

4. Who, where, what stories

3rd–6th grade

20 minutes



Materials:
small red, blue and yellow
pieces of paper (A6 or A7).

a) Pairs of students (preferably of mixed age) receive three small pieces of paper in three different colors. Each team writes the name of a person or an animal on the red paper, the place of the action on a blue paper, and what will happen (in two or three key words) on the yellow paper.

b) The papers are then collected and shuffled.

c) Each team receives three pieces of paper of different colors and must make up a story based on the information provided.

d) Final presentation.

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Skeleton stories, emotive word stories, scaffolding stories

Goal

To further the creativity and promote the enjoyment of writing and storytelling in the first language in a playful and easy manner. Create easy ways for comparing and assessing texts.

Skeleton stories, emotive word stories, scaffolding stories

3rd–6th grade

20 minutes



Materials:
Possibly a dictionary,
or another book or publication
from which to “pick” words.

Procedure (basic scaffold):

a) In the first step, five words are selected (see below) and written on the board or on a piece of paper.

b) These five words represent the scaffold or skeleton, around which each student writes a story. These five words must be used in every story (possibly highlighted).

c) Finally, the texts are read out loud, discussed and/or hung on the wall. It is exciting to see how many different “story bodies” emerged from the same “skeleton”. It will be interesting to discuss and assess how the students mastered the task of including the five skeleton words into their texts.

Remarks:

The process of selecting five words:

- The teacher goes around the class with a dictionary, a book or a magazine. Five students take turns to randomly open the book and point to a word with a pencil.
- All students note down a few words on pieces of paper. These are then collected and shuffled; different students pick five pieces of paper, these are used as the scaffolding or skeleton.

Variants:

1. Instead of involving the whole class in this activity, it is also suitable for just one or two level groups if the students are well acquainted with the procedure.
2. Instead of five words, it is also possible to select just three or four words. It is not recommended to use more than five words.
3. Phrases or short sentences can also be used as the skeleton or scaffold instead of individual words.
4. Christa and Emil Zopfi (1995, p. 49) suggest a nice variation of this exercise: each student can request a story in which three to five things or words occur. S/he writes these words on a piece of paper and passes it

on to another student. The second student then writes a story based on the particular words requested and returns it to the first student as a gift. (Variation: the “wish lists” are placed in a basket, each child picks a list and writes a story based on it). Extension: parents or family members are asked to provide such a list, and then receive the story as a gift. (see also 3, “wishing-word stories”).

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Imaginative writing in different social forms

Goal

To further the creativity and promote the enjoyment of writing and storytelling in the first language in a playful and easy manner. Create easy ways for comparing and assessing texts.

1. Partner stories

2nd–6th grade

30 minutes



Work cited:
Büchel & Isler, 2006, p. 146.

a) Students work together in pairs (they can also be from different age groups). Student 1 thinks about the beginning of a story (one sentence) and dictates this sentence to his/her partner (student 2).

b) Student 2 writes down the sentence and imagines how the story could continue, then dictates the next sentence to his/her partner (student 1).

c) In the end, the different pairs read their stories to the other teams. Variation (students of similar abilities paired): this exercise is carried out in silence. Student 1 writes down one or two sentences (the beginning of the story). Student 2 continues with one or two sentences, etc.

2. One title – many texts

3rd–6th grade

30–40 minutes



a) The teacher provides the class with an attractive title to stimulate the imagination. Examples: “If I could do magic” / “I myself in ten years” / “If I were a King/Queen (or: President/Prime Minister)” / “Wishes for my family’s native country”.

b) Each student writes a text based on one of the titles or creates an A3 poster with text and illustrations about it.

c) Exhibiting, presenting and discussing the texts in groups or as a whole class.

3. Writing an adventure book together

4th–9th grade

60–120 minutes



Materials:
a ring binder.

a) The assignment to the students (in groups or as a class project): Together, think about and imagine two protagonists who experience all sorts of adventures – in your country of origin, or where you live now; or anywhere else in the world or in space – in fact, anywhere you want! Determine the names of the characters (ideally a boy and a girl), how old they are, and if they have any special skills or abilities (e. g. perform magic, ability to travel through space and time at the speed of light...). Together, create a profile for each character (name, age, hobbies, special abilities, etc.) which will be featured at the beginning of your adventure book.

b) Each student writes and describes one or several adventures that the main characters experience.

c) Read your adventure stories to one another and then collect them in a binder.

d) Students continue to write new adventures regularly and to collect them. In time the class will have created their own book of adventure stories!