



The basics of storytelling

This activity helps children to develop a good set of storytelling skills. It can be quite hard work compared to some activities, but it pays dividends.

The idea is to break down how you tell (and listen to) stories into a number of key steps, which you then practise with the children.

How it works

Start with the skills of listening to a story. As with all good listening, the basics are: (a) sit still; (b) look at the person who is talking; (c) think about what the person is saying.

Explain that when you are listening to a story, there are five things to think about:

- Who is in the story?
- Where is the story taking place?
- When is it?
- What happens?
- How do the people in the story feel?

Tell them a story. It might be a real-life story, like *'What I did while you were at school today'*. Or it could be a story from a book, like *Little Red Riding Hood*.

After you've told the story, ask the children to talk about *who* was involved, *where* the action took place, *when* it took place, *what* happened, and *how* the people felt.

Repeat with other stories until you're happy that they understand and remember all the important parts of a story.

Remember to praise good story listening behaviours. *'Well done, you really listened to what was going on and where it happened!'*

What's in the story

Now let's look at the skills of telling stories.

Get one of the children to tell a short story. It might be about something that happened in the playground or at lunchtime. Or it could be a familiar story, like *Snow White*.

Ask the children what they think they need to do to tell a story well. Listen to what they say, and thank them for their ideas.

Explain that the first step is to plan what you're going to say. Show the children how drawing a few rough pictures can help with the planning. For instance, if you are planning to talk about a birthday party, you could draw some stick people to remind you of who was there and some drawings of food to remind you of what you ate.

The next step is to make sure that you include all the right details when you tell your story. Use the drawing as a reminder:

- Who is in the story?
- Where is the story taking place?
- When is it taking place?
- What happens?
- How do the people feel?

How to tell it

The final points you want to get across are about how to speak when telling a story.

- Look at the person you are talking to
- Speak loudly enough for everyone to hear
- Speak at a good speed – not too fast, not too slow
- Make the story sound exciting
- Use actions and pictures to bring your story to life

Ask each child to tell you a story and praise when they when they get things right: *'Well done. You spoke very clearly and you made the story sound really exciting.'*

Day to day...

When children tell you stories about what's happened during their day, you can help reinforce the basics by prompting them. Example: 'So you played with Miles today in the playground, WHEN was that? In the morning or the afternoon?'



'Now I know what I need to do to tell a story. The list helps me remember.'