



Language: English

Oral language and Story

In The Primary School Curriculum story is one of the five principal contexts through which oral language can be approached. Story includes story telling and children's response to story.

On page 45 &46 of the Teacher Guidelines the importance of story is addressed. There are also a number of language activities for responding to story.

Story telling

- Listening to stories provides children with a language structure and a pattern(eg once upon a time) to retell their own stories, to recount experiences and events. The teacher needs to model story telling for the children. This may include a recount, a narrative or a description.
- It is also recommended that children should hear recordings of professional readers or invite a storyteller to visit the class to tell stories.
- It is a good idea to have a storyteller's chair or to dress up for story telling. With younger children a magic carpet could jet you off to story land.
- There are many opportunities for storytelling in the classroom: news time, recounting experiences, retelling familiar stories, sharing assemblies, circle time, puppetry and drama.
- It is important to provide children with opportunities to retell and create stories. It is also a good idea to record the children telling their favourite story. Telling a story puts the storyteller in a very powerful position and can do wonders for a child's self esteem.
- Link with writing- experience charts, create a book or a talking book

Some ideas for helping children to tell stories

In the strand developing competence and confidence in using oral language it is important to enable the child to develop oral fluency and expressiveness. News telling in all its forms(recounts, show and tell, news pictures, sharing project work, topic news, newspaper media etc) can be extended and developed to provide children with opportunities to develop this competence and confidence.



Language:English

The News

News telling provides opportunities to;

- develop listening skills,
- develop oral fluency in constructing oral texts eg oral recounts – when, who, what, where, why
- to develop listening comprehension – children asking questions
- to initiate and develop topics –vocabulary development
- express oneself emotionally and imaginatively
- speak to an audience
- parental involvement

Setting the scene for a news story. Think of the child who has nothing to say at news time or maybe one sentence. This child needs help in extending his/ her story. Eg Child says he saw a man. Questions where was the man? Age? What was he carrying? Was it hot/ wet/ windy?

This methodology gives all children a format of presenting their news stories to the class. It also provides links with writing.

Stage 1: pictures

Stage 2:writing words

Who	What	Where	When	Why

The pupil draws his/ her news on the above template. Teacher needs to model this.

Oral telling: share news pictures in pairs and tell each other’s news. The news can be personal, local, national and international. It can be a report of classroom activities, a “show and tell news”, topic news or a retelling of a child’s illustration. This method can be used with young and older children.

Link with writing-when the news is recorded it will develop older children’s note taking skills.



Language: English

Retelling familiar stories

Use of picture books and big books; the pictures will prompt the children and provide a scaffold for retelling the story in sequence. Encourage the children to use the language of storytelling. Text-less picture books are also useful for this activity eg *The Snowman* by Raymond Briggs.

Reading predictable texts with repetition that will give children the opportunity to engage with the story orally and to develop prediction skills. Eg *The Little Yellow Chicken*, *The three little pigs*, etc

Role play retellings: Have children role play characters from stories. Each character tells the story from his/her point of view. This will involve use of voice and will express opinions on the story. Eg Goldilocks would retell a version of her story differently to mammy bear!

Role play familiar stories in small groups; identify the characters, work out what they would say in the story or an event from the story, work out the actions and the expressions for the characters. Allow the children to share their story with the class.

Use puppets to re enact stories in a variety of ways. Children can draw characters on card and use simple lollipops to complete the puppet effect or more elaborate puppets can be made using fabric and fibre.

Allow children to retell well-known stories in pairs or small groups eg Fairytales and stories from popular picture books.

*SEE handout for puppet theatre

Story raps- choose a fairytale- name, place, friends. Help children to create a rap using rhyming words eg Once I knew a girl and her name was Cinders, boy did she hate cleaning windows, she had three sisters and they laughed at her blisters. Poor Cinders, full of blisters! Until one day she met on her way, a fairy queen who wasn't so mean. She sent Cinders to the ball, inside the castle wall. All was well, till the clock struck...Yell.... Cinders had a fall on the way home from the ball. She lost her shoe,

she felt so blue. She was back in rags.....etc

Children also enjoy modernising fairytales.

The teacher may decide to record the rap as the children play with words as part of the process. The rap can then be edited as a whole class/ group collaborative work. This will also provide linkage with the writing process.

Listening to and reading a rich diet of stories -Fairytales, mysteries, science fiction, myths, legends, will provide children with the language of storytelling. They also need opportunities to retell the stories to an audience. E.g in class, at sharing assemblies.

Story innovation- retell a familiar story introducing a new character eg Little Red Riding Hood stumbles into the Goldilocks story. Ask children to retell the story in small groups

Book reports also provide a context for retelling narratives



Language: English

Home corner role play- younger children can dress up and retell stories they are familiar with through play

Story Starters

- Story prompts- to help children create stories. Allow children to use a *story map* with three parts.

Character	Problem	Setting
Part 1	Part 2	Part 3

Using memory to create stories-Close your eyes, think of a place, can you remember something you hated wearing, and think of something funny/sad/scary. Tell me the story.

Collect photographs that tell a story. Make the activity more challenging by including open-ended pictures. Encourage the children to think beyond the information in the picture and imagine what might have happened before or after the event in the photograph.

Use cartoon strips as a prompt for creating and telling stories.

Also video recordings of cartoons played without volume provides an opportunity for retelling the visual story.

Circle time- Story roundabout. This will enhance listening skills and concentration. The children sit in an inward facing circle. A child or teacher begins a story, which each child in turn continues by adding a sentence. Adding only one word at a time can vary it. The story can be a retelling of a familiar story or with older children it is possible to use story starters (a character, a setting, problem etc) to generate a group story. With younger children it is a good idea to provide pictures from the story as prompts for the children.

Another variation: Here we are playing with words in this nonsense story. It can be used as an example for a story roundabout where the children are challenged to begin the next line with a word or idea from the previous line.

Eg Fire Engines are red

Magazines and books are red too

2 by 6 are 12

Twelve inches in a ruler

Queen Elizabeth was a ruler

Queen Elizabeth was a ship too

Ships sail the sea

Fish live in the sea

Fish have fins

Finns fought the Russians

Fire engines are always rushing

That's why fire engines are red.



Language: English

A story game- Story titbit. The teacher prepares simple written or drawn stories, which are cut into 4 or 5 sections, so that there is a section for each child. The sections are put into a container and mixed up. The children take on section each. The children are told how many sections complete the whole story. The children approach each other and find the missing parts to their story. Then they put the story in order. This activity can also be done in small groups of 4/5. Each child has a story part and they discuss how to re-assemble the story in a meaningful sequential context.

Story cards -Make three sets of story cards; character, setting and problem. These are all fundamental to any good story opening. In small circles ask the children to create a story orally to share with the class. When children are familiar with these story elements ask them to collect and specify characters, settings and problems for other groups.

Story cards & genre- When the children have chosen their cards they have to select a genre eg fantasy, adventure, historical, realistic. The listeners have to identify the genre.

Storytelling variations- Retell the story having changed the setting /character/problem. Compare and evaluate the variations. This activity can also be used to retell a known story with new characters or settings.

Three props in a box- similar to story cards the children/ teacher choose three props from a box and creates a story using these tools. Props could include old postcards (setting), objects such as an artefact eg old teapot, character pictures and action pictures. The children use these tools to create a story.

Sharing Assemblies

In some schools individual classes take responsibility for regular assemblies. As well as sharing class projects etc this time could be used occasionally for story telling. A story teller could be invited to the assembly or a group /class may wish to share a story performance. Sharing a story with peers or other classes provides an audience that will challenge children to communicate the story clearly and audibly.



Language: English

More Story Ideas

- Collect action stories eg1 Finger story: Don't touch the baby story told on your hands. Tell the story at Christmas- don't touch the presents! Eg 2 Story song with actions; Hamburger, cheeseburger, lettuce, tomato. Where's the ketchup? -With hand actions and increasing velocity!
- Using voices-Boom Chicka Boom- Liz Weir. This story could easily be memorised by children who will enjoy repeating the story using different voices. (infants: experiment with different voices in role-playing *a favourite story, a cartoon character*)
- Riddles- collect some with your class to share. (Eg P. 66 Liz Weir's book)

Boat Story- Make a paper boat, tear pieces off as the story unfolds, the story teller will create a t-shirt image from the original boat shape . Fisherman, boat rocked, crash, boat sinks and mast falls off... Children will enjoy listening to this story and learning to re-tell the story using the prop themselves.

The tailor and the buttonhole- a traditional tale, with repetition, in which everyone can take part. (see Liz Weir's book Boom Chicka Boom p.70)

Harold and the feathers story with a lesson for Harold- good story to initiate a discussion on bullying.

Place names and stories

This story is a good stimulus for children to explore place names and to find out how they got their names. It will involve interviewing skills as children find out the story about a local place name from their parents or grand parents. The children will then be asked to share the story in pairs/ small groups with the class.

This activity could also involve some research work for small groups in finding out the story of national and international place names place names eg, Dublin, New York

Glen down -fairy story on how it got its' name. The Ulster fairies were washing their shirts in the river getting ready for battle against the Scots. The little Ulster fairy told the young girl that she would know who won the battle by the colour of the water. The next day when the little girl came to visit the river was no longer clear. It was brown because the fairies had turned the river brown with their blood.

Why is the sky so far away? - Greedy people eating pieces from the sky, thunder storms, sky was angry, sky moved away...

This story could be an introduction to Aesop's Fables. Read an Aesop fable to the children. Distribute copies of the fable to pairs of children who must recreate the story with new characters or a new event but preserving the plot and the setting.



Language: English

Responding to Story

See Teacher Guidelines page 47 for an exemplar of extension work based on a story.

R= RECEPTIVENESS CC= COMPETENCE & CONFIDENCE

C= COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT EI= EMOTIONAL & IMAGINATIVE

Story character interviews & Hot-seating technique can be used to encourage pupils to sustain attentive listening and respond to what they have heard with relevant comments. This will incorporate reading comprehension and drama techniques. The children interview a character from the story. The teacher role plays the character or when the children are familiar with the story and strategy they can volunteer to role play.

Read a story to the children. Focus on a character. Scribe on the board all the words that the children use to describe that character. Ask them to think of a question they would like to ask character x if they met him. Record some of the questions. This will help prepare children for the hot seating technique. Teacher will need to model this skill to enable children to become familiar with it.

The pupil on the hot seat takes on the role of character x in a story and retells it in that characters' voice. The listeners can ask relevant questions at appropriate intervals eg Cinderella or a story from history.

Using big books- Shared reading of the story with the children. Choose one part of the story. Display the page opening and discuss the character and the action on this page. Teacher may role play the character or a child may volunteer. Brainstorm the questions that relate to this part of the story as preparation for the character interview. Create a panel of interviewers to ask a set of questions. The procedure can be repeated for a different page opening with a new panel.

Tableau technique- freeze-frame a scene from a storybook eg *When Jesse came across the Sea*. Choose a scene representing the key characters. Freeze the action.

Eg Grandmother and Jesse, as Jesse leaves for America on the ship. Jesse is on the ship with strangers. Her grandmother is on the quay side waving good bye to her granddaughter. At this point the class can step into the scene looking at how characters are reacting to each other and how they might be feeling. Freeze framing can be used to highlight a key moment in the narrative.

Extension of freeze framing: tell a story to the class, ask the children to freeze one event. Draw the action and describe that part of the action to a partner.



Language: English

The story map can also be used to respond to stories that the children have heard. In pairs or groups of 3 ask the children to illustrate the story in the top boxes and summarise the story using words in the second set of boxes

Characters	Setting	Problem
Illustration here		
Words to summarise the events of the story.		

Character profiles- identify and discuss similar characters in stories eg the baddies or the goodies. Help children to explore the characteristics of these characters

- play “who am I” twenty question games

Story Endings- create new endings in pairs, explore the “ what if” of stories

Activities with familiar stories

The Three Little Pigs

To listen to a story and respond to it

To create real and imaginary sound worlds

Discuss the story with the children. With the children select sounds to use and add to the story. Here are some suggestions.

Events

The three little pigs running around

- *Vocal squeaks, bells played quickly*

Wolf prowling around

- *Drum repeated as footsteps*

First little pig builds a straw house

- *Rubbing palms, finger stroking drum skin, scrunching raffia or paper*

Wolf tries to blow first pig’s house down and succeeds

- *three vocal puffs, wolf footsteps continue, cymbals crash for house falling, bells for pigs running around*

Second little pig builds house of sticks

- *rhythm sticks*

Wolf tries to blow the house down and succeeds

- *repeat as for straw house*

Third little pig builds a house of bricks

- *vocal puffs followed by panting*

Wolf climbs up the house and then falls down the chimney

- *ascending notes on tuned percussion, followed by cymbal crash and bang on drum. Vocal cheers*



Language: English

Jack and the beanstalk

Outline the events of the story and help children select sounds to add to the story.

Suggestions: pitched percussion for the beanstalk growing, heavy drumbeat for the giant, claves played quickly for Jack running, vocal sounds for hen squawking, drum roll and cymbal crash for beanstalk falling down.

The Tortoise and the Hare

Outline the events of the story and help children select sounds to recreate the story.

Suggestions: Children chant ready, steady go to begin the race. Make footsteps for the hare on the claves and footsteps for the tortoise on a tambour., vocal snores for the hare's sleep, vocal cheers for the tortoise's victory.

Stories from other cultures

Cinderella is probably the best-known story in the world. Found in folk stories from Alaska to South America, it has an international appeal. The earliest version is thought to be Chinese from the 9th century AD. The story that most of us know is the French version written down by Charles Perrault. The Blue Fish is a great version that comes from South Africa. Storyteller Hugh Lupton collected it when he visited the country. Grimm's version offers a quite gruesome vision of cutting off toes to fit into the slipper. In the Indonesian version the stepsister is boiled, sliced up and sent to the mother for the next meal! Today we see a modern Cinderella in the Disney versions and in pantomimes.

Children will enjoy comparing the story of The Blue Fish and the more familiar tale- using a story map or flow chart- will help them to see the similarities and differences.

The story of Cinderella constructs a particular view of the world and the role of women. Children could discuss and compare how the modern day role of women in the story would compare.



Language: English

Useful Websites

Eric Carle Teacher Resource File Website.

Statement of content: Lesson plans and ideas using Eric Carle's picture books including The Very Hungry Caterpillar and Brown Bear Brown Bear What do you see? (Also available in big book)

Scholastic Website

Web address: www.scholastic.com

Statement of content: Click on teacher activities and discover interactive books for children. Also view many resources for literacy and other curricular areas

Carol Hurst's Children's Literature Site

Web address: www.carolhurst.com

Statement of content: This site reviews a host of books and authors for children's literature with links to other sites.

Language Arts Lesson Plans & Resources

Web address: www.storyarts.org

Click on Stories in a nutshell where you will find a variety of easy to tell stories from different cultures. Also find a link to Aesop's ABC...Twenty Six Fables. There are also some interesting ideas for story telling with children. Collecting Family stories is also a useful link to help children research family stories about people, places and special objects.

Primary Curriculum Support Programme

Web address: www.pcsp.ie

Click on the English link to find units of work on various aspects of the English curriculum including picture books like Izzy and Skunk by Marie Louise Fitzpatrick.

Folk and Fairytales (for children)

Find this site on the Yahoo search engine. It has links to Hans Christian Anderson's tales, Grimm's fairytales, Indian Children's stories, Celtic Folklore and many more



Language: English

Useful Resources

The Writers in Schools Scheme lists information on writers, poets and storytellers and how to operate the scheme in your school.

Contact: [www.poetryireland](http://www.poetryireland.com) .com or telephone 01 6799860 for information.

Changing Faces ibby Ireland: A guide to multi cultural books for children

Book Choice for primary Schools produced by the National Reading Initiative, CBI, and Dept. of Ed. and Science & Dublin Corporation

Boom Chicka Boom, Liz Weir (Book and cd)

Fairytales told by Berlie Doherty & illustrated by Jane Ray

A First Book of Fairytales retold by Mary Hoffman & illustrated by Julie Downing

East O' The Sun and West O' the Moon, illustrated by P.J.Lynch, a Norwegian fairytale

The King of Ireland's Son, Brendan Behan & P.J.Lynch

Tales of Wisdom and Wonder, Hugh Lupton & Niamh Sharkey

Colour photocopies of illustrations from picture books will provide resources necessary for retelling stories. Alternatively old books cut up and laminated are ideal.



Language: English

Primary School Curriculum

- some content objectives which can be approached using story as a context

Oral Language

Junior Infants/Senior Infants

Strand: Receptiveness to oral language

The child should be enabled to:

- Listen to a story or description and respond to it

Strand: Developing competence and confidence in using oral language

The child should be enabled to

- Talk about past and present experiences, and plan, predict, and speculate about future and imaginary experiences
- Choose appropriate words to name and describe things and events
- Experiment with descriptive words to add elaborative detail
- Combine simple sentences through the use of connecting words

Strand: Developing cognitive abilities through language

The child should be enabled to

- Provide further information in response to the teacher's prompting
- Listen to a story or narrative and ask questions about it
- Focus on descriptive detail and begin to be explicit in relation to people, places, times, processes, events, shape, size, position
- Discuss different possible solutions to simple questions

Strand: Developing emotional and imaginative life through oral language

The child should be enabled to

- Reflect on and talk about a wide range of everyday experiences and feelings
- Create and tell stories
- listen to, learn and retell a rich variety of stories, rhymes and songs
- respond through discussion, mime and role-playing to stories, rhymes and songs heard and learnt
- create real and imaginary sound worlds
- experiment with different voices in role-playing
a favourite story, a cartoon character



Language: English

Oral Language

First/Second Class

Strand: Receptiveness to oral language

The child should be enabled to:

- Listen to stories, descriptions, instructions and directions and respond to them

Strand: Developing competence and confidence in using oral language

The child should be enabled to

- Talk about and reflect on past and present experiences, and plan, predict, anticipate and speculate about future and imaginary experiences
- Experiment with more elaborate vocabulary and sentence structure in order to extend and explore meaning
 - experimenting with descriptive words*
 - combining simple sentences*
 - elaborating simple sentences*
- Experiment with word order and examine its implication for meaning and clarity
- Focus on the subject under discussion and sustain a conversation on it
- Initiate discussions, respond to the initiatives of others and have practice in taking turn

Strand: Developing cognitive abilities through language

The child should be enabled to

- Give a description, recount a narrative or describe a process and answer questions about it
- Listen to other children describe experiences and ask questions about their reactions to them
- Become increasingly explicit in relation to people, places, times, processes and events by adding elaborative detail to what he/she describes and narrates
- Listen to a story or narrative and ask questions about it
- Engage in real and imaginary situations involving language use
 - explain, persuade, enquire, report., agree, dissent*
 - discuss a point of view, justify opinions*
- Ask questions that will satisfy his/her curiosity and wonder
 - why? how? where? when? what? what if?*



Language: English

Strand: Developing emotional and imaginative life through oral language

The child should be enabled to

- Describe everyday experiences and events
- Express feelings in order to clarify them and explain them to others
- tell stories in his/her own words and answer questions about them
- re-create stories and poems in improvisational drama
- use play and improvisational drama to sustain imaginary situations
- create real and imaginary sound worlds
- use imaginative play to create humorous characters and situations



Language: English

Oral Language

Third/Fourth Class

Strand: Receptiveness to oral language

The child should be enabled to:

- Listen to, retell and tape a narrative or a description, taking turns giving the account

Strand: Developing competence and confidence in using oral language

The child should be enabled to

- Present ideas that are relevant to the subject in a logical sequence
- Summarise and prioritise ideas
- Become familiar with the functions of words without necessarily using technical grammatical terms

Noun, verb, adjective, adverb, pronoun, preposition

- Make lists of local words and expressions
- Use improvisational drama to re-create well known characters
- Hear, discuss and react to local storytellers

Strand: Developing cognitive abilities through language

The child should be enabled to

- Discuss a story being read and predict future events and likely outcomes in it
- Discuss different possible solutions to problems
- Discuss causes and effects in relation to processes and events and predict possible outcomes
- Listen to a presentation and discuss and decide which are the most important questions to ask
- Learn how to use the basic key questions
why? how? where? when? what? what if?
- Make presentations to the class about his/her own particular interests
- Justify personal likes and dislikes
- Argue a point of view and try to persuade others to support it
- Explore historical events through improvisational drama
- Explore reactions to ideas through improvisational drama

Strand: Developing emotional and imaginative life through oral language

The child should be enabled to

- Describe everyday experiences to the class or group and discuss them
- Discuss favourite moments, important events and exciting characters in a story, play or poem
- Express reactions to events and characters in stories
- Discuss reactions to poems



Language: English

- Create and tell stories to the class or group and retell them after questioning, comparing the versions
- Express feelings and attitudes through improvisational drama
- Create and sustain imaginary contexts through improvisational drama
- React to poems through improvisational drama
- Dramatise stories
- Experience and enjoy playful aspects of language
 - telling riddles and jokes*
 - experimenting with funny sounding words*
 - playing word association games*
 - discussing the origins and effects of unusual words*
 - reading and listening to examples of humorous literature*
 - composing rhymes and verses*
 - appreciating how words interact- how a word can trigger a humorous reaction*



Language: English

Oral Language

Fifth/Sixth Class

Strand: Receptiveness to language

The child should be enabled to:

- Listen to authors reading and discussing their own work

Strand: Developing competence and confidence in using oral language

The child should be enabled to

- Discuss the meaning, effect and diversity of local words and expressions
- Hear accents and dialects other than his/her own on tape and on video and discuss them
- Use improvisational drama to learn how local idiom, accent and dialect can influence the effect of language in particular situations

Strand: Developing cognitive abilities through language

The child should be enabled to

- Discuss issues of major concern
- Discuss ideas and concepts encountered in other areas of the curriculum
- Use a discussion of the familiar as the basis of a more formal or objective grasp of a topic or concept
- Use the basic key questions and checking questions as a means of extending knowledge
- Listen to a presentation on a particular topic, decide through discussion which are the most appropriate questions to ask, and then prioritise them
- Argue points of view from the perspective of agreement and disagreement through informal discussion and in the context of formal debates
- Justify and defend particular opinions or attitudes and try to persuade others to support a particular point of view
- Respond to arguments presented by the teacher
- Discuss the value, truth or relevance of popular ideas, causes and proverbs
- Explore and express conflicts of opinion through improvisational drama
- Explore historical contexts through improvisational drama

Strand: Developing emotional and imaginative life through oral language

The child should be enabled to

- Discuss with others his/her reactions to everyday experiences and to local, national and world events
- Discuss the concerns of other children



Language: English

- Discuss ideas, concepts and images encountered in literature
- Discuss personal reading and writing
- Express individual responses to poems and literature and discuss different interpretations
- Discuss plays, films and television programmes
- Experience and enjoy playful aspects of language
 - experimenting with sequences of words*
 - discussing the origins and effects of unusual words*
 - hearing and reading aloud humorous literature*
 - telling riddles and jokes*
 - playing word association games*