



Storytelling Extension Activities for the Classroom*

After a storyteller visits your classroom, consider using one or more of these activities to enrich the experience for your students. The level of interest in these activities will demonstrate the level of **cognitive engagement** the students still have with the story.

1. Draw and Describe:

Ask the children to draw a picture from the story. This activity will demonstrate **visualization**, which is an important literacy skill. Then, ask each child to describe his/her drawing. For young children, this may be done one to one with the child and teacher. The teacher may wish to ask the child if anything from the description should be written down. Older children may write their own simple descriptions or incorporate words into their pictures. They may wish to present their drawing to the group.

2. Discuss and Analyze:

The teacher can develop a set of simple discussion questions related to the story. These should be open-ended to allow the children to question the actions and events so they engage in **critical thinking**. Examples, "When do you think this story took place?" "What do you think happened after the story ended?" "Do you think this story really happened?" "Why do you think that?"

3. Personal Connection Building:

Ask questions like: "What was your favorite part of the story and why?" "If you were the main character would you have done anything differently?" "Has anything like what happened in the story happened to you?" Questions like these help the children learn to connect stories to their own life perspectives and experiences. The ability to **personally connect** to a story helps reading comprehension.

4. Picture Together:

Students who drew pictures from the same story are asked to compare their pictures and decide the order that the events they pictured occurred in the story. The teacher may need to coach them through a retelling of the story since the sequence of pictures may be from widely separate sections or may be just a character. **Sequencing** is an important skill for both reading and math.

5. Storyboarding:

For students in grades 3 to 7, have the students break into small groups. As a group, the students create a storyboard of the story. If the groups **find different meanings** in the story, the storyboards may reflect those differences.

6. Reenactments:

Young children enjoy acting out a story they heard either through actions or puppets.

7. Book Versions:

Ask your school librarian to locate picture book versions of the story, or text versions in story collections. Take the children to the library. Ask the librarian to share these with the children and to show them where they are located in the collection. This demonstrates the **connection between oral stories and books**, and provides practice in **comparing and contrasting**, which is an important literacy skill.

8. Connections to Other Stories:

Read or tell another story that shares a plot or motif with the original story, or is a story variant of the first. In a follow-up discussion ask the children about **similarities and differences** between the stories.

9. My Story:

Each student who wishes may tell his/her version of the story. This may be done in small groups or to the whole class. **Oral presentation** is considered an advanced skill, but some struggling or behaviorally challenged students may excel as storytellers.

10. Response Writing:

Ask the students to write a poem, essay or story of their own.

11. Character Letters:

Ask older children to write a letter from one character in the story to another. This provides practice in **point of view**.

12. Just the Facts:

Have the students write the story as a newspaper article or as it would be delivered by a television reporter. This helps students learn how to **extract facts** from the story, and provides practice in **writing a synopsis**.

*Some of these activities are adapted from “Why Storytelling Matters: Unveiling the Literacy Benefits of Storytelling” by Denise E. Agosto in *Children and Libraries* 14(2): Summer 2016, pp. 21-26.