this,

Floota toot toot,

I play my flute,

Floota toot toot,

I play my flute.

The youngest son went to his second brother and he asked him if he would teach him how to play the flute. His brother said, "You're too small. You might drop it or decide to use it as a sword. Go away."

So the youngest son went to his oldest brother and asked him if he would teach him how to play the zanza, but the oldest brother said, "You are too small. You might drop it or use it as a doorstop. Go away."

The youngest son got a great idea. He went to his father and told him, "Father I want to learn how to play an instrument, but my brothers will not teach me theirs. I will go on a journey to find an instrument that no one else plays."

His father wished him well. The young son packed a bag with food and clothing and set out on his way. He walked past the village and deep into the jungle. After walking all morning, he grew hungry. He sat on the trunk of a fallen tree and opened his bag. He took out a piece of bread and began to eat. Sunlight splashed green through giant elephant-ear leaves. Off in the distance he heard the sound of birds playing their flutes. It sounded like this,

Floota toot toot,

Floota toot toot,

Floota toot toot,

I play my flute.

They must have taught my brother how to play the flute, the youngest son thought. The birds flew out of the trees and said, "We can teach you how to play the flute if you give us some food."

The youngest son replied, "My brother plays the flute. I am looking for an instrument that no one has ever heard. But you may have some of my food." He shared his bread with them.

"We must give you something in return for your generosity," the birds chirped. "Here is a bag of seeds. If you are in trouble, throw the seeds on the ground and say, 'Seeds, seeds, return a good deed.'"

He took the bag, thanked the birds, and went on his way. Deeper and deeper into the jungle he journeyed. After many hours of walking, he was tired. It was time to sit and have something to eat.

He sat on a large rock next to a pond and took out an apple. He heard the frogs on the pond singing and it sounded like this:

Zimma zimma zanza,

Zimma zimma zanza,

Zimma zimma zanza,

I play my zanza.

"They must have taught my brother how to play the zanza," the youngest son said. Just then all the frogs hopped off their lily pads said, "If you give us food we will teach you how to play the zanza."

The youngest son said, "My brother plays the zanza. I am looking for an instrument that no one has ever heard before. You may have some of my food." He shared his apple with them.

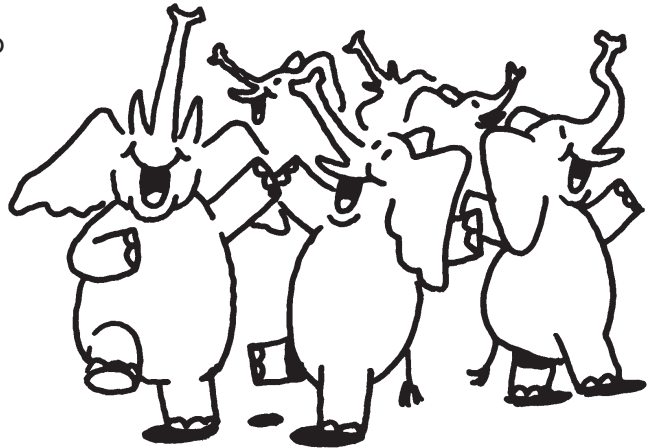
"We must give you something in return for your generosity," they croaked. "Here is a bag of seeds. If you are in trouble throw the petals on the ground and say, 'Seeds, seeds, return a good deed.'"

He took the bag of seeds, thanked the frogs, and continued on his way.

The next day he had reached the edge of the jungle. Far off in the distance he heard a strange sound. He followed the noise many miles across the hot desert with only his bag of food and a little sack of water to a great valley.

Down in the valley below there were thousands of elephants dancing. One elephant stood in the middle of all the dancers pounding his giant feet upon a hollow log that had been stretched with skins.

The youngest son had never seen an instrument like this. He loved the deep sounds it made. It was the most magical thing he had ever heard, and he wanted to learn how to play this instrument. The pounding of the elephants and the pounding of the instrument drew him closer and closer to the dancing elephants. When he finally reached their outer circle he said, "Would you teach me how to play your instrument?"



The elephants stopped and stared at the youngest son. The player picked up his instrument and cried out, "No one may play the magic drum of the elephants but the King of the Elephants, and I am the King of the Elephants. Now be gone."

So it was. The youngest son sat behind a tree and said, "I only wanted to play the instrument." He wept to himself. "I didn't ask to keep it. They are just like my brothers. They don't want to share." Down in the valley the drumming continued and the elephants were dancing. They danced and danced until nightfall came and they all fell asleep.

The youngest son stayed behind the tree and thought of different things he could do to learn how to play this instrument. He tried beating on his leg to keep the time of the King of the Elephants, but the sound was flat and fleshy. He tried beating on the tree but that was no good either. When the elephants had all fallen asleep, he decided there could be no harm in just trying the drum. "Just a little tap," he thought, "to see what it feels like. Then when I get home I can make one of my own."

He climbed down the hill and tiptoed into the center of sleeping elephants. The elephants could not have heard the youngest son among them, for they were all snoring like this: "Snnzzzzzzzz DADA!" Like a trumpet. They were making such a racket he could have stomped his way to the drum and sung a song without having been caught. When he got to the drum he felt the smooth hide top. He ran his hands down the hard wood sides. He took the strap and placed it over his neck. Then he began to play. He tapped ever so lightly with his fingertips. *Tippy Tippy Tap Tap.*

Then he pounded a little harder with the palm of his hand. Pum pum pum. Soon he found he was creating rhythms and melodies. Before he knew what he was doing he was banging away on the drum. Without even thinking about the elephants or what they would do to him if they caught him playing their sacred instrument.

Just then the King of the Elephants woke up and saw the youngest son playing his drum. He blew his trumpet as loudly as he could and yelled, "Seize him! He is trying to steal the drum." The youngest son saw the King of the Elephants coming after him and ran. He forgot he was wearing the strap that held the drum, and as he ran for his life, the drum came with him.

The elephants were right behind him. Then he remembered the gift that the birds had given him. He reached into his bag and took out the seeds. He threw them on the ground and said, "Seeds, seeds, return a good deed." A forest grew between him and the elephants. This did not stop the elephants. Each of them pulled up a tree with its trunk and tossed it to the side. The elephants were soon right behind him again.

He remembered the bag of seeds the frogs had given him. He reached into his bag and took out the seeds and threw them onto the ground and said, "Seeds, seeds, return a good deed." A giant muddy swamp appeared between him and the elephants.

All the elephants got instantly stuck in the mud. All the elephants, that is, except the King of the Elephants. He went around the swamp and he was right behind the youngest son. The King of the Elephants cried out, "Give me back my drum!" The youngest son stopped and turned. He didn't

realize he was wearing the drum. He took it from around his neck.
"All I wanted to do was play it. I didn't mean to take it. You should learn to share."

He tossed the drum to the King of the Elephants, and the King yelled "No!" The drum crashed to the ground and smashed into a million pieces. Then something wonderful happened. Each piece became a smaller drum and they all flew away. The King of the Elephants reached up and grabbed a drum for himself and returned home. The youngest son reached up and grabbed a drum that fit right under his arm to play in the parade.

When he got home he told everyone he had his very own instrument to play in the parade this year.

When everyone marched down the main street of town, the oldest son played his zanza.

Zimma zimma zanza,

Zimma zimma zanza,

Zimma zimma zanza,

I play my zanza.

The second son played his wooden flute.

Floota toot toot,

Floota toot toot,

Floota toot toot,

I play my flute.

And finally the youngest son came down the street with his drum keeping the beat,

Burrum Burrum Burrum,

Burrum Burrum Burrum,

Burrum Burrum Burrum,

I play my drum.

After the parade, he let everyone play on his drum. When they got home, they fashioned their own drums. Soon everyone played their drums together, creating a community of music. A group of drums playing together is the rhythm of life. They still play together to this very day.

Fun Follow-up Activities

1. Creative Dramatics: Explore Your Environment

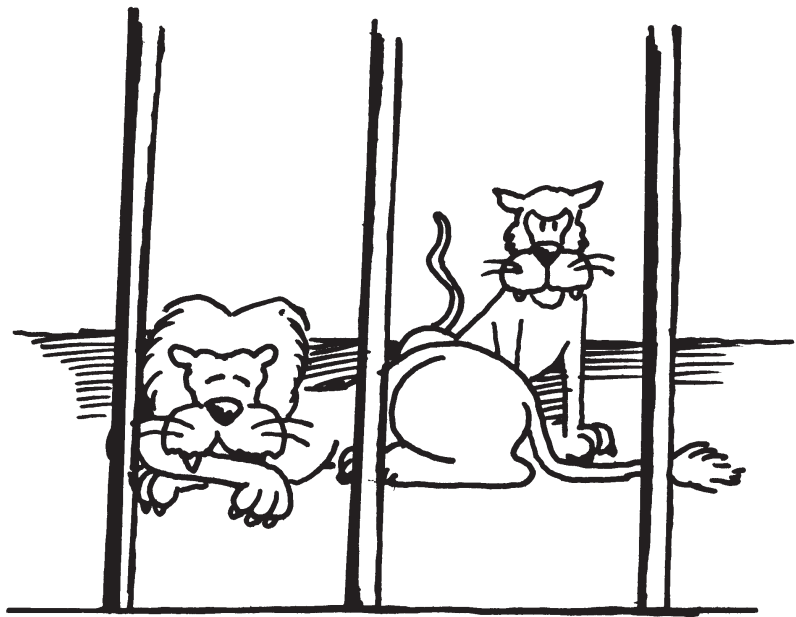
The following exercise focuses on imagining and creating a setting. It can be used with varying age groups. Keep it simple for younger children or make it more complicated for older kids.

Tell the participants that you are going to be working on creating environments. Have a list of environments you can easily use, or generate a list from the participants.

Environments include: a playground, the moon, a restaurant, a zoo, a department store. Have each person enter the environment and pantomime handling two objects in this environment. Make a list of everything that your listeners created.

Younger kids can simply play around in the environment, with you telling them what to deal with. For instance, "You are walking in a busy department store. It is very crowded, so you are watching where you are going. You are going to buy a birthday present for a friend. You see a toy that you think she will like, you stop, pick it up, and look at it..."

Older kids can invent the environment themselves. You can even have them enter the environment one at a time and have each person use what the others created in the environment. Encourage them not to worry about their pantomiming skills and to feel as comfortable as possible creating locations for stories to take place.



2. Language Arts: Write About a Journey

Discuss what a journey is with your listeners. A journey can be a personal quest, travel, or simply getting from point A to point B. Have your listeners write about a journey they take almost every day. Ask them how they get to school. Have them write about everything that they remember seeing and hearing on this familiar journey.

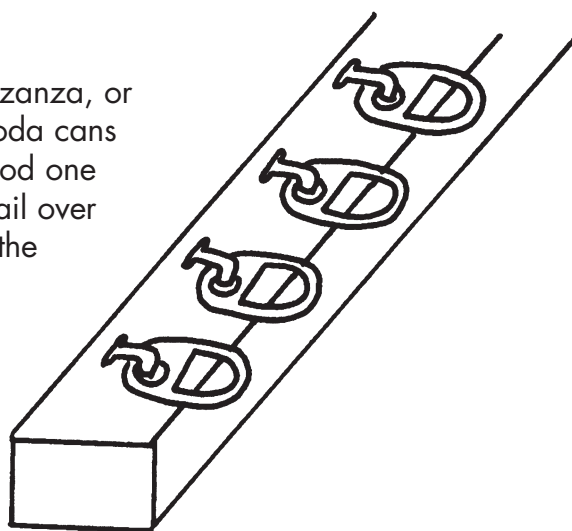
Then, ask them to bring a notebook and record everything that they notice on this journey. It should be as detailed as possible, noting sounds, smells, and visual data. Have them write again about this journey with all the information they have gathered.

This is also a great exercise for any storyteller to do. It makes you aware of details in our daily journeys that we may forget or never notice.

3. Art Project: Create Your Own Instruments

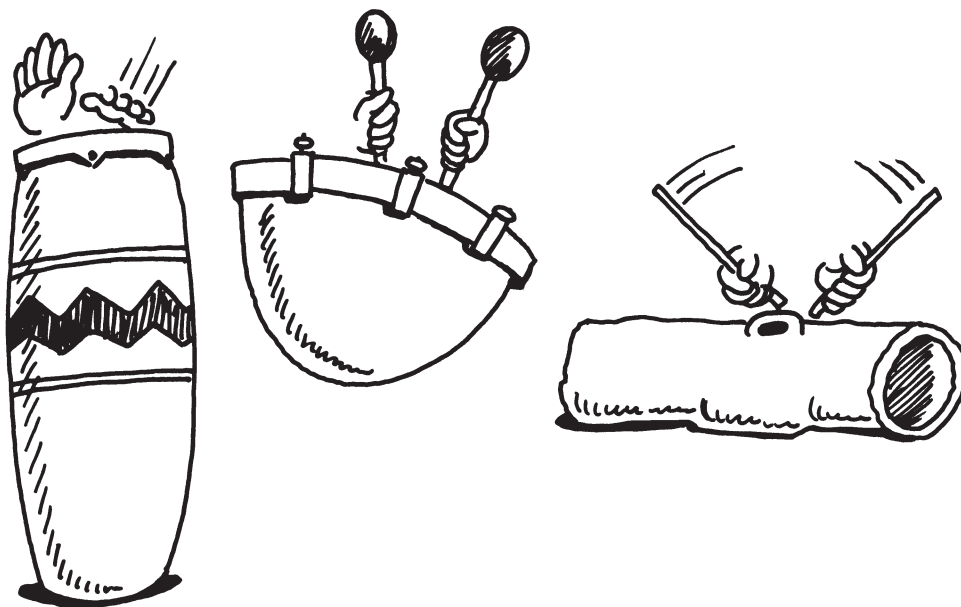
There are countless instruments that can be made with household objects.

- You can make drums from coffee cans or oatmeal containers. All you need to do is decorate your drum, seal the top with tape, and make drumsticks.
- Used film canisters make wonderful ankle and wrist shakers. Fill the canisters with beans or rice, seal them tightly with tape, glue them to a strip of leather or cloth for an anklet or bracelet, and then shake them about.
- Rubber bands and tissue boxes can make a guitar.
- You can fill bottles of water to different levels to make a xylophone or wind instrument.
- Two aluminum pie tins stapled together and filled with beans or rice create a tambourine. Decorate it.
- If you are ambitious you can create your own zanza, or thumb piano. Remove the flip top metal tabs from soda cans with a wrench. Bang a nail into a thick piece of wood one third of the way down the nail and then bend the nail over flat onto the wood. It should look like the picture at the right. Now nail the tabs onto the wood, secure on one side and hang over the nail on the other side. Pluck the metal tabs and you have a zanza. Shortening and lengthening the metal tabs over the edge of the nail will change the tone of your notes.



4. Music/Social Studies: All About Drums

Drums have great historical significance as well as entertainment appeal. Have your listeners write a report called "All About Drums." They should research drums in different cultures: what they look like, what they were made of, and what they were used for. They can also include a study of drums of today, answering questions such as: What types of drums are used by different musicians? Who are some renowned drummers today? Where are drums made? What are the sounds made by different types of drums? At what events is drum music heard?



Letting Your Listeners Perform with You

Storytelling Technique: Act out of the Circle

Acting out of the circle allows you to let your listeners perform with you. Before you begin telling your story, gather your audience into a circle where you are the focal point. Use the warm-up technique to prepare the audience for the fact that they are going to participate in the story actively. When you start the story pick a listener to perform the role of the first character.

For this story, first pick someone to play Ocelot. This listener acts out all of Ocelot's actions and repeats her lines after you. Keep the telling very simple because you will be starting and stopping a lot during the story. When it is time for your actors to join you in the story, say what they are to say clearly and indicate to them when it is their turn to repeat.

Even young children pick up on this technique fairly quickly. If they do not, just say, "It is your turn. Repeat what I have said." Then repeat it if you need to. Children love to perform along with you, and generally have very few inhibitions about jumping into the tale.

However, if this approach does not work for you, try telling the story alone first and then repeating it a second time, this time inviting your listeners to participate. Repeating the story brings your listeners closer to it so that they can perform on their own. You will want to keep yourself available as the narrator to step in and help whenever needed.

You will also find that repeated performances will bring a greater level of confidence to those who are acting out the story. When they become comfortable with the story and their roles within it, many young actors will start to see room for improvement. At this point they will begin to add to the story.

Pre-story Warm-up: From Seeds to Tree

To get listeners in the mood for this story, have them become trees. After all, this is a story about the tree of life.

Have everyone lie on the floor in a ball. Tell them the following: “Imagine that you are tiny seeds lying in the dirt, waiting to sprout. Feel the wet dirt all around you, and imagine that you are far, far, down deep in the ground. Now imagine that you are being watered, feel the wet mud all around you. Now you begin to grow, very, very slowly. You start to stretch toward the sky and reach out of the damp mud. Very slowly start to reach your whole body toward the sky, and come up to your feet as you reach your branches into the hot sun.

“Imagine that you are a beautiful, tall tree, with your roots planted firmly in the ground and your proud branches outstretched. Imagine that you are being pushed by a light wind, and you start to sway in the breeze. Now imagine that you are yourself again, and you sit underneath this splendid tree you have created. Imagine yourself sitting underneath this great tree, ready to experience a story.”

Story Background

This story is based upon a tale found in South American mythology and was adapted and embellished by one of the authors, Mark Pierce, and the children (ages 6–10) of the SMARTS collaborative in Norton, MA. They were told the original story, and in preparation for performing it as a group, the story was discussed as was the meaning it might have had for listeners many centuries ago and how people today could relate to what is known about the world now.

One of the students had just been studying the division of the continents. It was his idea to develop the story further to include the separation of the continents. Every time the story was worked on, the children were eager to develop characters, lines of dialogue, and action, while remaining true to the spirit and ideas of the original story. Their input had a profound impact on the version of the story included here.

The Tree of Life

Based upon a South American Folk Tale

A very long time ago, when the Earth was still asleep, the animals ruled the world. The land was bare and dismal and times were hard for the animals. All they had to eat were grass and roots. They grew tired of having so little to eat. Especially Ocelot. This is the tale I was told.

One day Ocelot’s stomach growled louder than the Jaguar. Unhappy about the prospect of eating grass and roots, she decided to go for a long walk to keep her mind off her appetite.

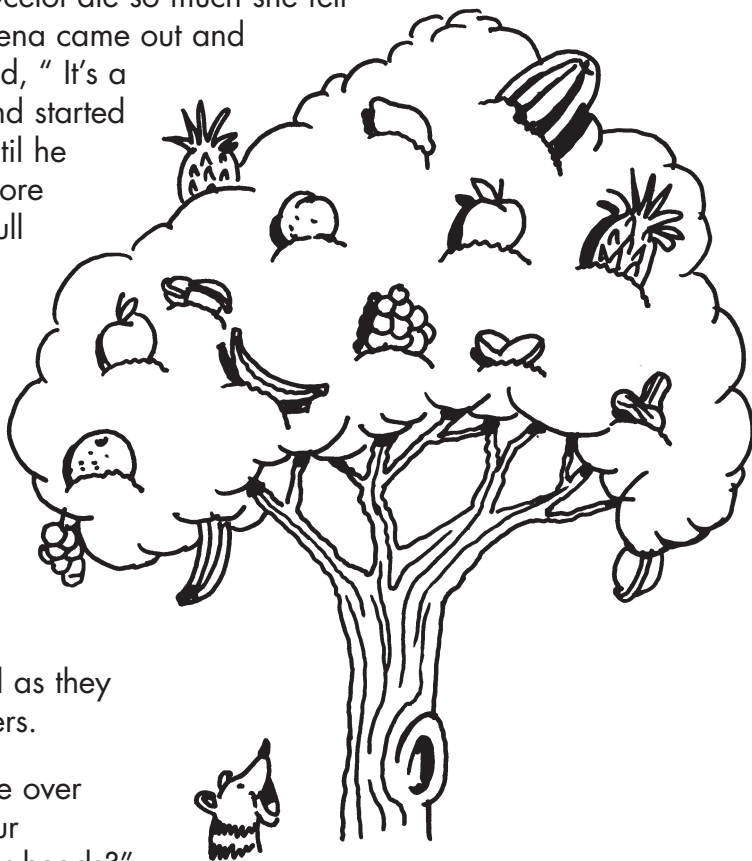
She walked and walked and kept on walking, hoping to find something good to eat. She wandered off into a part of the world where no one had ever gone before. Off on the horizon she saw a giant tree. As she drew closer to the tree she saw that on that tree grew all kinds of fruits, nuts, and berries she had never seen before. Ocelot stared at all of those colorful fruits, nuts, and berries and couldn't decide where to begin. So she pulled one fruit after another off the tree and began tasting all of them. They were exquisite. She cried out with glee, "It's a smorgasbord of food!" She ate and ate and ate some more.

Before long Ocelot was feeling full of food and sleepy, so she took a nap under the tree. When she woke up, she couldn't believe she had slept so long. She hurried back to join the others. Lion, the king of the animals, and a very observant king, asked Ocelot, "Why is your stomach bigger than your head?" Flustered, Ocelot didn't know what to say. She didn't want all the animals to know about her find. So she said, "I was so hungry I swallowed a rock. Now I am full."

Lion didn't really believe her. "Why would anyone eat a rock?" he thought. So he told Hyena to follow Ocelot the next day to find out where she went. Hyena followed Ocelot to the tree. Hyena hid behind a rock and watched as Ocelot ate so much she fell asleep under the tree. Hyena came out and looked at the tree and said, "It's a smorgasbord of food!" and started to eat and eat and eat until he couldn't eat anymore. Before long Hyena was feeling full of food and sleepy, so he took a nap under the tree next to Ocelot.

Many hours later they woke up and screamed when they saw each other. Ocelot said, "Don't tell anyone and we can keep this tree as a secret to ourselves." Hyena agreed as they went back to join the others.

When they did, Lion came over and asked, "Why are your stomachs bigger than your heads?"



Ocelot and Hyena both said, "We both ate rocks today. Now we are full." Lion did not believe either of them. He asked Gorilla to follow Hyena and Ocelot to see where they went and report back to him.

The next day Gorilla followed Ocelot and Hyena until they came to the tree and the two of them ate until they fell asleep under the tree. When they were asleep, Gorilla came out and looked at the tree and said, "It's a smorgasbord of food!" Gorilla ate everything she could grab until she was full of food and sleepy. She took a nap under the tree next to Ocelot and Hyena. When they all woke up, they looked at each other and screamed. Then Ocelot said, "Don't tell anyone and we can keep this tree as a secret." Gorilla agreed as they went back to join the others.

Again Lion came over and said, "Why are your stomachs bigger than your heads?" Ocelot and Hyena and Gorilla looked at each other and said, "We all ate rocks today. Now we are full." Lion didn't believe them and so he asked Zebra to follow them.

Zebra too came back with a big stomach and no believable explanation, so Lion had to ask another animal and another animal and another animal to find out what was going on. Finally, all the animals knew about the tree except for Lion. They decided they had to share the secret of the tree with Lion.

From that day on, all the animals lived around the tree. Each animal lived on the part of the tree where their favorite fruit grew. Monkey lived with the bananas. Gorilla lived with the oranges. Hyena lived with the mangoes.

One day Monkey climbed too near Gorilla's oranges and Gorilla accused Monkey of trying to steal her fruit. A fight began. Lion tried to stop the fight by roaring, but Monkey and Gorilla would not listen to his roars. Soon all the animals took sides in the fight.

"Monkey is always going after my mangoes," said Hyena.

"Don't be silly," said Elephant. "You're acting like Gorilla. Gorilla thinks everyone is after her oranges."

"You should talk, Elephant," said Ocelot. "If I go anywhere near your peanuts you blast your horn and stomp around."

"I do not."

"You do too," said Ocelot.

Before long, in the midst of all their fighting, they began to pull on their part of the tree to keep the other animals away from their fruit. They pulled and

they pulled and yanked so hard the tree began to pull apart. It split down the middle. Water burst up from the center of the tree. The land separated. The animals still clung to their section of the tree.

The tree split into seven parts, each section going its own way, becoming one of the seven continents. That is why there are seven different continents on the world today, and why there are all different types of fruits and different animals on all the different continents. It all started with the Tree of Life and one hungry Ocelot. At least that is what I was told.

Fun Follow-up Activities

1. Geography: Look at the World

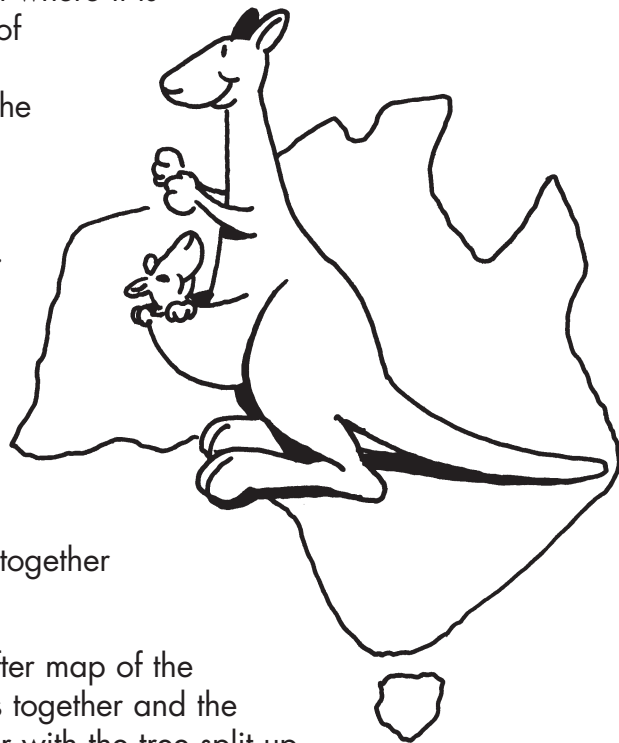
This story provides a starting point for further study into the geological positioning of the seven continents. Begin by looking at maps and globes and pointing out all the different continents. Compare the different sizes and varying terrains, and note the countries that exist in each continent.

2. Art Project: Make Maps and Animal Drawings

Make a map of the world. Cut out the continents to make a puzzle and see if you can fit the pieces together to make one large continent. Move them apart. Which direction did each continent have to move to get where it is today? Compare your findings to that of geologists. See if you can tell how this movement of the continents will affect the future of the world.

Now look at animals from around the world. Look at the most exotic animals. Those are the animals you want to use for this project, since exotic animals usually live in remote places. Have each person pick an animal they like and draw a picture of it. Cut out the animal and place it on the map where it belongs. Now put the continents back together with the animals where they belong.

You may want to draw a before-and-after map of the continents: one part with the continents together and the animals pulling at the tree, and another with the tree split up into parts and the continents where they belong.



3. Language Arts: Write a Story About Your World

The following is an exercise for your listeners. Ask: “What has always bothered you? Why does a dog always bark at the door when there’s no one there? Why are adults fascinated by the weather report? (It’s not like they can change it.) Why does it always rain when I want to go to a baseball game? Why is it always sunny out when I have to go to bed early?” Start by asking yourself some of these questions. Think of other things that bug you. You could brainstorm these questions as a class or work individually. Once you have a few questions, pick one you want to answer. Answer it in your story. Create a reason why it happened. For example: why are adults fascinated by weather reports? Here’s a story that answers that question.

Did you know that many, many years ago, before there were any buildings or houses and before there were any caves or holes in the ground and before there were any children, there were only adults and the weather.

Every day the adults would go to the center of the world. There they would gather together and hold hands and wait for the weather gods to come down from the skies to tell them what sort of weather they would have that day. As they waited, the people would sing songs, very quietly but sweetly they would sing, in hopes of pleasing the weather gods.

If the weather gods liked their song, they would send them sunshine and gentle rains to make the flowers grow. If the weather gods didn’t like their songs, they would send forth terrible storms. The adults knew that they had control over the weather, but only if they were very, very good and only if they sang very quietly and sweetly so as not to upset the weather gods.

Then one day they made a big mistake. One guy named Harold got sick of singing. He waited in secret behind a big rock for the weather gods to come down from the skies. When they did he jumped out and yelled at them, “Hey you weather gods you, we’re sick of singing for you. Why don’t you just give us nice weather all the time and cut out the games.”

Well, the weather gods did cut out the games. For many days it did nothing but storm and rain. Everyone was mad at Harold. They kicked him out of the adult world, and he became a child. He was the first child. When the weather gods stopped being angry, the sun came out. The adults could no longer sing for their weather; they just had to wait and see what would happen.

That is why adults are fascinated by the weather: they are waiting to see if the weather gods have forgiven them. That is also why adults don’t like loud music—they are afraid it might offend the weather gods.

Bilingual Storytelling

Storytelling Technique: Try Using Different Languages in a Story

The tale in this chapter is from Central America and includes several Spanish phrases from its original version. Any time you tell a story from another country, you can include phrases, words, or songs in the original language of the story. This allows your listeners to hear another language, and can add flavor to your telling. It is also a great way to add spice to a foreign folk tale and promote cultural understanding.

When using another language it is best if the phrases are repetitive, so that your listeners have a number of opportunities to hear and learn them. You can also include cognates in your story any place they fit. Cognates are words that sound the same in both of the languages being used. For example, Spanish cognates include: *no* (no), *pantera* (panther), *mama* (mother), *bebe* (baby), *fotografía* (photograph), *radio* (radio), and *papa* (father).

Pre-story Warm-up: Review Spanish Phrases

This story includes several Spanish phrases for your listeners to learn. Introduce them to the following:

la cucarachita: the little female cockroach

bonita: pretty

peso: dollar

perro: dog

¿Quieres casarte conmigo?: Will you marry me?

pantera: panther

toro: bull

ratón: mouse

olla: stew pot

Story Background

This story has its roots in Costa Rica, Panama, and El Salvador. Have your listeners locate these countries on a map. Research and discuss what life is like in these regions.

The story of “La Cucarachita Bonita” is an adaptation of a variant found in many collections. In some versions the character of La Cucarachita is instead an ant, La Hormiga, but the action is the same. The ending of the story has been changed for this version. Young children may be upset by the original ending. In the original tale, the mouse falls into the stew and dies, whereas in this version he is saved.

La Cucarachita Bonita

A Folk Tale from Costa Rica, Panama, and El Salvador

La Cucarachita Bonita was a delightful and playful little creature. And very hardworking. One day La Cucarachita Bonita was sweeping her front stairs when she found a peso sitting on the bottom of the stairs.

She picked it up and polished it clean and said, “I am going to take this peso and buy a pot of rouge.” She walked downtown and went to the store. There she asked for a pot of red rouge. “That will be one peso,” said the clerk. She happily gave him her peso.

La Cucarachita went home and stood before the mirror. She put some bright red rouge on her lips and then a little on her cheeks, and then she put on her best red dress and went for a walk. She was a lovely, charming sight, all red and happy. She was so breathtaking that all who saw her instantly fell in love with her.

Señor Perro, the dog, was the first to see her. He howled and said, “OOO, La Cucarachita es muy bonita. ¿Quieres casarte conmigo?” (Which means, “Will you marry me?”)

La Cucarachita Bonita boldly asked, “What will you give me if I marry you?”

“I’ll give you bones and things that smell bad and lots of dog food.” He then sang this song:

I am a dog and I chase cats.

I am a dog and I like my bones fat.



I am a dog and I like to fight.

I am a dog and I like boys to bite.

I am a dog and I like meat.

I am a dog and I can't be beat.

La Cucarachita said, "No, I cannot marry you, but thank you for your song. Good-bye Señor Perro." Señor Perro sadly walked off.

She had only walked a little way when Señor Pantero, or Mr. Panther, saw her. He snarled as he said, "OOO, La Cucarachita es muy bonita. ¿Quieres casarte conmigo?" ("Will you marry me?")

La Cucarachita Bonita boldly asked, "What will you give me if I marry you?"

Señor Pantero answered, "I'll give you lots of food, and you will get to live in a cave." Then he sang:

I am a panther and I love to run.

I am a panther and I find the tall grass fun.

I am a panther chasing rabbit is my game.

I am a panther and I am not tame.

I am a panther and that is my name.

La Cucarachita answered, "I am sorry, but I can't marry you, Señor Pantero, but thank you for your song." Señor Pantero growled sadly and slunk away as La Cucarachita Bonita walked off.

She had only gone a little way when Señor Toro, the bull, saw her. He kicked the dirt back behind him and he said, "OOO, La Cucarachita es muy bonita. ¿Quieres casarte conmigo?" ("Will you marry me?")

La Cucarachita Bonita boldly asked, "What will you give me if I marry you?"

Señor Toro answered, "I will give you beautiful, sparkling matador clothes, and front row seats to all the bullfights." Then he sang:

I am bull and I do my thing.

I am a bull and I wear a nose ring.

I am a bull and my horns are long.

I am a bull and I am mighty strong.

I am a bull and this is my song.

La Cucarachita Bonita said, "I am sorry Señor Toro, I can't marry you, but thank you for your song." Señor Toro snorted angrily as he walked away.

La Cucarachita Bonita had not walked very far before she met Señor Ratón, the mouse. He was very excited when he saw her, and as he twisted his whiskers he said, "OOO, La Cucarachita es muy bonita. ¿Quieres casarte conmigo?" ("Will you marry me?")

La Cucarachita Bonita boldly asked, "What will you give me if I marry you?"

Señor Ratón answered, "I will give you a place by my side." Then he sang:

I am a mouse.

I'm gentle and sweet.

I am the mouse

You have been waiting to meet.

I am a mouse.

People run from me and scream.

I am a mouse.

I am as peaceful as I seem.

I am a mouse.

I love to eat cheese.

I am a mouse.

Say you will marry me, please?"



La Cucarachita Bonita said, "Yes, I will marry you, Señor Ratón." He squeaked with joy.

So it was that La Cucarachita Bonita and Señor Ratón wed. Everyone attended their wedding, including Señor Perro, Señor Pantero, and Señor Toro. They were as happy as any couple could be. They lived together and were very comfortable in each other's company. Until one day, a horrible thing happened.

La Cucarachita Bonita had prepared a big pot of stew in the olla, or stew pot, for their dinner. The olla was filled with rice and cabbage and sausage, Señor Ratón's favorite dinner. Then she prepared to go off to church.

She told Señor Ratón to stir the stew in the olla while she was gone. "But don't taste the stew until I come home," she proclaimed. Then she left.

Señor Ratón did what he was told, and a little while after she left he went to stir the stew. *Ooooooh*, it smelled wonderful.

"What can be the harm in just one taste?" He put the spoon into the pot, filled it with a little stew, and brought it to his lips.

Just as he did so, he lost his balance and he fell into the hot stew. Señor Ratón cried out, "¡Ayúdame! ¡Ayúdame! I have fallen into the olla! ¡Ayúdame! ¡Ayúdame! I have fallen into the olla!" No one heard his cries.

Far away at church, La Cucarachita Bonita was praying when an angel came down and whispered into her ears. "Cucarachita Bonita, your husband has fallen into the olla. You must go home and save him."

La Cucarachita Bonita jumped up and ran home as fast as she could. When she got there, she heard her husband crying out, "¡Ayúdame! ¡Ayúdame! I have fallen into the olla. ¡Ayúdame! ¡Ayúdame! I have fallen into the olla!" La Cucarachita Bonita ran into the kitchen and grabbed the big spoon and reached it into the stew. "Ratón, grab this spoon and I will pull you out." He grabbed the spoon and she pulled him out of the stew. "Now go and clean yourself off. You are covered with stew."

That night all of Ratón's friends came over for stew. They ate heartily and all of them said, "La Cucarachita Bonita, this is the best stew I have ever had. What is that unusual flavor you have added to the stew?"

La Cucarachita smiled at her husband and replied, "It is my secret ingredient." Her husband laughed as they all ate happily this day and for the rest of their lives. That is the story of "La Cucarachita Bonita," a folk tale from Costa Rica, Panama, and El Salvador.



Fun Follow-up Activities

1. Creative Dramatics: Act in Pairs

Because this story has one central character who meets many characters, it is a perfect story for paired acting. Let everyone in your group find a partner. Once they are in pairs, one actor will play La Cucarachita Bonita and the other actor will play all the other characters. After rehearsing a few times, let some of them perform the story for the rest of the group. See how many of the Spanish phrases they remember.

Now have your partners go back and do it again. This time give them Spanish-English dictionaries and have them substitute as many English phrases with Spanish phrases as they can. You can make it a competition, if you want, with the partners who substitute the most Spanish phrases for English phrases becoming the winners.

Paired acting is also a good activity for a parent and child.

2. Art Project: Character Masks

Make masks based upon the different characters in the story using card stock, construction paper, and any other materials you have handy.

3. Language Arts: Write a Marriage Proposal Song

Using the format of the marriage proposals in the story, have your listeners write marriage proposals of their own, from any animal's point of view. They should write at least six lines, and they do not have to rhyme if the writer doesn't wish them to.

4. Supplemental Activities: Spanish Around the World

Get a large map of the world. Using an encyclopedia, find all the countries in the world where Spanish is the national language. Color those countries red. Do the same for English-speaking countries. Then compare how much of the world is Spanish-speaking and how much is English-speaking. Try doing this with a third language, perhaps French or Chinese. This can be an ongoing project for your listeners. Let them fill in as many languages as they want to investigate.

Exploring the World With Stories

Storytelling Technique: Learn the Culture and Then Use It in Your Story

As a storyteller you are a cultural ambassador, passing along the stories that are representative of people throughout the world. When you are presenting stories from a culture other than your own, you should familiarize yourself with that culture, so that you can remain true to the spirit of the story. You may wish to tell stories that are only from your cultural background. Many professional storytellers make a living telling stories that were passed down from their ancestors, and they do so with proper reverence and respect.

For many people, however, there may come a time when you choose to tell a story that comes from a part of the world you know little or nothing about. That is when you will need to use your research skills. Go to the library and look for photographs, artwork, magazine articles, and historical information about the country from which the story comes.

You may also choose to visit the travel section of your library or bookstore. Travel books can be an excellent resource. Some tend to focus on restaurants and sites, but many include information on culture, customs, and even a thumbnail history of the nation. Other sources for cultural information are the country's embassy and the Internet. A travel guide can give you a visual reference for your story, making the location specific and clear for you.

How to Use Cultural Knowledge

Once you have the information that you want about, say, Vietnam, Micronesia, Afghanistan, or Turkey, how are you going to use it in the story? Let it influence the story the way oregano influences the flavor of spaghetti sauce! It should never overwhelm the story. Add a dash of what you know. Spice it up with some real history. Toss in a dash of customs or the name of an indigenous flower.

The most important thing that you want to learn from your research is behaviors. This knowledge will affect how you tell your story. So much of what we convey in our storytelling is through how we choose to display the behavior of the central characters. Read about social behavior. If you can be true to the customs, attitudes, and influences of a particular region, you will be giving your listeners a more accurate and precise story.

Pre-story Warm-up: The Statue Game

In the following story, the main character must make herself as still as a lampstand. To help your listeners understand this experience, have them pretend that they are statues. Ask them to freeze in interesting positions and hold them whenever you give a signal, perhaps the sound of a bell. Time your participants and see who can freeze in one position the longest.

Story Background

This story takes place in Vietnam. Before telling the story, show your listeners where Vietnam is located on a map. Point out that it is a small country south of China. Vietnam's shape resembles the letter S, and is often referred to by the Vietnamese as "a bamboo pole with a basket of rice on each end." The "baskets" are two river deltas, and the "pole" consists of mountain ranges running along the western border.

The story of "The Lampstand Girl" is an adaptation of a variant found in *The Brocaded Slipper and Other Vietnamese Tales* by Lynette Dyer Vuong. The original tale tells the experience of a shipwrecked princess, rather than the character of Tam. The adaptation included here was the result of a long-term project with English as a Second Language (ESL) classes in Providence, RI. As part of this project, storytelling was used to bridge understanding among groups of recent immigrant students.

The changes made in the story of "The Lampstand Girl" were the result of the input of the Vietnamese students, who were 11–13 years of age, and especially the Vietnamese girls, one of whom provided the basis for the character of Tam. Their classroom teacher had told us that these Vietnamese girls had been particularly shy and quiet, and had suggested directing a story to their needs. The resulting story was a favorite among all students, and it was great for everyone to witness the vocal delight and enthusiasm of the formerly shy young girls. They acted out the story, retold it themselves, and shared their experiences when discussing the story of this young girl who was forced to become a lampstand.

The Lampstand Girl

Based upon a Vietnamese Tale

Tam's friend Kim returned from the marketplace with important news. She ran through the rice paddies shouting, "Tam! Tell your grandmother she must go to the Citadel of Dai La. The Emperor's son is very ill and no one can cure him. Your grandmother knows all the herbs of the forest. She can cure him with one of her broths."

Emperor T'ang had come down from the North to visit Vietnam with his family. For many hundreds of years, Chinese emperors claimed Vietnam as their own. They ruled over the country and the Vietnamese people enforcing Chinese laws. Sometimes the Chinese emperors were kind to Vietnam, and sometimes they were cruel. Emperor T'ang had always been kind to Vietnam.

"The Emperor sent word that if anyone can save his son's life they will be greatly rewarded," Kim said. "Tam, your grandmother can save him. Go tell her at once."

Tam ran to the thatched hut where she lived with her mother, father, and grandmother. When she found her grandmother, she told her the news. "You must leave right away to save the little Emperor. He is at the Citadel, and they fear he will die."

Her grandmother laughed. "I am too old," she said. "You will go, Tam."

"Me?" Tam said in disbelief.

"You have helped me fix my cures for many years now. You have watched, and I know you have learned. You are ready to take my place. You go and save the little Emperor. I cannot travel that far."

"I must go?" Tam asked.



"Yes, you are young and strong. Dai La is very far from here. Get yourself ready and in the morning you will leave."

When the sun rose Tam set on her way. The journey was long and after many days of travel, she arrived at the Citadel of Dai La.

She stood before the gates spellbound. The door to the fortress was made of rough, hewed wood and loomed so high above her it made her dizzy. "Who could have built such an amazing place?" she wondered.

Two guards stood at the door. "What is your business, little girl?"

Tam bowed. "I have come to save the Emperor's son."

The two guards laughed. "You think you can save him when all the doctors have failed. Go, then." They pushed the mighty doors open and pointed to a stone building. "The Emperor's Court is in there. The little Emperor T'ang waits for you, girl. You can try and save him, but I wouldn't want to be you if he dies."

She stepped in. The doors slammed behind her. Her knees wobbled.

"Why have I come?" she thought. "What if I cannot save him and he does die? What would happen?"

When there was no one around she ran over to the building and slipped into a dark hallway to collect her thoughts. There at the end of the hall a golden light glowed from a room. Silently she stepped inside.

Canary-colored scarves of silk fluttered everywhere. Amber and crimson flowers stretched from brightly glazed vases. Giant fluffy pillows blanketed the floor, and from under one of those pillows a head poked out. A beautiful young Chinese princess with long, black hair and coal-black eyes stared at her. "What are you doing here, vagabond?" the princess demanded.



"I have come to save the little Emperor," Tam stammered. "I was trying to find my way to the court. I got lost."

The princess looked Tam up and down and smiled, "So, you have come to save my little brother, have you? What makes you think you can save him when all the doctors have failed?"

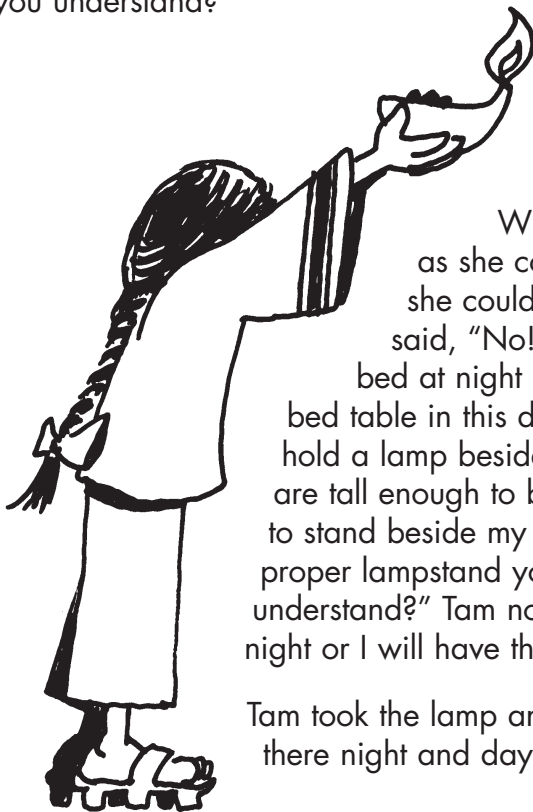
Tam bowed, "My grandmother knows all the herbs of the forest. She has cured many people in my village. She has taught me her cures, and I believe I can help your brother."

"What makes you think that my brother, a prince, could have the same common ailment that infected the people of your village?"

The princess watched as Tam tried to find an answer. "You must pass some tests in order to see my brother. I must make sure you are not a spy. Do as I say or you will not be allowed to see my brother. Do you understand?"

"Your brother is very sick. Wouldn't it be best if I saw him right away?"

"What if you have come to kill him? I cannot let you see him until I know you are trustworthy. Do not ask any more questions, or I will have the guards throw you to the tigers." Tam didn't say a word. "This is my room," the princess said. "Your first test is to clean it from top to bottom. Do you understand?"



Tam cleaned, scrubbed, and shined everything in the room while the princess read her books and instructed her in how to clean.

When she finished, Tam was as tired as she could be. Tam asked the princess if she could see the little Emperor. The princess said, "No! I need a lampstand. When I go to bed at night I like to read. They do not have a bed table in this dreadful country that is tall enough to hold a lamp beside my bed at just the right height. You are tall enough to be my lampstand. I want you to stand beside my bed holding this lamp. To be a proper lampstand you must stay perfectly still. Do you understand?" Tam nodded. "You must not move day or night or I will have the guards throw you to the tigers."

Tam took the lamp and stood by the bed. She stayed there night and day not moving a muscle.

One afternoon when the princess was gone, Tam put the lamp down and stretched her aching body. Suddenly she heard someone coming. She grabbed the lamp and went back to her place.

It was the Emperor coming down the hall. As he passed his daughter's room he saw something very unusual. It was a lampstand, fashioned like a statue of a peasant girl. "What beautiful work," he thought. "Where could my daughter have found this piece? I must ask her. The craftsmanship is remarkable. It looks just like a real girl."

He stepped over to the lampstand and inspected it closely. Tam's arms ached, her legs were numb, and her head was throbbing. A single tear rolled down her face. She prayed the Emperor would leave soon so that she could put down the lamp, but the Emperor was fascinated by this new find. He looked closer and closer. He even touched her clothes.

"This is enchanting. They used real rags. What a wonderful idea. The skin is so life-like. Why, there's even a tear on the cheek." He reached out to touch the tear on her cheek. Tam screamed. He screamed. He leapt back in terror. Tam leapt back in terror and dropped the lamp.

"Oh my! I am so sorry," Tam said. "I will clean this up. I am so sorry."

"Who are you?" the Emperor demanded. "And why are you in my daughter's room?"

"I am humbly sorry, Your Highness. I did not mean to startle you. I have come to cure your son, if only I could pass the tests you have set so I could see him."

"What tests? What are you doing here?"

Tam explained everything that had happened since arriving at the palace. The Emperor was furious.

"Your Highness, please do not judge your daughter harshly. She must have her reasons for behaving this way."

"And what would they be?"

"Only she can tell you that. Now let me see your son before it is too late. Please take me to him."

The Emperor led her to his son's bedside. The little Emperor shook with fever. His breath was slight and cold.

"Please take me to a fire where I can prepare the broth," Tam said.

The Emperor's servants led her to the kitchen. Tam took out her bag of herbs. Everyone worked quickly to assist her. Soon the broth was ready. When she returned to the little Emperor's side, everyone watched nervously. The Emperor sighed, "I hope you are not too late."

Tam held the bowl up to the little Emperor's lips. The boy opened his eyes and took a slow, careful sip of the soup.

The next morning the fever broke. The little Emperor sat up in bed and asked for his breakfast.

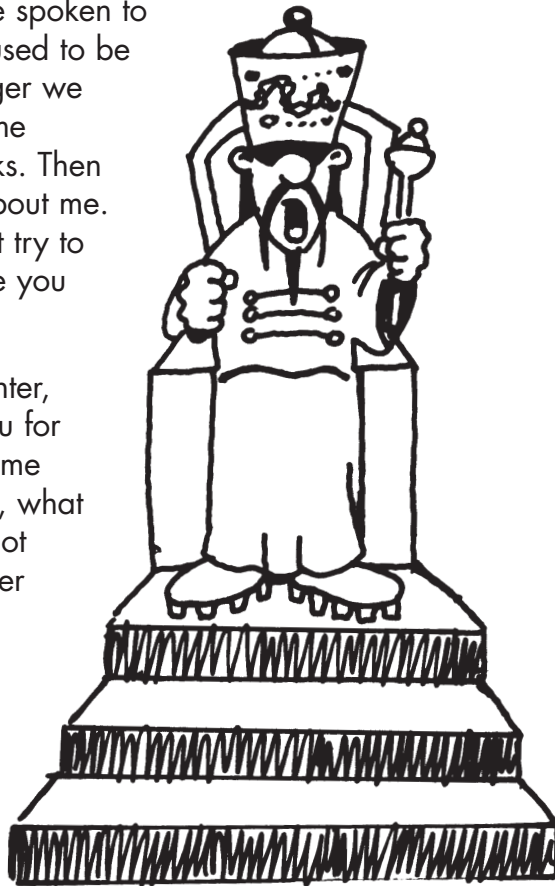
Emperor T'ang rejoiced. His son would live. Now to deal with the princess. When she heard that the Emperor had discovered her lampstand girl, she tried to flee the Citadel, but the guards stopped her and returned her to her room. There she stayed with soldiers at her door until the Emperor sent for her.

"What do you have to say for yourself, young lady?"

Defiantly, she glared at her father and replied, "That, Father, is the most you have spoken to me since my brother was born. I used to be special to you. When I was younger we played games together, you told me stories, and we went on long walks. Then he was born and you forgot all about me. I did not try to kill him. I just didn't try to save him. I thought if he was gone you would love me again."

The Emperor was stunned. "Daughter, you are right. I have neglected you for too long." He paused for a long time before he spoke again. "However, what you did to Tam was cruel. Had I not discovered your game, your brother might have died."

Suddenly Tam interrupted. "Your Highness, what she did saved your son's life. She has not told you the whole story. When I first came to this palace I was afraid. I wanted to leave rather than risk shaming myself. If your daughter had not



discovered me sneaking about the palace I may not have had the chance to save your son's life. She was right—she had no way of knowing that I was not a spy. You should thank her."

The Princess was shocked. "You should not thank me. I am not proud of what I did. I did not see clearly. I made you a lampstand when I should have made you a friend."

"Well, I have already been your lampstand, now I can be your friend. Being your friend would be more enjoyable."

"Yes, it would," said the Princess.

"Well, not only have you earned a new friend," said the Emperor, "but for saving my son's life you shall be rewarded."

"Your Highness, I would like to give the reward to my village. We are in need of many things, like a new school and a hospital."

"Done," said the Emperor. "We must visit your village and give the people their reward."

When her friends saw Tam return home on the back of an elephant with the Emperor of China, they could barely contain their joy.

Tam's grandmother was eager to see her. Tam told her all about her adventure. "How proud I am of you, my child," her grandmother said.

The Emperor stayed in Tam's village for many days, and while he was there he made his daughter clean Tam's thatched hut from top to bottom. Everyone laughed, but the princess was glad to do it for her new friend.

Fun Follow-up Activities

1. Social Studies: Study Vietnam

Have your listeners engage in further study of Vietnam. Discuss the climate. It is subtropical and is subjected to summer and winter monsoons, making the annual rainfall 80 inches or more. Research monsoons.

One of the main crops of Vietnam is rice. Eaten daily, it is the most vital food in the Vietnamese diet. Rice grows in flooded fields called paddies. Other common crops grown in Vietnam include sweet potatoes, corn, coffee, rubber, oranges, pineapples, and coconuts.

You may also wish to research styles of clothing, animals, types of shelter, modes of transportation, and political history.

2. Creative Dramatics: The Mirror Game

In the story of “The Lampstand Girl,” when Tam had to remain as still as a lampstand, she had to have tremendous powers of concentration and focus. The Mirror Game develops the power of concentration. Let everyone find a partner. Choose one person to be the Leader, and the other to be the Mirror. Tell the Leader to begin moving very slowly, and whatever moves they make must be mirrored by the Mirror. Both participants must maintain eye contact. Encourage the Leader to make many varied motions as the Mirror copies them. For example, they can make faces, spread their arms, flex their hands, move their hips, and so on, as long as they maintain eye contact and do not move so swiftly that it would be impossible to mirror the actions.

After several minutes, allow the partners to switch.

3. Language Arts: Tell the Story As the Prince

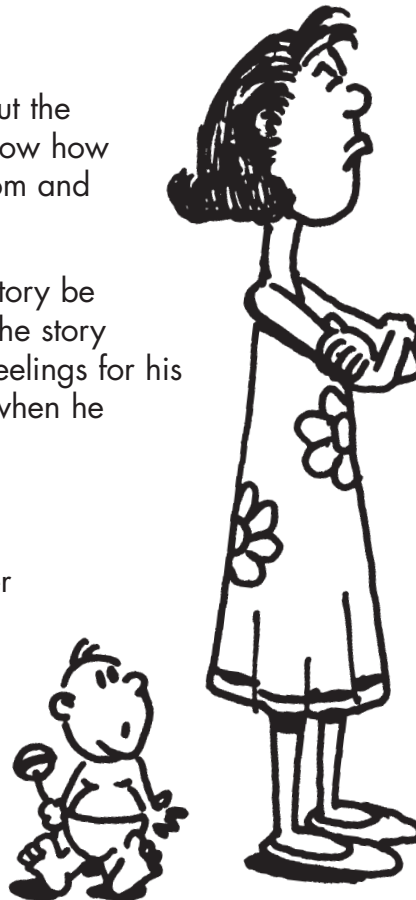
“The Lampstand Girl” lets us know quite a lot about the feelings of the older sister, but we do not really know how the little Emperor felt about his place in the kingdom and what happened to him.

Imagine that you are the Prince. How would this story be different for you? Have your listeners write or tell the story entirely from the Prince’s perspective. Include his feelings for his sister and father, what was going on in his mind when he became ill, and his view of how he was cured.

4. Topic for Discussion: Sibling Rivalry

The older sister in the story was very jealous of her little brother. Discuss how she felt and talk about the problem of sibling rivalry. Is sibling rivalry something that any of your listeners have experienced? How does it make you feel? If you were the older sister, would you make the same choices the older sister in the story did? How would you have handled your feeling of jealousy? Were her feelings of envy justified?

Do you think there was a better way she could have handled her situation?



What choices would you have made? Finally, how was the older sister changed by her experience? What kind of person do you think she will become as a result of her experience?



How to Develop Characters and Make Your Listeners Jump

Storytelling Technique: How to Create Characters and Suspense

We are all mimics. We have all found ourselves relating an event or story involving someone else, slipping into an imitation of that person. It may have been a vocal inflection, a gesture, an attitude, or even an accent that we used to indicate who we were imitating. These impersonations are more specific than you know, and they are genuine impressions that you can use in your stories.

“George the Lamplighter” is an example of a story from an unknown origin. A friend, Rochel, relayed to us bits and pieces of a bedtime tale his aunt told him when he was little. It involved a character named George the Lamplighter who had a wooden leg, went around snatching little children, and walked making a *clomp shump* sound. That was the basis for creating the story in this chapter, “George the Lamplighter.”

To make the story real for you, choose people from your own life as models for all the characters except George. For example, one of the authors, Mark Pierce, likes to model the two girls and the Uncle Bob characters after people in his own family. Knowing the characters in the story usually makes it easier to describe them and make them real to listeners.

When you are working on characters for stories, you too can base them on real people. Make the characters specific. If you are telling an anecdote and the characters have no names, give them names. Choose people you know, whom you can easily visualize, such as friends, family, or even TV stars if you want. If the characters are animals, you may want to think of cartoon characters. Experiment with the following characteristics when creating characters:

1. What pitch is their voice in? Do they have a low, high, or mid-range voice?
2. Do they have any special vocal qualities? Are they hoarse sounding, screechy, whiny, nasal, or raspy?
3. How loud are they? Do they speak loudly or softly?

4. How fast or slow do they talk?
5. How do they move? Do they have any special gestures or physical characteristics?
6. What do they want in the context of the story? What are their actions and objectives?
7. Do they speak with an accent? (Note: If you are doing an accent for a character, be discreet. Don't lay it on too thick. Bad accents can be offensive and reinforce stereotypes.)

Rehearsal Versus Performance

All stories are made up of characters. Some stories have only one or two distinct characters. Other stories are not that straightforward and feature a multitude of characters that come and go. When considering personalities for characters, try rehearsing them before you perform them live. When you practice a character for a story, rehearse them big—bigger than you would ever want or dare to do them. Take them to an extreme; air them out; be generous with their gestures, tics, accents, and personality traits. When you have practiced all of your characters this way a few times, you will find the things that distinguish one from another. Once you have done that, you need to tone them down for your performance. Keep what you like but make it smaller and more personal. Remember, storytelling is theater of the mind. Don't make your characters so big that you take away from your audience the treat of imagination. Leave them enough room to fill in some of the details on their own.

Creating Suspense

Like “Long, Long Fingers and Ruby, Ruby Lips,” this is a “jump story.” You will want to scare and surprise your listeners so much that you actually make them jump. The trick to making a scary story a good jump story is to draw your audience in, keep them on the edge of their seats, and when they least expect it, you let out the BANG! That will make the jump work.

Pre-story Warm-up: Life Without Electricity

Before telling this story, have children imagine how different the world must have been without electricity. It helps to set the mood for the story and provides background information. You can discuss how oil lamps worked. Describe how you had to strike a match to light a wick on a lamp and then had to lower the globe.

Brainstorm what life would have been like without electricity. Discuss all of the conveniences that would not have been available. For instance, most children are fascinated by the idea of a world without TV. Have them imagine what children

did a hundred years ago without TV. After discussing this concept, go over and turn out the light and start the story.

George the Lamplighter*

Origin Unknown

I'll never forget the night I was walking with my aunt Ruth and aunt Jean after dinner when all the streetlights on our street came on at once. Jean and Ruth both laughed and Ruth said, "What does that remind you of?"

Jean replied, "George the Lamplighter."

I asked, "Who is George the Lamplighter?" They told me this story.

When my aunt Jean and aunt Ruth were just little girls, six and seven, they lived in the city of Philadelphia. This was back in a time before there was any electricity, and so there were no electrical lights. To light a room, they used an oil lamp.

The same was true for street lights. The streets of Philadelphia would have gone dark had it not been for George the Lamplighter.

Each night George walked the streets of Philadelphia with a long stick that had a burning wick on the end of it. He lifted the globe on each street lamp, lit the lamp, and placed the globe back on the lamp. When he finished, the streets of Philadelphia blazed brightly.

Everyone in Philadelphia knew George the Lamplighter—especially the children. They liked to make fun of George because George was a strange-looking man. At one time George had been a sailor, captain of a whaling ship. That is, until his ship was caught



**Note to Teacher: Some parts of this story might be unsuitable for very young children. Adapt as needed.*

in a great storm and he fell overboard. His crew managed to save him but not before a shark chomped off one of his legs. Since that day George wore an oak leg. When he walked down the cobblestone streets of Philadelphia, his wooden leg dragged along behind him. You always knew George was coming because his leg sounded something like this—*clomp shump—clomp shump—clomp shump*.

That was not the only thing that was strange about George. His hair was long and white and stuck out like wiry bristles, and his beard looked like the quills of an angry porcupine. George had clear blue eyes that beamed off in two different directions.

When he looked at you, he had to turn his head at an odd angle just to see you with one eye. Everyone thought George was the strangest sight they'd ever seen. Every night after supper all the kids of Philadelphia ran out into the streets just to see George on his route. They chased behind him calling out,

*George, you're so ugly,
George, you're so weird,
Your teeth are all buttery,
And what a strange beard.*

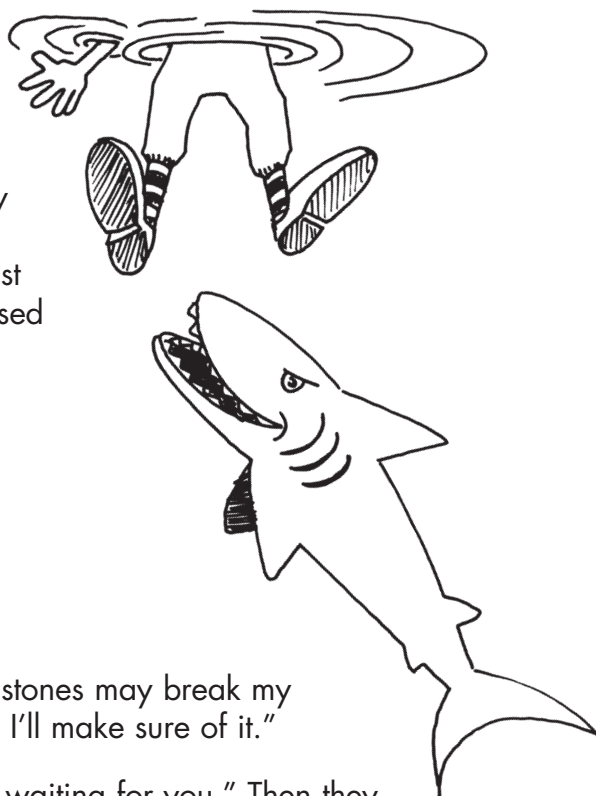
George would yell back, "Sticks and stones may break my bones, but sharks are gonna eat you. I'll make sure of it."

"Come and catch us, George. We're waiting for you." Then they ran off.

My aunt Jean and aunt Ruth were just like everyone else. They used to make fun of George too.

"Hey George, you're so ugly, you're so weird. Come and get us, George!"

Jean and Ruth's uncle Bob said, "Girls, I have heard something terrible. Little kids in this town have been making fun of my friend George the Lamplighter. George is a dedicated civil servant, and mean kids are out there taunting him. I am so glad my two favorite nieces, Jean and Ruth, would never do anything like that. Would you?"



"Oh, no, Uncle Bob, we would never do anything like that. Never."

One cold wintry day, a great blizzard blew in from the north. School closed early. Everyone rushed home and lit a fire to keep themselves warm. The only person who was out that snowy winter night was George the Lamplighter. He was lighting the lamps. As the snow piled up on the streets, he dragged his leg behind him, *clomp shump—clomp shump*. He lifted the globes on each lamp and lit them all with care. One lamp was particularly troublesome. A gust of wind kept blowing it out. Finally he succeeded in getting it lit. Then as he turned to cross the street he realized his wooden leg was frozen into the snow. He tried to pull it out, but it wouldn't budge. He tried to go the other way, but he still couldn't move. He cried out for help, "Help me. Help me, I'm stuck in the snow. Help me, please. Can anyone hear me?" No one could hear his cries. They were lost in the wind.

The next day when the police and firemen came out to clean up the streets they found George had died in the snow. Everyone in Philadelphia was very sad, except for the children.

The city gave George a big funeral.

Many months passed. George was all but forgotten. Then, some time around Halloween, the older kids were talking about George again.

"Have you heard about George?"

"Sure," all the little kids said. "he froze to death last winter."

"There's more," the older kids said. "Gravedigger Joe was in the graveyard last night and there he saw a horrible sight. The casket of George the Lamplighter had been dug up and his coffin was empty. His body was gone. He's coming for the kids that treated him wrong. He's walking the streets at night. Dragging his leg, his clothes dripping wet. He's going to get you late at night when you're asleep. He'll pick you up, hold you over his head, and toss you in the ocean where you will be shark



bait. When I go to bed I take a big stick with me. I don't want to be eaten by a shark."

Jean and Ruth were terrified. They wished they had never said anything to George the Lamplighter. When they got home, they were greeted by their uncle Bob.

"Jean and Ruth, did you hear about George the Lamplighter? His grave has been dug up and his body is gone. You know what that means, don't you?"

"No, what?"

"It means George is coming back just like he said he would. He's coming back to get all of those nasty little kids that made fun of him. He's coming back to get all of them. I am so glad that my two favorite nieces never made fun of him. Right?"

"Right!"

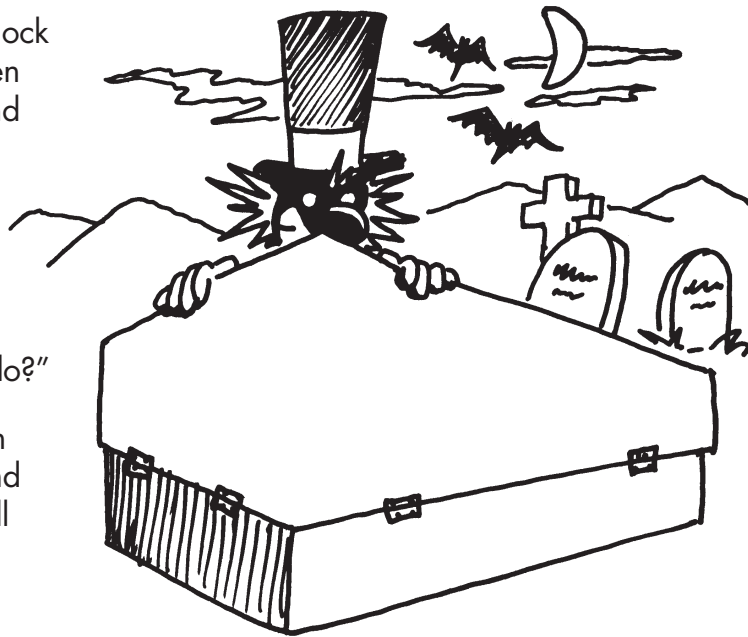
A few days later it was Halloween. Jean and Ruth had been out trick or treating and were eating their candy when their mom and dad approached them. Mom said, "Jean, Ruth, we are going out tonight to see a show. We think the two of you are old enough to take care of yourselves without a babysitter. When we leave, lock the door behind us and then go to bed. We will be home by twelve-thirty. All right?"

"All right."

"Good-bye. Remember, lock the door behind us." Then they were gone. Jean and Ruth were alone.

Jean looked at Ruth and Ruth looked at Jean. Jean said, her voice quivering, "What do you think we should do?"

"Let's go to bed. We can read for a little while, and before you know it they'll be home."



So they went upstairs and lit the oil lamp and started to read. Soon they could no longer keep their eyes open. They blew out the oil lamp and fell asleep. At twelve the bell in the tower downtown rang softly, telling them it was midnight. Jean nudged Ruth and said, "Hey, Ruth, can you hear that?"

"Yes. It's midnight."

"You know what that means, don't you?"

"It means Mom and Dad are going to be home any minute now. We made it all the way through the night and nothing happened."

Just then they heard a *BANG*. "AH!" Jean screamed, "What do think that was?"

"Probably nothing. Maybe a cat in the alley knocked something over. Don't worry about it."

"I'm scared." Just then they heard the sound of the front door opening. *Creeeeeeek!* "Do you think that's Mom and Dad?"

"I don't know. Just be quiet and we'll find out. Don't make any noise. We want them to think we are asleep. Okay?"

"Okay."

Then they heard *clomp shump, clump shump, clomp shump*.

"I have come to get you, you nasty little children. Just like I said I would. I am going to throw you into the ocean and feed you to the hungry sharks."

"What are we going to do, Ruth?"
Jean cried.

"Shhhhhhhh! Just be quiet. If you're quiet, maybe he won't know we're here."

"I am being quiet," Jean said.



"No, you're not," Ruth replied. "Pull the blanket over your head and stay still."

Jean pulled the covers over her head and tried to stay as still as she could, but she was shaking all over. Every time she shook she made a little sound like this, "EEK!"

Clomp shump, clump shump, clomp shump. "I am on the first step."
Clomp shump!

"I am on the second step." *Clomp shump!*

"I am on the third step." *Clomp shump!*

"I am on the fourth step." *Clomp shump!*

"I am on the fifth step." *Clomp shump!*

"I am on the sixth step." *Clomp shump!*

"I am on the seventh step." *Clomp shump!*

"I am on the eighth step." *Clomp shump!*

"I am on the ninth step." *Clomp shump!*

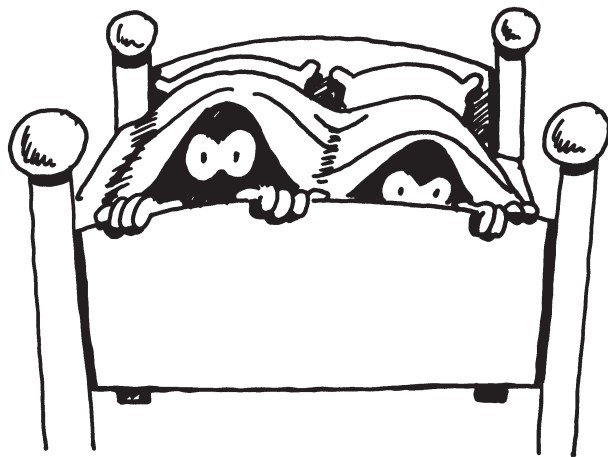
"I am on the tenth step." *Clomp shump!*

"I am on the landing." *Clomp shump, clomp shump, clomp shump, clomp shump!* "I am right outside your door."

"AAAAAAAH!" said Jean.

"BE QUIET!" said Ruth.

Clomp shump, clomp shump, clomp shump, clomp shump!
Then they felt cold, icy fingers grab the blanket that shivered over their heads. Jean shouted out, "Please don't throw us into the ocean, George. We're sorry we ever said anything mean to you!" The blanket was ripped off them. They both screamed, "AAAAHHHHHHH!"



Uncle Bob said, "I thought you girls were never mean to George the Lamplighter?" Ruth and Jean both stared at him. They were really glad to see him, but they were ashamed. They shouldn't have said anything cruel to George the Lamplighter. They could see that now. Ruth was the first to speak up, "We didn't want to, but all the other kids were doing it and it seemed like fun."

Uncle Bob said, "I'm sure it wasn't fun for George."

Jean said, "You're right. We should have been nicer to him. I feel terrible. How do we let him know that we are sorry?" Just then, all the lamps in their house lit up at once.

"I think he knows," said Uncle Bob. "Don't you?"

Fun Follow-up Activities

1. Language Arts: At Home with George

Have your listeners describe an evening with George. Tell them to imagine that they have been invited over for tea. What kind of host is George? What does his house look like? What do the two of you talk about? What questions do you ask George?

Do you become friends? Describe everything that happens in a story, perhaps called "My Evening with George."

2. Art Project: Philadelphia Before and After

Have your listeners draw pictures depicting the differences in the way that Philadelphia was lit during the story of George the Lamplighter and today. Make two different drawings of the city on black paper using oil pastels.

Their first picture would be of George lighting the street lamps and what the city looked like at this time. Their second drawing would be of the same city but in the present day, also at night, with all the different light sources that exist today.

You may want to begin this project by comparing the differences in light sources. Both pictures would be illuminated by the moon, and the picture in George's time could include the lamps that he has lit and various forms of light in houses and businesses.

The picture of today could include street lamps, neon signs, car headlights, storefront lights, and other light sources. Compare the brightness of the pictures.

3. Topic for Discussion: Talking About Tolerance and Winter Light

Discuss whether any of your listeners have either witnessed or experienced the type of treatment that George the Lamplighter was subjected to. How did they react to it? Discuss strategies for dealing with this behavior, and what George could have done to make his situation better. Finally, discuss the meaning of tolerance and ways of creating tolerant behavior.

You may also tell this story during the winter holiday season. Use the subject of winter light and winter darkness for a discussion about why winter holidays, such as Hanukkah, Christmas (Advent), and Kwanzaa, have candle lighting as a ritual.



How to Create a Unique Holiday Story

Storytelling Technique: How to Create Your Own Holiday Tale

Every year as Christmas rolls around, people recycle materials, art projects, decorations, and stories as part of the holiday tradition. For a change, try redecorating stories you like into holiday tales. The story featured in this chapter, "The Antler Party," is based upon an African American story most commonly referred to as "The Horned Animals' Party." You can find one version in *Afro-American Folktales*, edited by Roger D. Abrahams.

The tale this Christmas version is adapted from tells the story of an exclusive horned animals' party, which naturally lent itself toward the use of reindeer as the horned animals. We added further Christmas elements, such as setting the story in the North Pole, and including Santa Claus and his sleigh. The main action of the story is true to the original, but the added elements have made it a favorite holiday tale.

When looking for new holiday stories to tell, don't limit yourself to stories in holiday collections. Use your imagination and you can adjust stories you know or are working on to fit into your holiday needs.

Pre-story Warm-up: The Animal Game

Many of the stories you tell will have animal characters in them, giving you the perfect opportunity to have your listeners transform themselves into different types of animals. Children love to re-create the movement and sounds of animals, and the following is a clear and easy game that children of all ages enjoy. It encourages them to explore different kinds of animal behaviors and characteristics in a team-contest format.

Make a list of different kinds of animals. Write each animal on an index card. Form two teams. The first person in each line is the Guesser. It is their guess and only their guess that will be considered for scoring purposes.

Pick one person from each line to “act out,” or perform, the movements of the animal shown to them on the index card. Encourage them to give specific clues to their team. While they are performing as the Animal, the first person in line tries to guess what animal they are. The first person to guess the animal gets a point for the team. If any other person on the team knows or has a guess of what the animal is, the turn passes to the next person in line, as, again, that guess is the only one that counts. Doing it this way eliminates the problem of the whole class shouting their guesses. You can vary your list of animals from hard to easy, and encourage the players from the sidelines. For the antler story below, you should have your listeners act out arctic animals: reindeer, polar bear, timber wolf, walrus, seal, hare, snow leopard, and penguin.

The Antler Party

Based upon an African American Story

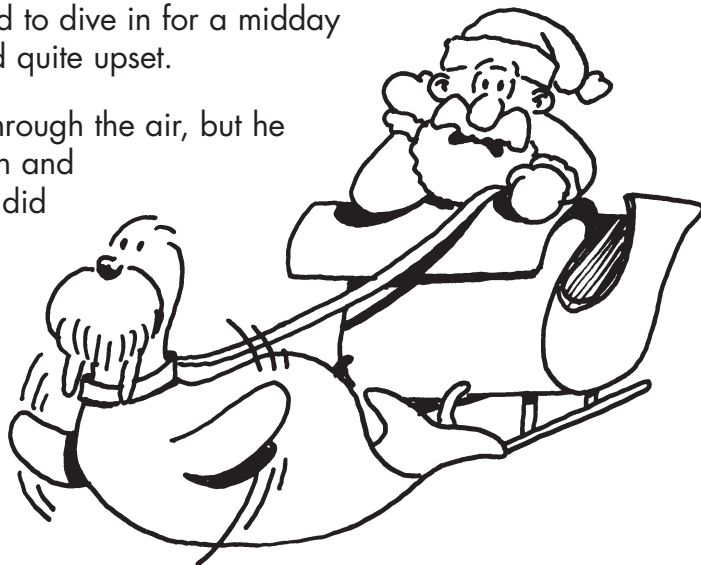
Way back when and long ago, when Santa Claus first started his Christmas delivery service, he needed an animal to drive his sleigh. Santa decided to hold a contest to find the right animal for the job. Creatures came from miles around to enter the contest. Everyone got a chance to try to pull Santa’s sleigh up into the clouds.

Mr. Polar Bear went first, but he was so big he couldn’t become airborne. He ran Santa right into a snow drift.

Mr. Walrus tried next. He flapped his little fins, and even got off the ground, but when he looked down he saw some fish in the water and just had to dive in for a midday snack. Santa got all wet and quite upset.

Mr. Wolf flew like a hawk through the air, but he headed straight for the moon and wouldn’t stop howling. Boy, did Santa have a headache after that trip!

Mr. Claus was about to give up, when who should arrive on the scene but Mr. Reindeer. When Mr. Reindeer pulled that sleigh up into the sky it was a beautiful sight.



The reindeer glided like skaters on ice. They won the contest hooves down, and they were the animals chosen to pull Santa's sleigh on Christmas Eve.

This made all the reindeer the happiest animals in all the frozen north. Unfortunately, after a few years, all that happiness turned into something else—something mean. They weren't just happy anymore—they were proud. They weren't just proud, they were conceited. They thought they were better than all the other animals. They were cruel too. They liked to make fun of everybody.

None of the other animals would have anything to do with the reindeer, but the reindeer didn't mind because they felt superior. They even had their own private parties. Every year, a week before Christmas Eve, the reindeer threw an exclusive Christmas bash and invited only antlered animals.

To announce their party, the reindeer put signs out on every snow bank, iceberg, and mountainside at the North Pole that read:



As chance would have it, Mr. Wolf and Mr. Polar Bear were out walking in the snow when they came upon one of the reindeer's signs. Wolf pointed to the sign and said, "Hey! Now, would you look at that! It says right there that on Friday night there is going to be a polka party."

"A polka party. OOOeey, you know I love to polka, Mr. Wolf. How about you? Do you love to polka too, Mr. Wolf?"

"I sure do, Mr. Polar Bear. It says here there is going to be food and soda for all. Sure sounds like fun."

"Let's go! Let's go!"

"I would love to, Mr. Polar Bear. But there's one problem. One little problem."

"A problem. What problem? Do you need polka lessons, Mr. Wolf? I could teach you how to polka."

"I know how to polka. No, the problem is, it says right here only animals with antlers can come to the party. Well now, hey now, that's not fair."

"Yeah. That's not fair."

"I bet this is the work of those snooty reindeer."

"Yeah, those snooty reindeer. They're so mean."

"I've heard even Santa's helpers don't like them."

"Is that right?"

"Yeah. Boy, are they big-headed. Just cause they get to fly Santa's sleigh. You know what I think, Mr. Polar Bear?"

"No, Mr. Wolf what do you think?"

"I think we should crash that party."

"Crash it? You mean go to the party even though we aren't invited? How are we going to do that, Mr. Wolf?"

"Well, it says here 'No one without antlers is allowed.' So all we need is antlers to wear and then we can go to that polka party Friday night."

So Mr. Wolf and Mr. Polar Bear set out in search of antlers. They searched high and they searched low. They dug up snow and they even broke through the ice.

They asked Mr. Walrus and they asked Mr. Seal, but no one knew where they could find anything in the middle of winter that looked like antlers.

You see, one of the sad things about the North Pole is that there are not many trees. So there aren't many branches. So there was nothing for Mr. Wolf and Mr. Polar Bear to use as antlers.

Mr. Wolf and Mr. Polar Bear were feeling quite low. It was already Friday afternoon and they had no idea how to get into that party.

Mr. Wolf was deep in thought. Mr. Polar Bear was shaping a giant bear out of snow with his big white paws.

"What are you doing?" Mr. Wolf asked.

"Making a snow bear. It helps me to think."

"Really?" said Mr. Wolf. He picked up a paw full of snow himself and started to play with it. He smooched it this way and that. He shaped it into an antler.

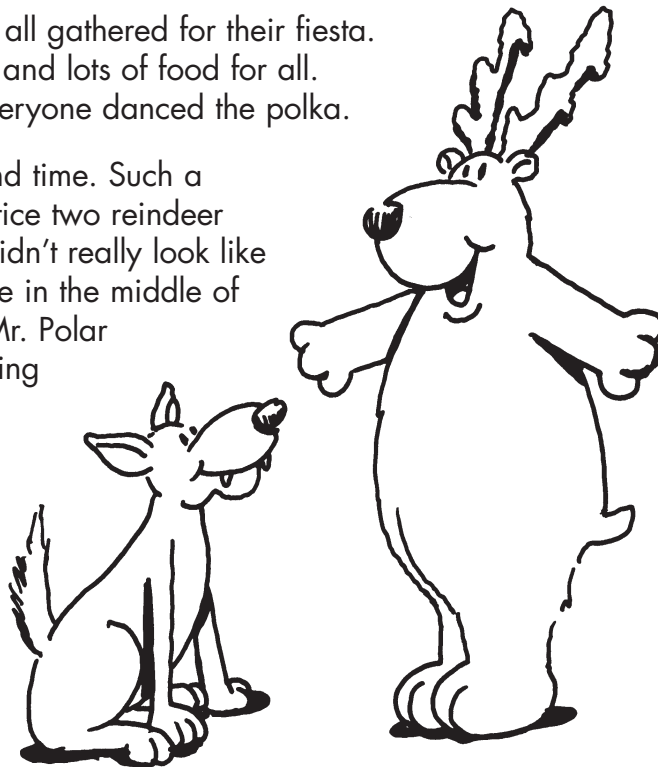
"What's that?" asked Mr. Polar Bear.

"It's an antler." Mr. Wolf stuck it onto his head. "Now I know how to get into the party."

Friday night the reindeer all gathered for their fiesta. There was soda and lots and lots of food for all. The music started and everyone danced the polka.

They were having a grand time. Such a good time they didn't notice two reindeer dancing with them that didn't really look like reindeer at all. Right there in the middle of all those reindeer were Mr. Polar Bear and Mr. Wolf hopping and sliding away.

Both of them had picked a partner and were doing the polka to their hearts' content. There on top of their heads were two of the



tallest, most magnificent sets of antlers you would ever want to see. They were even brown. (They were covered with dirt.)

Mr. Polar Bear and Mr. Wolf were having a wonderful time until somebody turned up the heat. Of course, when snow gets hot, it melts. That's right, it melts, and so did their antlers. Before they even knew what was happening, Mr. Wolf and Mr. Polar Bear had nothing on their heads but two big piles of mud. They looked silly, but that was hardly the worst of it. All the reindeer stopped dancing.

"Look!" cried Dancer, King of the Reindeer. "Impostors!"

"We have been tricked!" screamed Vixen.

"Well, I am thoroughly upset with this turn of events," snorted Cupid. "Who could have had the nerve to crash a party they weren't invited to?"

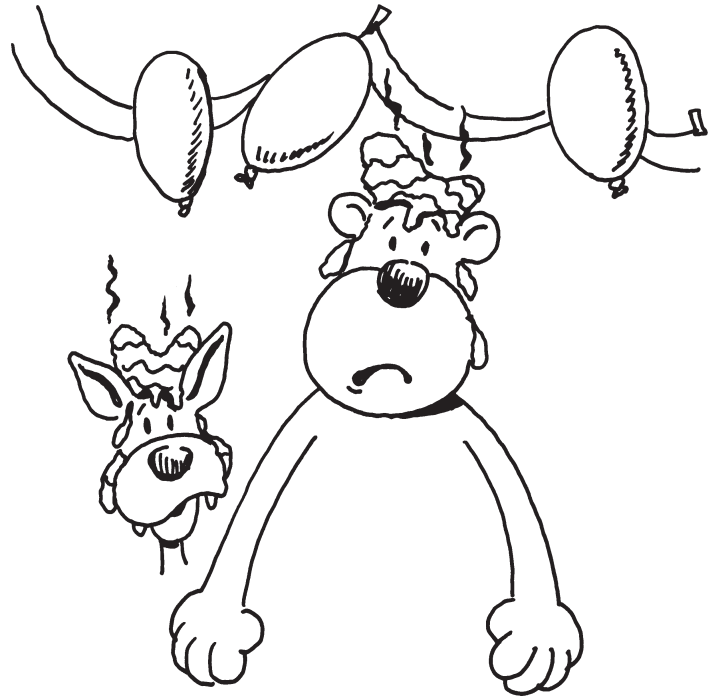
"Are we in trouble?" Mr. Polar Bear whispered to Mr. Wolf.

"Yes, we are. I think we should run!" And so they did.

The reindeer followed closely behind them with their antlers pointed right at the party crashers' necks. Mr. Wolf took a quick look back. The sight of those antlers coming straight for him made him yelp. Mr. Polar Bear heard his yelp and ran faster and faster looking for cover. All he could see were the glowing lamps of Santa's Workshop. So he dashed in.

He didn't really dash in, he crashed in. He dove straight through the front door splintering it everywhere. Mr. Wolf flew in right behind him, yelping all the way. When the elves heard the door shatter, everyone dropped what they were doing. Some even screamed. Mr. Polar Bear dove under a workbench and tried to hide. Mr. Wolf slipped behind the stove and curled up into a tiny ball.

Suddenly all the reindeer came dashing into the workshop. They searched everywhere for Mr. Polar Bear and Mr. Wolf. Santa heard all the racket and came barreling into the workshop to see what was going on.



"Who has broken my door?" The elves all pointed to Mr. Polar Bear and Mr. Wolf.

"I see," said Santa, "And why did you break my door?"

"They're going to hurt us," cried Mr. Polar Bear.

"Who is going to hurt you?" asked Santa.

"They came to our party uninvited," Blitzen explained.

"Your what?" Santa exclaimed.

"Our party. We were having our yearly Christmas Polka Party. As everyone else knows, no one is invited but antlered animals such as ourselves. We post it everywhere. All over the North Pole," said Cupid.

"Well, I didn't know that." said Santa "Did all of you know that?" he asked the elves. They all nodded.

"Oh yes," said the elf named Ralph. "Santa, everyone knows that. They have a party every year, and every year they let all of us know that we are not invited."

"Is that right?" asked Santa.

"Oh yes. They are so mean. All year round."

"And stuck up."

"They are not nice at all."

"They have no manners at all."

"They didn't even invite you to their party, Santa."



Santa had heard enough. "I am shocked. All year long we work our fingers to the bones to deliver toys for little girls and little boys all over the world. We don't ignore a single child anywhere. No matter who they are. Now I find that my most trusted helpers do not know how to treat others with kindness. What have you got to say for yourselves?"

Not one reindeer said a thing. They knew they were in trouble. They were ashamed. They hung their heads low. Mr. Wolf and Mr. Polar Bear came out from their hiding places.

"Does this mean they aren't going to hurt us?" asked Mr. Polar Bear.

"Of course they aren't going to hurt us." said Mr. Wolf. "Right, Santa?"

"Right." said Santa. "As a matter of fact, what are you two doing on Christmas Eve?"

"Who? Us?" Mr. Wolf looked behind him to see who Santa could be talking to.

"Yes, you two. How would you two like to guide my sleigh that night."

"Where have I heard that before?" Mr. Polar Bear wondered aloud.

"You will need to find ten others to help you. Do you have ten friends that could join us?"

"Ten friends! I'll say!" Mr. Wolf snapped to attention. "Sure Santa. No problem. Ten friends to guide Santa's sleigh on Christmas Eve. Boy, that's a tall order. Not as though every animal in the world wouldn't like that job! Fame and fortune. Face on the cover of *Time*, *Life* and *Animal Weekly*. Interviews with "Animal Kingdom" and the "Discovery Channel." Not a problem! Don't even worry about it. I'll have them here tomorrow for their flight plans and instructions. Yes, Sir!" He saluted.

"You don't need to salute," Santa smiled.

Off in the corner twelve reindeer were weeping. Tears dripped down their long snouts and off the tips of their black noses.

"As for you," said Santa, "perhaps this will teach you a lesson. Next year we will review your behavior to see if you have earned back the right to fly my sleigh. In the meantime, I believe you were having a Christmas Polka Party."

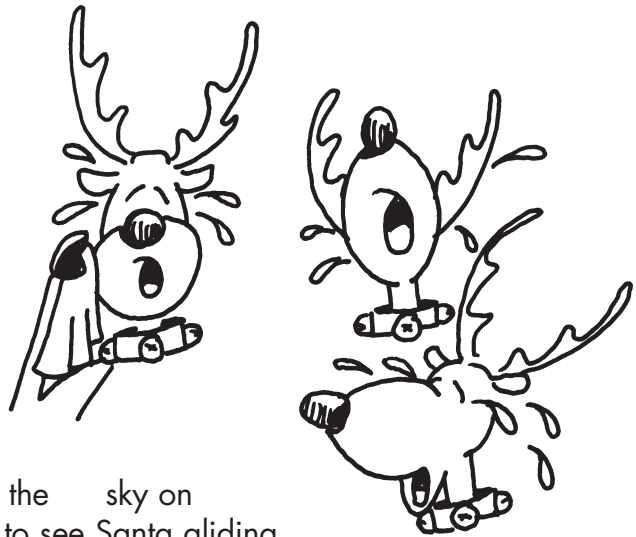
"Polka Party!" Mr. Polar Bear blurted out. Everyone in the room let out a loud YOOOOWWEEEE! Because everyone loves to polka.

"Let's take a break and go to a polka party!" said Santa. "I must go get Mrs. Claus. She loves to polka. Let's go."

So they did. Everyone had a spectacular time, especially Mr. Polar Bear and Mr. Wolf. They were going to fly Santa's Sleigh on Christmas Eve. They were so delighted their feet barely touched the ground as they danced.

After a few moments of tears and boohoos, the reindeer finally joined the festivities and forgot all about their problems. They knew they had a lot of

work to do over the next year to get back on Santa's good side, but they were sure they could do it. They had learned their lesson. They even agreed to share their secret Christmas flight route with Mr. Wolf and Mr. Polar Bear. They also taught all the other animals how to give Santa a nice, smooth ride. As it turned out, they were very good teachers.



So that is why, if you look up into the sky on Christmas Eve you may be surprised to see Santa gliding by on a sleigh led by Mr. Wolf, Mr. Polar Bear, Mr. Walrus, Mr. Seal, Mr. Lemming, Mr. Arctic Hare, and a whole bunch of their Arctic friends—but no reindeer. That is also why, this year, preparations are under way at the North Pole for the biggest polka party ever. Maybe you will get to go too.

After all, everyone is invited.

Fun Follow-up Activities

1. Creative Dramatics: Attitudes and Emotions

When a person or animal has a certain attitude, they carry themselves with that attitude. For instance, the reindeer were conceited. Have your listeners walk around the room with a proud attitude. Remind them to hold their head high, keep their backs erect, and act like the proud reindeer. Discuss how that feels. Discuss how feeling proud is a good thing, as long as you don't get carried away and become selfish. Discuss the polar bear and the wolf. What one word could you use to describe each one of their attitudes? Have your listeners walk around like Mr. Bear and Mr. Wolf. Make a list of other attitudes and emotions and act them out. Some examples include nervous, angry, frightened, excited, sick, sleepy, friendly, shy, brave, happy, upset, and scared.

2. Art Project: Recycled Decorations

Discuss how you changed a nonholiday story into a holiday story. Talk about how you can turn something that is old and used into something new and pretty. Brainstorm things that you can turn into holiday ornaments, such as paper towel tubes, milk cartons, cans, bottles, boxes, and so on. Have your listeners bring in things that are recycled and cleaned and have them explain to the class what this thing can be turned

into for the holiday. When everyone has brought in at least one thing, let everyone decorate their item and turn it into a recycled holiday ornament.

3. Dance: The Polka

Have your listeners learn to dance the polka. It's an easy dance, and kids enjoy it. You can find polka music very easily in your local library or bookstore. If you can, invite someone to your class who knows how to dance the polka, perhaps a relative or other volunteer.

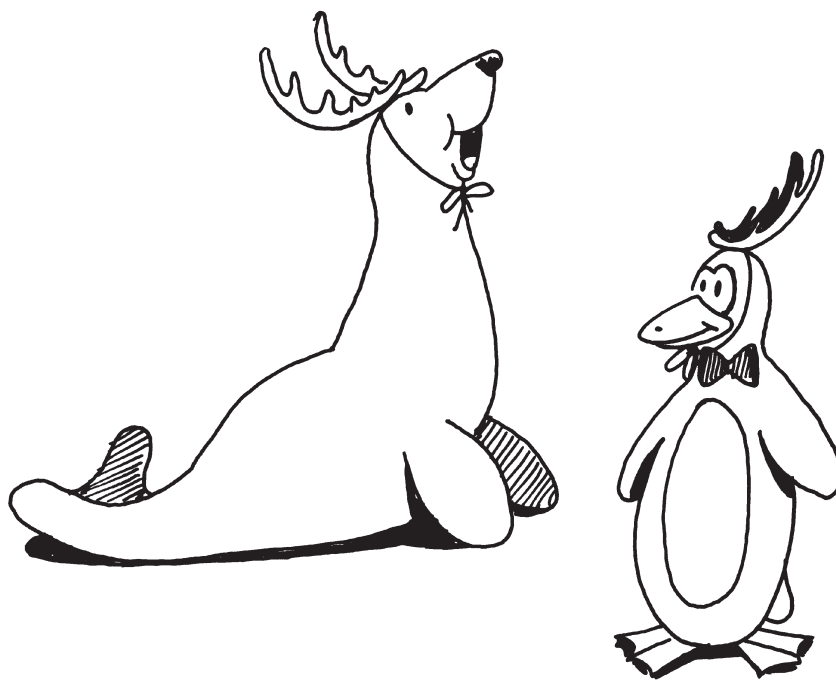
4. Language Arts: Point of View

Have your listeners write (and later tell) their version of this story from the point of view of the reindeer. Make the story Blitzen's tale. Have Blitzen tell his version to Santa. Can the reindeer justify having a private party. Ask the listeners how they would feel if someone crashed their party. Remind them to include a beginning, middle, and end of the story. After writing their versions, have them tell their versions aloud.

5. Research Activities: All About Antlers and the Arctic

Embark on a study of antlers. Begin by asking your listeners what they know about antlers, and then what they would like to learn. Find out all the answers to your questions by researching, and write down all of your findings.

After learning about antlers, research the Arctic region in the same manner, asking what you know and what you would like to learn, and writing down conclusions.



Create Story Recordings

Storytelling Technique: Creative Uses for Storytelling

Storytelling is an immediate art form that offers direct, instant contact with its listeners. You will come to value this in your journey into storytelling, as you make your own discoveries and connections with your listeners.

Storytelling also allows you to expand into other areas. You can create theater pieces, dance pieces, and radio plays to be recorded. These are all outgrowths of the original task of telling a story, and let you use your stories in different artistic contexts.

You can have great success and a whole lot of fun creating radio plays based upon traditional folk and fairy tales. These radio plays can be as complex or simple as you want to make them. A parent and child can get together and record a story complete with sound effects, or small groups of children in a classroom environment can work together to create radio plays.

These radio plays are simply retellings of the story that are tape-recorded in the style of classic radio plays. You can create rich sound environments and strange sound effects, without having to worry about memorizing lines or creating costumes, sets, and props.

In this chapter you will find a traditional Irish tale that can be accented with the use of atmospheric sound effects, children speaking in sheep voices, and invented sounds such as the fairy popping out of the hole.

Another benefit of this story is that it prompts students to share their stories about illnesses and deaths in their families in a positive, healthy environment.

Pre-story Warm-up: Get Ready to Record

Before recording a story play, work together to decide what sounds to create. Bowls of potato chips are neat for the sound of leaves crackling beneath your feet as you walk through the forest. The sound of bells and triangles make interesting fairy music. Musical instruments can be used for a variety of sounds.

Again, this process can be as simple or complex as you wish, depending upon the time or equipment you have available.

Story Background

The term *fairy tale* does not necessarily refer to tales that have to do with fairies, but it is a term that has stuck. For example, *Rapunzel* and *Snow White* are commonly referred to as fairy tales, but no fairies are in these tales.

However, there are quite a few stories that do have fairies in them. Most of these fairies have many characteristics in common. How does the fairy look? We all have our own mental picture of fairies, but the traditional fairy is small, clothed in green, and sometimes has green skin as well.

Fairies are rarely harmful, but they are often pranksters. They apparently love milk and milk products and have been said to milk cows in the fields. Many people leave milk or cheese on their porches as a gift to the fairies.

Fairies usually live underground, which explains the wee old fairy getting stuck in the hole in this chapter's tale. He was probably on his way to his underground home.

Legend has it that fairies also do good deeds for people by granting wishes or by giving food and money to the poor, giving gifts to children, or assisting with chores.

There are also stories about fairies persecuting people, usually when they feel they have been wronged or mistreated.

Fairies in some form or another can be found in stories all around the world.

Goodfellow and the Fairies

An Irish Tale

NARRATOR: Young Goodfellow was a kindhearted lad. He lived with his mother on a farm deep in the heart of Ireland. He spent his days tending their great flock of sheep and dreaming of fairies.

GOODFELLOW: Mother, I'm off to watch the sheep.

MOTHER: Be careful, Goodfellow, and make sure to watch out for the wee fairies.

GOODFELLOW: I'm not afraid of the wee fairies, Mother. They won't do me any harm.

MOTHER: I've heard many stories about their mischievous deeds.

GOODFELLOW: Don't worry about me, Mother, I'll be careful.

SHEEP: Goodfellow left his house to tend to us that day. In the early evening, when the sun was going down he heard a cry from the hills. He went to see what it was. What a sight he saw! A wee old fairy stuck in a hole in the hill, screaming desperately for help.

FAIRY: Help! Help me, please, I'm stuck!

SHEEP: Goodfellow looked in the hole and couldn't help from laughing.

GOODFELLOW: What are you doing in there, wee old fairy?

FAIRY: Don't just stand there laughing, help me!

GOODFELLOW: I didn't mean to laugh at you. I'm sorry. Of course I'll help you.

SHEEP: And he reached down and pulled the fairy out of the hole. It was a hard tug and a great pull that finally freed that fairy from the hole.

FAIRY: Thank you, young fellow. I was afraid that I would be stuck down there forever.

GOODFELLOW: Oh, no, I would never let that happen. Are you hungry? Would you like some cheese?

FAIRY: I would like some cheese. Thank you very much, young fellow.

GOODFELLOW: You may call me Goodfellow.

FAIRY: That is a good name for you, Goodfellow. I can see that you are a good fellow.

GOODFELLOW: My mother thought so when I was born. That's why she gave me that name. I will have to tell her that you think so.

FAIRY: Now what would you like, Goodfellow?

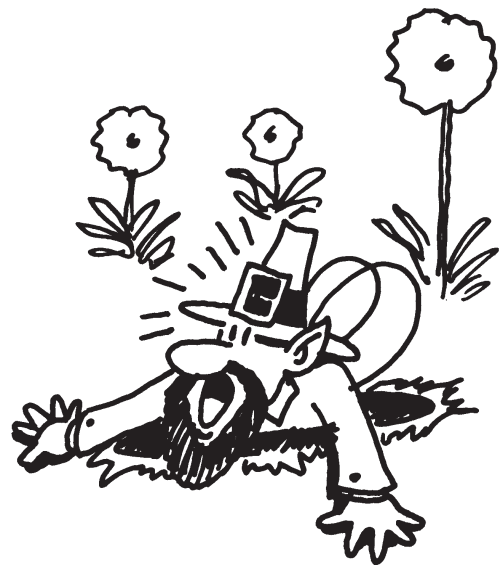
GOODFELLOW: What do you mean?

FAIRY: What do you wish for? You have a wish to be granted.

GOODFELLOW: Why is that?

FAIRY: You helped a fairy. If you help a fairy, you are granted a wish.

GOODFELLOW: Oh, no. It was my pleasure to help you out of that hole. It was only



right. You don't owe me anything in return.

FAIRY: But you must. You have one wish coming to you, whether you want it or not.

GOODFELLOW: But there is nothing I fancy.

FAIRY: Are you sure?

GOODFELLOW: I am sure. My mother and I are very happy, and I enjoy tending to my fine sheep. Oh, it is getting dark. I have to be on my way or my mother will worry about me. Have a good night. Perhaps I will see you again.

FAIRY: Good-bye, Goodfellow. Thank you for your help.

SHEEP: Goodfellow rounded us up and took us home. When he got there something was wrong. Goodfellow's mother was quite ill.

GOODFELLOW: Mother! Mother?! Where are you?

MOTHER: Here I am, Goodfellow—lying in bed. I don't feel well, my son.

GOODFELLOW: What's wrong?

MOTHER: I don't know.

GOODFELLOW: I'll bring you some herbal tea. That will make you feel better.

MOTHER: Thank you, Goodfellow. You are a good son.

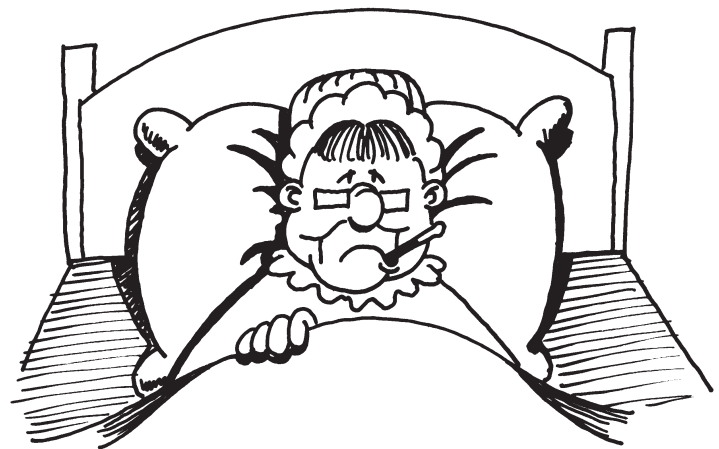
SHEEP: Every day Goodfellow would come home from tending us, and every day, for weeks and weeks, his mother was still in bed.

GOODFELLOW: Mother, do you feel any better today?

MOTHER: No, Goodfellow. I am sorry. I fear that I am not getting any better.

GOODFELLOW: I will make some hot herbal tea.

SHEEP: Goodfellow made his mother a cup of hot herbal tea each evening, hoping that the herbs were doing their work and would soon heal her.



Each evening his mother drank the tea, but felt better for only a moment. Winter came and Christmas passed, and Goodfellow's mother got sicker and sicker. Goodfellow went to the old woman who lived on the hill. She knew about herbs and medicines. Maybe she could help his mother.

OLD WOMAN: Now, Goodfellow, what your mother needs is a tea made from the herbs of New Year's Eve. You must pick them after the first snow has fallen.

GOODFELLOW: What do the herbs of New Year's Eve look like?

OLD WOMAN: Look for the first snow. Look and they will be there.

GOODFELLOW: I will try.

SHEEP: When New Year's Eve came, Goodfellow sat on the hill where he had saved the fairy many months before. If only he had made a wish back then about his mother's health. He looked to the sky, hoping it would snow, but the sky was filled with bright stars. There was not a cloud in sight.

GOODFELLOW: Please let there be snow. Let it snow for New Year's Eve.

SHEEP: Goodfellow closed his eyes and prayed for snow. Soon he fell asleep. When he awoke he was covered with snow.

GOODFELLOW: The snow has fallen! Just as the old woman said it would. Now I have to find those special herbs. How am I going to find them in the dark? If I don't find them, my mother will surely die.

SHEEP: Now, what you don't know is that fairies can grant a wish whenever they so desire.

FAIRY 1: Fairy friends, someone is crying on the hill.

FAIRY 2: Who is it?

OLD FAIRY: Why it is my friend, Goodfellow.

FAIRY 1: The one who saved you from the hole?

OLD FAIRY: The very same.

FAIRY 2: And he didn't take his wish?

OLD FAIRY: That's him.

FAIRY 1: He is also the one who leaves milk and cheese out for us to eat at night when we are playing.



OLD FAIRY: He is a Goodfellow.

FAIRY 2: Why is he crying?

OLD FAIRY: The sheep told me his mother is sick. He needs to find the herbs of New Year's Eve, but he doesn't know how.

FAIRY 2: Come, let's put fairy lights on all the herbs he needs.

FAIRY 1: Yes, let's go.

SHEEP: And the fairies danced that night, placing lights on the healing plants.

GOODFELLOW: Look! Under the snow, lights are glowing. These must be the herbs I am looking for!

SHEEP: He picked the herbs with lights shining on them. Soon Goodfellow had all his pockets stuffed with herbs. He took them home and boiled them in the first snow of the New Year.

GOODFELLOW: Here, Mother, have some tea.

MOTHER: Son, I am sorry, but I fear it will do me no good.

GOODFELLOW: But, Mother, it will. It is a special New Year's Eve tea. I am sure it will make you feel better.

MOTHER: Goodfellow, bring the tea to me, and for you, I will drink it.

SHEEP: She tasted the special tea, and within mere moments she was up and about. The glow returned to her cheeks, and for the first time in months, she smiled a hearty smile.

MOTHER: Son, your tea has cured me. Where did you get the recipe for this wonderful tea?

GOODFELLOW: I made it from the herbs of New Year's Eve.

MOTHER: How did you know how to find the herbs of New Year's Eve?

GOODFELLOW: Lights shone on them in the dark. Look at them, Mother. They are very rare.

SHEEP: She looked at the herbs, but they were not rare at all. They were basil, rosemary, and thyme. They were the same herbs he had been making tea from for months. Then she understood.

MOTHER: The lights that shone on the herbs must have been fairy lights. They granted your wish this New Year's Eve, and you have saved my life. This is truly a special holiday.

SHEEP: It was a special holiday for Goodfellow and his mother. It was special for the fairies as well, for that night, Goodfellow left a great basket filled with milk and cheeses and breads and biscuits as a gift for the wee fairies. He left it on his porch, with his mother's blessing, and she never told him to watch out for fairies again.

FAIRIES: Happy New Year!

Fun Follow-up Activities

1. Making Radio Plays: Experiment with Sounds

- Before making your radio play, play a tape of sound effects and have the children try to guess what they are and write them down on a sheet of paper.
- With their eyes closed, have children try to re-create the following sounds: a heart beating, a wolf howling, a rainstorm falling, water dripping, feet running, a clock ticking, a cat meowing, thunder clapping, birds screeching, a rocking chair creaking, and wind whistling through trees.
- Now create a sound environment. Start with something easy such as the woods. Have everyone sit around in a circle and let them come up with one sound they will make to add to the environment. Try a more difficult environment—perhaps a city, or a carnival.
- Experiment with creating sounds from ordinary objects. For instance, potato chips make good crackling leaves. What about other sounds, such as a door opening, sheep walking, or tea boiling?
- Now comes the hard part. How do you make sound for something that has no sound? With a radio play, sound can be used for things that make no sound. For instance: fairy lights, stars sparkling in the sky, snow falling. Have everyone close their eyes again and try to think of what sort of sound would help them visualize these sights.
- Then there are emotions. Since you cannot see the actors, you can use music or sounds to let us know when they are happy, sad, or scared.
- If you can, find some radio plays to listen to after you have finished your radio play. Compare your production to the professional one.



2. Creative Writing: What Do You Wish For?

As a starting off point for a writing exercise, read the following story about fairies to your listeners:

The Tale of the Three Wishes

There once was an old man who lived with his old wife on on an old farm. They worked hard, day in and day out. They worked so hard that they wished they didn't have to.

"Oh my aching back!" the old man said.

"Oh my aching feet! I wish we had some gold so we wouldn't have to work so hard," said the old woman. So it went from day to day.

One night as they ate their usual bowl of gruel for dinner, the old man sighed, "I wish we had something better to eat for dinner. I am so tired of gruel every night." Just then they were visited by a magic fairy who appeared in their kitchen window and said, "I have heard your pleas, and I am here to help. I will grant you three wishes. You may wish for anything you like, but remember, wish wisely." Then the fairy disappeared into thin air.

The old man and the old woman were amazed. They sat silently for the longest time before the old woman squealed out, "Well! What should we wish for?" The old man replied, "I don't know. We could use a bigger house."

"We need a goat for fresh milk," the old woman said.

"I need a mule to help me on the farm," the old man said.

"I know," the old woman said, "let's finish our dinner and then we can make a list of all the things that we want, and we can pick the three best wishes from our list."

"Good idea," said the old man, and they started to eat.

The old woman took one taste of her cold gruel when she dropped her spoon into the bowl and declared, "I am not in the mood for gruel! I wish we had a nice big sausage for dinner!" Suddenly and magically a sausage appeared before them on the table. The old man could not believe his eyes. His face turned bright red. "How could you waste one of our three wishes on a silly sausage?! Foolish old woman. I wish that sausage would grow from the end of your nose!"

As fast as a blink of the eye, the sausage was hanging from the end of the old woman's nose. She started to cry. "What am I going to do? I am hideous with this sausage hanging from the end of my nose." Tears ran down her cheeks. The old man saw how silly she looked and realized that there was only one thing to do. He had to wish for the sausage to fall off the end of her nose. He did just that, and she no longer had a sausage nose. The old man and the old woman hugged each other and began to giggle. They realized how laughable they had been, and from that day on they made their wishes wisely and worked together to make them come true.

Discuss wishes with your listeners and have them write about what they would wish for if they met a fairy. As a preface to this writing exercise, tell children that the only thing that they cannot wish for, which violates the fairy wish granting code, is for more wishes. Older children can write more involved stories about their encounter with a fairy and what they did (perhaps a good deed or action) to earn wishes, and describe the outcome. Younger children can write and draw pictures of their three wishes.

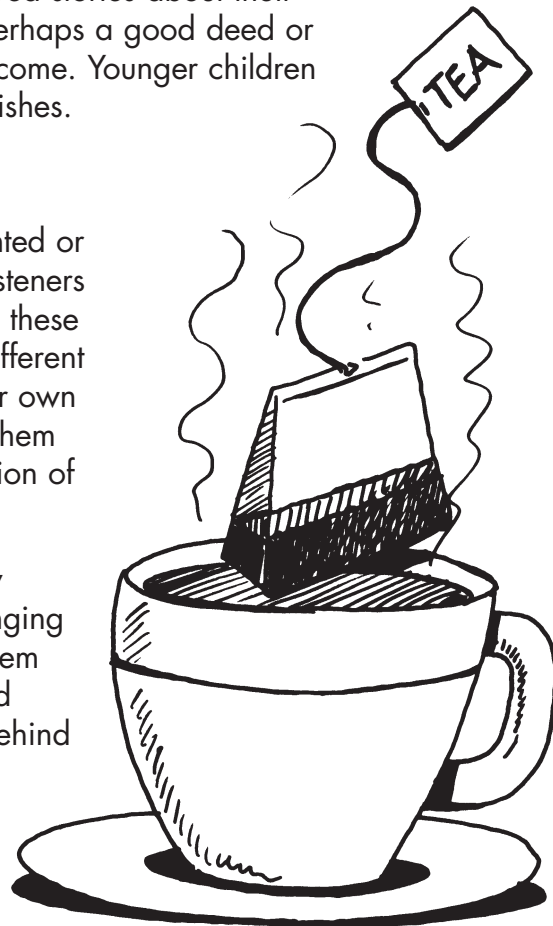
3. Art Project: Fairyland Creations

Gather a variety of pictures artists have painted or drawn of fairies and fairyland. Have your listeners note the similarities and differences between these pictures, and discuss their reactions to the different depictions. Then let your listeners create their own fairy paintings. When they are done, have them describe their unique and special interpretation of the creatures of fairyland.

They can also make a "fairy panorama," by creating and cutting out fairies and then hanging them by strings in a decorated box. Have them decorate the box in a nighttime scenario and place small holes with colored cellophane behind them for fairy lights.

4. History: It's Tea Time

Goodfellow believed in the powers of tea to save his mother. Tea is a well-loved beverage in Ireland. The "cup of tay" is considered the "curer" and soother of all ills. Tea is popular throughout the world; in fact, it is the world's favorite beverage. The history of tea makes for interesting study, and the story of Goodfellow can provide a starting-off point for researching tea.



Tea was first discovered in 2737 B.C. in China. According to a popular legend, one of China's first emperors, Shen Nung, discovered the tea drink when a leaf from a plant accidentally fell into a pot of water he was boiling for purification. The pleasing smell prompted him to taste the brew, and the world's first cup of tea was drunk.

Just as tea was discovered accidentally, the tea bag became popular because of a chance event. Historically, tea was typically shipped in tins and brewed in tea strainers. In 1908 an American importer, Thomas Sullivan, wanted to save money on the cost of tins, so he sent his customers "tea samples" in silk bags. His customers, not knowing what to do with them, dunked them in boiling water, and suddenly the tea bag was born.

For further research, you and your listeners can gather information on where tea grows and how it is made. Older children may want to research the Boston Tea Party and the commerce of tea.

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Williams-Ellis, Anabel. *Tales from the Enchanted World.* Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1987.

Other Resources:

The National Storytelling Association
P.O. Box 309
Jonesborough, TN 37659
(423) 753-2171 or (800) 525-4514

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