

# Telling Stories

Before the days of books and TV, everyone told stories. There are thousands of traditional tales across the world that started by being told. They were often told by storytellers who travelled from village to village telling tales in exchange for food and a bed for the night. You may have seen a storyteller in school. Here's how to become one yourself.

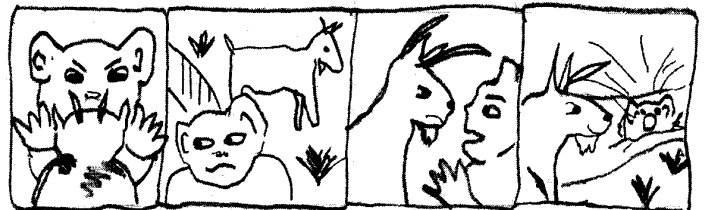
## 1 Story picture maps

Draw a story picture map — pictures of the characters and events. You can add words to act as prompts. Drawing the map helps to visualize the story (see it in your mind).

You can see the whole plot in one place on the page.

## 2 Storyboard

Try drawing a cartoon version of the main events. This is called a storyboard. Stick to the key events.



## 3 The story's skeleton

Some people work out the bare bones of a story. What are the main incidents? Try to end up with five or six. Write them in boxes in a flow chart with prompt words. Then write the prompt words on separate cards to help recall the sequence.

**Little goat trots over bridge**

**Troll stops him**

**Little goat says wait for bigger brother Repeat twice**

**Big goat knocks troll into river**

#### **4 Act it**

Another idea is to put a few simple actions to the story. These movements help you remember what is happening and they also help the listener understand. So you might use your hands or face to convey chopping, cutting, picking up, smiling and so on. Keep the actions simple and do not have too many.

#### **5 Use a tape**

Making a recording of the story can help. Remember to leave spaces between each sentence. Then replay the tape over and over again, repeating each sentence in the space. This is a good way to learn a story if you learn best through listening.

#### **6 Practise**

Keep retelling the story to yourself. You may feel daft standing in your room or walking down the road muttering the story aloud, but it does help. After a while you will remember a version of it. It doesn't matter if the words change a bit each time you tell it. That is all part of being a storyteller. It helps if you have a friend who will listen!

#### **7 Story partners and circles**

Try working in pairs and retell the story a few times, till you are both really good at it. There are two ways to do this.

- You can both tell the story at the same time as though you are looking into a mirror.
- You can take it in turns — with the listener helping the teller. Story circles are fun. You sit in a circle and retell the story, taking turns at saying the next sentence or event.

**The Billy Goats Gruff**

**The Enormous Turnip**

**The Three Bears Stone Soup**

**The Magic Porridge Pot**

**Red Riding Hood**

**Cinderella.**

**The Little Red Hen**

**The Three Pigs**

**The Gingerbread Man**

**Rumplestiltskin**

**Jack and the Beanstalk**

## Changing tales

Once you know a story really well, you can make it your own. This can be done by changing it in various ways.

- Change the names and places. You could have a story about the three bold bison and instead of a troll you might have a wolf under the bridge.
- Add extra description or events. So you might have a section in which the troll makes an elaborate trap for the big goat which is then broken.
- Alter the characters, setting or events. Instead of Goldilocks and three bears you might have secret agent called Gold E. Locks who breaks into the headquarters of a gang of robbers, led by the infamous Mister Big.
- Retell the tale from a different angle. You could have a wolf telling the story of how he saw a tornado approaching the pig's house and tried to save the poor fellow!
- Use the plot with different characters. Instead of the Billy Goats Gruff, you might have three snowmen who want to cross the road and sneak into a freezer to snowbathe!

## Points to remember

- **Make** sure your audience is comfortable and **looking at you**.
- Do not rush the telling - vary the pace. For instance you might want to speed up a little in a chase. Some places may need dramatic pauses.
- Make sure that the words are clear and can be heard. Can everyone hear?
- Use expression - make the troll sound angry or frightening. Make the little billy goat sound terrified and timid.
- Lean forward as you tell the tale and use your eyes. Look at the audience and into their eyes as you tell the tale. Scan the group and hold their attention with your eyes. Make your eyes larger by opening them wide!
- If you are telling a tale to younger children and you see that they are becoming frightened you say something like, but the little goat was not **afraid**'. **Good storytellers adapt the story for their audience.**