

Play a Storytelling Game

Use this grid for a storytelling exercise and then write the story. Choose a character, setting and event and see what happens. Tell the story. You could make your own grid too.

Try to show the character needing to do something which will either redeem or heal a character or a situation.

Character	Setting	Event/Problem
Wizard	Beach	Flood
Knight	King's garden	Shipwreck
Unloved princess	Walnut shell	Kidnapping
Poor sailor	A treehouse	A child is lost
Wolf	Forest	A rope is cut
Sheep dog	A ship	Storm
Trapeze artist	Lighthouse	A message found
Girl tree feller	Island	Bushfire
Elf	Cave	A jewel is stolen

Tips for telling stories

Stories do not need to be learned by heart as they change and develop with the telling, but I do learn the first line so I can start with confidence, and I know the last line so I can finish crisply.

- Introduce the character and the problem. Build up audience sympathy.
- Be clear what your character wants, or what their problem is, and therefore, their motivation.
- Cause conflict.
- There must be something at stake. Suspense can be generated by a time limit, a secret, danger or raising the stakes.
- Include a dark moment.
- Rise to a climax.
- Resolve the story so that it does not rely on coincidence, but on the courage or cleverness of the character.
- Use facial expression, pauses, costumes, hats or a prop, and vary volume and tone of voice to help tell the story.
- Know the last line so you can end well.

Before I had a book for younger readers published, I told stories to children at school visits. These often later became published books, like *Yardil* (2004) and *Across the Creek* (2003).

Workout

Think up five story prompts of your own. I often get ideas from news and articles online, objects I find, an image I've seen, places where I walk, fairy stories, folktales or any reading at all. There are more ideas for stories and writing on my website called 'Picture This.'

This page is based on p55 from my writing book called *Riding the Wind: Writing for Children and Young Adults*.