

# Storytelling and Oral History



Festival Photograph by John Robson,  
New Bedford, MA

**Developed by  
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**With special thanks to Tom Cummings of the Education Department of the Bishop Museum in Honolulu, Hawai'i and Ronald Adams and Jennifer Gonsalves of the New Bedford ECHO Project.**

## **ECHO PARTNERS**

**Alaska Native Heritage Center and North Slope Borough, Barrow, Alaska**

**Hawai'i: Bernice Bishop Museum,**

**Massachusetts: New Bedford Oceanarium, New Bedford Whaling Museum, and the Peabody Essex Museum**

## Storytelling and Oral History

This curriculum unit was developed to introduce teachers and students to storytelling. It was made possible by the Education through Cultural and Historical Organizations (ECHO) Act, a federally mandated educational and cultural enrichment initiative annually serving hundreds of thousands of children and adult learners in Alaska, Hawai'i, and Massachusetts. Established by Congress, as part of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001, ECHO brings innovative programs to culturally diverse audiences.

The ECHO Project brings together groups that are geographically distant, but culturally and historically connected. First brought into contact with each other through tall ships, today's partner regions share threads of common history. Each of these partners has its own distinct mission, but all are stewards of the arts and knowledge of their regions. They collect drawings, paintings, sculpture, artifacts, music, poetry, and literature. They gather historical and scientific facts, figures, and documents. Their collections

reflect the connections that the ocean has created between the regions.



### **An Introduction to Storytelling: The Call of Story**

The Call of Story Broadcast, at Brigham Young University, which produces storytelling programs for public television, captures the essence of storytelling

(<http://www.callofstory.org/en/storytelling/default.asp>):

“The stories we are willing to share with one another give our culture its values, beliefs, goals, and traditions, binding us together into a cohesive society, allowing us to work together with a common purpose. Storytelling lives at the heart of human experience—a compelling form of personal communication as ancient as language itself. Since the beginnings of humankind, we have shared, through stories, the events, beliefs, and values held dear by our families, communities, and cultures.”

## What is Storytelling

The National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) defines storytelling, explains its benefits in the classroom, and suggests strategies for implementing storytelling in the classroom on its website as follows: “Storytelling is relating a tale to one or more listeners through voice and gesture. It is not the same as reading a story aloud or reciting a piece from memory or acting out a drama—though it shares common characteristics with these arts. The storyteller looks into the eyes of the audience and together they compose the tale. The storyteller begins to see and re-create, through voice and gesture, a series of mental images; the audience, from the first moment of listening, squints, stares, smiles, leans forward or falls asleep, letting the teller know whether to slow down, speed up, elaborate, or just finish. Each listener, as well as each teller, actually composes a unique set of story images derived from meanings associated with words, gestures, and sounds. The experience can be profound, exercising the thinking and touching the emotions of both teller and listener.



## Why Include Storytelling in School?

Everyone who can speak them informally as we wonders of our day-to-day exaggerate our voices, lean in and compose the minds. Often they are similar tale from their own learned oral skills can be classrooms in many ways.



can tell stories. We tell relate the mishaps and lives. We gesture, pause for effect. Listeners scene of our tale in their likely to be reminded of a lives. These naturally used and built on in our

Students who search their memories for details about an event as they are telling it orally will later find those details easier to capture in writing. Writing theorists value the rehearsal, or prewriting, stage of composing. Sitting in a circle and swapping personal or fictional tales is one of the best ways to help writers rehearse.

Listeners encounter both familiar and new language patterns through story. They learn new words or new contexts for already familiar words. Those

who regularly hear stories subconsciously acquire familiarity with narrative patterns and begin to predict upcoming events. Both beginning and experienced readers call on their understanding of patterns as they tackle unfamiliar texts. Then they re-create those patterns in both oral and written compositions. Learners who regularly tell stories become aware of how an audience affects a telling, and they carry that awareness into their writing.

Both tellers and listeners find a reflection of themselves in stories. Through the language of symbol, children and adults can act out through a story the fears and understandings not so easily expressed in everyday talk. Story characters represent the best and worst in humans. By exploring story territory orally, we explore ourselves—whether it be through ancient myths and folktales, literary short stories, modern picture books, or poems. Teachers who value a personal understanding of their students can learn much by noting what story a child chooses to tell and how that story is uniquely composed in the telling. Through this same process, teachers can learn a great deal about themselves.

Story is the best vehicle for passing on factual information. Historical figures and events linger in children's minds when communicated by way of a narrative. The ways of other cultures, both ancient and living, acquire honor in story. The facts about how plants and animals develop, how numbers work, or how government policy influences history—any topic, for that matter—can be incorporated into story form and made more memorable if the listener takes the story to heart.

Children at any level of schooling who do not feel as competent as their peers in reading or writing are often masterful at storytelling. The comfort zone of the oral tale can be the path by which they reach the written one.

Tellers who become by retelling it often, meaning with each new pairs or in small negotiate the meaning



very familiar with even one tale learn that literature carries new encounter. Students working in storytelling groups learn to of a tale.

## How Do You Include Storytelling in School?

Teachers who tell personal stories about their past or present lives, model for students the way to recall sensory detail. Listeners can relate the most vivid images from the stories they have heard or tell back a memory the story evokes in them. They can be instructed to observe the natural storytelling taking place around them each day, noting how people use gesture and facial expression, body language, and variety in tone of voice to get the story across.

Stories can also be rehearsed. Again, the teacher's modeling of a prepared telling can introduce students to the techniques of eye contact, dramatic placement of a character within a scene, use of character voices, and more. If students spend time rehearsing a story, they become comfortable using a variety of techniques. However, it is important to remember that storytelling is communication, from the teller to the audience, not just acting or performing.

Storytellers can draft a story the same way writers draft. Audiotape or videotape recordings can offer the storyteller a chance to be reflective about the process of telling. Listeners can give feedback about where the telling engaged them most. Learning logs kept throughout a storytelling unit allow both teacher and students to write about the thinking that goes into choosing a story, mapping its scenes, coming to know its characters, deciding on detail to include or exclude.

Like writers, student storytellers learn from models. Teachers who tell personal stories or go through the process of learning to tell folk or literary tales make the most credible models. Visiting storytellers or professional tellers on audiotapes or videotapes offer students a variety of styles. Often a community historian or folklorist has a repertoire of local tales. Older students both learn and teach when they take their tales to younger audiences or community agencies. Once you get storytelling going, there is no telling where it will take you.

Oral storytelling is regaining its position of respect in communities where hundreds of people of every age gather together for festivals in celebration of its power. Schools and preservice college courses are gradually giving it curriculum space as well. It is unsurpassed as a tool for learning about

ourselves, about the ever-increasing information available to us, and about the thoughts and feelings of others.

The simpleminded youngest brother in olden tales, while disregarded for a while, won the treasure in the end every time. The NCTE Committee on Storytelling invites you to reach for a treasure—the riches of storytelling. (<http://www.ncte.org/about/over/positions/category/curr/107637.htm>).

## The ECHO Storytelling Curriculum

This curriculum was developed to introduce intermediate and middle grade teachers and students to the art of storytelling. Primary grade teachers can easily adapt the lessons to meet the needs of younger students. The curriculum consists of five lessons that teachers can use to introduce storytelling:

- Lesson One is an introduction to the elements of storytelling.
- Lesson Two asks students to create a story by using long-recognized, basic elements that make the storyline coherent and interesting. This lesson was developed by Tom Cummings, a Hawaiian storyteller you will meet the Festival.
- Lesson Three explains the cultural role of storytelling and asks students to compare and contrast stories from different cultures.
- Lesson Four prepares students to interview elders in their families, communities, or neighborhoods.
- Lesson Five introduces students to processes for developing and telling a story.

Storytelling has been around as long as there have been people. It has played a critical role in the development of our world cultures and civilizations. Storytelling has been used over the centuries to chronicle extraordinary people and events, to transmit information from generation to generation, to teach, and to entertain. It can be used in the classroom for enjoyment and learning.

# Storytelling: Lesson One

## An Introduction to Storytelling

Objectives for Students:

- To identify the parts or components of a story
- To explain why we tell stories
- To use a Story Guide to plan and tell a story

Materials:

Handout 1A: Story Guide

Handout 1B: Thinking About Your Storytelling

Activities

### *1. An introduction to storytelling: The teacher tells a story*

Tell a two or three minute story about yourself to students. Use Handout A (A Story Guide) to prepare your story. Here are some ideas for stories to help you get started:

- Tell about a time you got into trouble with your parents or a teacher.
- Tell about a time that you learned something from a friend.
- Tell about a time that you felt foolish or proud.
- Tell a story about someone who did something heroic.
- Tell about a time you did something that was totally out of character or unexpected.

Q: Ask students: Why do you think I chose to tell this story? Did you think it was scary, humorous or sad? Was there a lesson that I learned?

Allow students to express their ideas.

### *2. Learning about the Story Guide*

The Story Guide includes the parts or components of a story: characters, location or setting (when and where the story takes place), the problem, how the problem was solved, and the outcome.

- Distribute two copies of the Story Guide to each of your students. You should have a copy of the Story Guide on the overhead, on chart paper, or on the board.
- Ask individual students to think about your story and respond to the question in the first box, “Why was this story a good one to tell?” Students will discuss their responses to this question later in small groups (This is the theme of the story.).

- Assess students’ knowledge of the components of a story by asking them to brainstorm their ideas about each. Record their responses and clarify when necessary.
- Place students in groups of 3 or 4. Ask students to work together to fill in the information about your story in the Story Guide. Choose one student to record each group’s responses including the one they answered individually, “Why was this story a good one to tell?”
- Process with the class. The recorders will report out for their groups. Accept responses that may be slightly different from your original ideas IF they are consistent with the text. (For example, students may view your problem or solution a little differently than you planned. Allow responses that “make sense” and adhere to the text.)
- Review and clarify students’ understandings of the components of stories. Students should write definitions of each story component in their Story Guide Handout. As students are writing, you can “check for understanding” and note any students who need additional instruction. (Assessment)

*3. The student plans a story using the Story Guide.*

Ask students to plan a 2-3 minute story using the Story Guide. They can use the following story starters that are adapted from ones developed by Dylan Pritchett, a storyteller who travels throughout the country, telling stories. (To see Dylan Pritchett tell a story, follow this link:

[http://www.epfl.net/kids/estories/ESTORIES\\_Teller\\_info.cfm?id=12](http://www.epfl.net/kids/estories/ESTORIES_Teller_info.cfm?id=12))



Story Starters

- The last time I was scared late at night was when...
- Once on my way to or home from school...
- One time when I was at my friend’s house for \_\_\_\_\_, I was surprised when...
- When I was little I used to.....
- One time .....
- Never...
- It started out like any other ordinary day...

*4. The student tells a story.*

Ask students to work with a partner. Each student will take a turn telling his/her story to the partner. Remind students to be good listeners. After both students have had a chance to tell their stories, ask them to (individually) answer the questions on Handout B.

- About your partner: Did your partner's story include all the story components?
- About your own story:
  - Why did you choose that story to tell?
  - How did your partner react to the story?
  - Was it easy or hard for you to tell this story? Why?
  - What would you change next time?

## Story Guide

Why was this story a good one to tell?

Who are the characters in your story?

What is the location of your story? When does your story take place?

What's the problem?

What are the 3 or 4 big events in the story?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

How was the problem solved?

What was the outcome or result?

## Handout B: Thinking About Storytelling

Answer the following question about your partner's story:

1. Did your partner's story include all the story parts? Explain.

Answer the following questions about your own story:

1. Why did you choose that story to tell?
2. Was the Study Guide helpful or not? Explain your answer.
3. How did your partner react to the story?
4. How did you feel about your partner's reaction?
5. Was it easy or hard for you to tell this story? Why?
6. What would you change next time?

## Teacher Notes for Lesson One

“Stories are the threads which bind nations, cultures, and families together. Just as there is no culture without stories, no childhood or education is complete without the magic of shared stories. Stories allow all children, regardless of age, culture, or ability, instant access to a larger world, in terms of time and space, that the one in which they live.” (Cabral and Manduca, 1997)

\* Follow this link to great storytellers: <http://www.epfl.net/kids/estories/>

\* The National Council of Teachers of English offers the following definition of storytelling (<http://www.ncte.org/about/over/positions/category/curr/107637.htm>):

“Storytelling is relating a tale to one or more listeners through voice and gesture. It is not the same as reading a story aloud or reciting a piece from memory or acting out a drama—though it shares common characteristics with these arts. The storyteller looks into the eyes of the audience and together they compose the tale. The storyteller begins to see and re-create, through voice and gesture, a series of mental images; the audience, from the first moment of listening, squints, stares, smiles, leans forward or falls asleep, letting the teller know whether to slow down, speed up, elaborate, or just finish. Each listener, as well as each teller, actually composes a unique set of story images derived from meanings associated with words, gestures, and sounds. The experience can be profound, exercising the thinking and touching the emotions of both teller and listener.”

### \* Background Information on Storytelling

- Storytelling is an ancient art. Before there was the written word, early societies used stories to teach, to pass down beliefs and traditions, to teach, to entertain, and to keep oral records of historical events.
- In some societies, the central role of storytelling diminished over time with the emergence of the written word. In other cultures, storytelling has consistently played a central role in passing on cultural knowledge, factual information, morals, themes, and understandings about life.
- There is a renewed interest in storytelling as an educational tool for 1) learning about the past and present of other cultures, 2) exploring values, 3) teaching listening, 4) supporting the language development of English Language Learners, 5) helping students make sense of events in their lives (Cabral and Manduca, 1997).
- Hamilton and Weiss, in *Children Tell Stories*, suggest that storytelling promotes students’ love of language and listening skills, enhances their vocabulary, comprehension, recall, kindles their imaginations, and advances their writing skills.

\* The following website offers a wide range of information about storytelling. It includes a FAQ (frequently asked questions) section that will answer many of your questions. There are also links to several very informative websites: <http://www.timsheppard.co.uk/story>

## Lesson Two

### A Way of Learning and Teaching Storytelling



This lesson was developed by Tom Cummings, who works in the Education Department at the Bishop Museum in Honolulu. In this lesson, students will learn about developing, writing, and telling a story.

**Key Concepts:** Stories are an effective way to retain and recall information. By understanding the elements in a story, its telling can be effective in sharing values and concepts as well as be entertaining.

#### Objective

To have students create a story by using long-recognized, basic elements that make the storyline coherent and interesting.

#### Materials:

Handout 2A: “The Art of Storytelling”  
Handout 2B: Storytelling-Its Genesis  
Rip/chart sheet with stand  
Marking pens of various colors  
Masking tape  
Scissors

#### *1. Why storytelling is important*

Purpose: To demonstrate that many and various elements from our human experience can be made into a story – even when the story is fantasy and created from random elements. And to understand that a story has a general pattern helps to make its telling interesting.

Ask students to read Handout 2A: “Storytelling – Its Genesis”  
Set a purpose for students’ reading by giving them a question to answer as they read,

Q: Why is storytelling important to us all?

Discuss. In the discussion, ask students what they learned in their reading about the purpose of storytelling. Build on their responses.



## 2. Elements for creating a story

Make a chart sheet for three elements or components of a story

- Location
- Characters
- Objects

Explain that object is a new component. Be sure that students understand that this refers to an article that is important in a story.

**Story Element Brainstorm:** In a group discussion, go around the room and ask students to think of items for each story element. Include everyone in the group, urging them to be creative and imaginative. Use one chart sheet for each of the elements below. (See the attached sample sheet.)

- **Location (Setting):** Ask students, “Where do you want the story to take place?” (Encourage students to be wildly imaginative, suggesting places that are interesting, unusual, out-of-this world.)
- **Characters:** What kinds of characters – human or otherwise – do you want in the story? Have in mind or be ready to describe the interesting personality traits(s) of the characters. Have students create one villain, then one hero. (Again, prompt students to suggest characters who are fabulous, heroic, bad, unforgettable, loving or hateful.)
- **Objects:** This is optional, but ask: What “thing” do you want in the story that belongs to one or all of the characters (a famous sword, a magic wand, a self-playing flute, a star to wish upon, an invisible bird, a magic carpet, a wind gourd, a conch shell, a special kind of rope or fishhook, and on and on)?

An example is provided in the “Notes for Teachers” section at the end of this lesson.

## 3. Creating and telling a story

After completing this exercise, cut out the words or phrases from each chart sheet. At the same time, have the students divide into groups. (Four to six in a group is ideal. Two per group does not invite full or varied exchanges of ideas. More than six diminishes full participation from everyone in the group.)

Randomly give each group one of the cut-out words or phrases from each of the chart sheets; i.e., location, characters, objects. Then ask each group to create a story that uses all three words or phrases (location, character and object). Allow each group ten minutes to create a story. After, take the following steps:

Have each group select someone to tell their story in three to five minutes.

**Beginning the story:** Pre-instruct the tellers that their story must include an introduction. That is, they must remember to say at the start: “I’m going to tell you a story about…” At the beginning of the telling the teller should also say who is in the story, and where and when it took place.

**The Problem or Conflict:** Pre-instruct tellers that they must include a problem or some sort of conflict in the story. The bigger the conflict, the better the story. And the more complicated the conflict grows, the better.

**Resolution:** Pre-instruct the tellers that at story’s end the conflict must be resolved or come to rest. The story must have a conclusion whether it is happy or sad. At the end we hope to learn how the character coped.

#### *4. Students Sharing How They Feel*

After each story is told to everyone, discuss with them how they felt about the story – accepting that the stories came out of random and seemingly “nonsense” elements.

Some questions could include:

- What did you learn about the words in your group’s list as the story was being created?
- How did you feel hearing that list of location, characters and objects being used in the story?
- What feelings and ideas were expressed in your group as you discussed and created the story?
- Why is it important to have those feelings and ideas?
- Why are having various feelings and ideas a natural process of creating, telling and hearing stories?
- What else did you learn in the creation of the story and its telling?

#### *5. Review the Activity*

By prompting the answers from the students, discuss what makes a story interesting. Lead students to at least the following conclusions.

- Location or setting is important. All stories must happen some place, whether externally or in the mind.
- Characters are essentials in the story, be they people, animals, or a natural phenomenon (wind, rain, lightning, sun).

- Objects in a story – though not absolutely needed – make what happens more interesting (e.g., Holy Grail, or the conch shell of Waipi`o, Kihapu).
- Introduction at the beginning of the story is important. It is that “Once upon a time a time there was a prince in search of the magic ring in the land of Zurester.”
- Problem or Conflict must be present. A big storm, a battle, an argument or a plague makes the story interesting. Remember, it is how the conflict is coped with that is important.
- Resolution. Bring the story to a conclusion. After all the fussing in the story, make it come to a happy, sad, or mysterious ending.

### *6. Follow Up*

Assign students to create and tell their stories, using the exercise above as a guide. Organize other story creation and storytelling groups. Allow students to storytell in front of the others in the classroom as well as at home to family members or in other grouping.

Continue to use this storytelling format, and be creative by modifying this activity. Plan actively and encourage students to create and tell stories to themselves and others again and again.

Repetition makes us better at telling stories. Listen to other storytellers to learn from them.

Encourage students to write and keep their stories on file. Tell them to create their own book or anthology of short stories.

Movies are a great way to help students understand storytelling composition. Animation films for younger audiences – but for adults too – are excellent ways to see how a story is told. So, find a good storytelling movie and see it yourself to analyze and enjoy. Then assign students to see it with the idea that they will report back to you what they learned about the elements in the story as told on the screen, all with your facilitation in the classroom.

## Handout 2A: “Storytelling – Its Genesis”

People are storytelling creatures. We make sense of our experiences of the world through the stories we tell; and we are drawn to the stories of others: bedtime stories, family histories, myths, legends, and anecdotes of the struggles and triumphs of people, whoever they are. The art of storytelling goes back as far as humanity itself. Most of what we know about our past was first told to us by storytellers. Every culture has relied on its storytellers to teach its citizens about themselves through hearing how characters in stories cope with others and their environment:

Even in this modern age of technological wonders and instant global communications, the ancient art of storytelling, its oral tradition, is still an important way of sharing information. Native peoples – for whom stories have always formed the backbone of culture – claim or are reclaiming the power of their stories as a fundamental way of knowing their world, past present and future.

***Everyone is a storyteller.*** And for everyone, the ability to tell a story effectively, and to listen to one properly, can be cultivated through exercises and careful practice. This activity recommends ways to understand what a story is and aims to encourage and give students confidence to storytell.

<p><b>Place:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Magic Mountain</i></li> <li>2. <i>Secret Cave</i></li> <li>3. <i>Haunted Castle</i></li> <li>4. <i>Deserted Island</i></li> <li>5. <i>Submarine</i></li> <li>6. <i>Planet Mars</i></li> <li>7. <i>Soccer Stadium</i></li> <li>8. <i>Stomach of Whale</i></li> <li>9. <i>Continue until students responses are done</i></li> </ol>	<p><b>Characters:</b></p> <table border="0"> <tr> <td><i>Good Guys:</i></td> <td><i>Bad Guys:</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>1. <i>Johnny Angel</i></td> <td><i>Ghost</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. <i>Jim Jolly</i></td> <td><i>Ding Dog</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>3. <i>Merlin</i></td> <td><i>Ogre</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>4. <i>My Mom</i></td> <td><i>Tax Man</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>5. <i>Space Ace</i></td> <td><i>Doom Duster</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>6. <i>Dandy Dude</i></td> <td><i>Bumster</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>7. <i>Sharp Singer</i></td> <td><i>Flat Dat</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td>8. <i>Continue until student responses are done</i></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>	<i>Good Guys:</i>	<i>Bad Guys:</i>	1. <i>Johnny Angel</i>	<i>Ghost</i>	2. <i>Jim Jolly</i>	<i>Ding Dog</i>	3. <i>Merlin</i>	<i>Ogre</i>	4. <i>My Mom</i>	<i>Tax Man</i>	5. <i>Space Ace</i>	<i>Doom Duster</i>	6. <i>Dandy Dude</i>	<i>Bumster</i>	7. <i>Sharp Singer</i>	<i>Flat Dat</i>	8. <i>Continue until student responses are done</i>	
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<p><b>Objects:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>A magic Whistle</i></li> <li>2. <i>The Flying Carpet</i></li> <li>3. <i>A Comet</i></li> <li>4. <i>Laser Sword</i></li> <li>5. <i>A wind Box</i></li> <li>6. <i>A Conch Shell</i></li> <li>7. <i>The Golden Cape</i></li> <li>8. <i>The Glass Slippers</i></li> </ol>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Instruction For Teacher</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. When each rip sheet list is complete...</li> <li>2. Cut each phrase or word out of them.</li> <li>3. Put the "words-strips" that you cut into the appropriate paper bag (location, character, object).</li> <li>4. Shake each bag to mix the "words-strips"</li> <li>5. Have someone from each group pick one strip from each bag -- no fair reading first.</li> <li>6. When each group has 3 strips (1 from each bag), ask students to create a group story, using their "word strips" only. Tell students to begin their stories with an introduction. Then include conflict or problem. Next, resolve the story and then end it.</li> </ol>
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## Lesson Three Storytelling and Culture

### Objectives for Students:

- To explain the roles of storytelling in different cultures
- To compare and contrast stories from different cultures and times

### Materials:

Handout 3A: Why We Tell Stories

Handout 3B: The Story of Nho Lobu

Handout 3C: How Stories Came to Earth (Africa)

Handout 3D: Crane and His Blue Eyes (Yup'ik)

Handout 3E: Pu`ui`aiki and the `Opihi of Moa`ula

Handout 3F: The Fables of Aesop

Handout 3G: Comparing Stories from Different Times and Cultures

### Activities

#### *1. Why do we tell stories?*

Ask each student to tell a partner a brief (1-2 minutes) and extemporaneous story. The story can be one he or she has heard from a friend, relative, teacher or person on television or the radio.

Ask students to write (in their journals, or on paper) why they chose that particular story. A prompt might be, "I told a story about ..... I chose this story because...."

- An example: "I told a story about how my sister colored her hair and it turned orange. I chose this story because it was funny and I'll never color my hair."

Ask several students to read what they've written. Record their responses on chart paper or the board using two columns:

The Story Was About

Why I Chose this Story

Once you have enough responses, ask students to identify common themes that emerge about why stories were chosen. These could include 1) stories that are entertaining, 2) stories that give news or information, 3) human interest stories, 4) stories that teach a lesson, and 5) favorite stories from my family or culture. Some stories will fall into more than one category. The goal is for students to draw on their own background knowledge and experiences to understand the role of stories in society.

## *2. The role of stories in society.*

Ask students to read Handout 3A. As they read, they should place a check in the margin next to information they already knew, and underline new information about the role of storytelling in society.

Q: What new information did you learn about the role of storytelling in society?

## *3. Stories from different times and cultures*

Distribute Handouts 3B through 3G. Read the story of Nho Lobu on Handout 3B aloud. When you've completed your reading, ask students to turn to Handout 3G. Complete the handout for Nho Lobu with students. You can either fill in the relevant information or simply place a check in the box (√).

Place students in heterogeneous groups of four. They will be continuing to compare the stories from different times and cultures on Handouts 3C through 3F. Assign a role to each student.

- The Discussion Director
- The Recorder
- The Summarizer
- The Clarifier

Each group will read the stories on Handouts 3C through 3F one at a time. The stories should be read orally with students taking turns or students can read in buddy pairs depending on the reading levels of individual students. After each story is read, students will complete the required information in Handout G.

- The Discussion Director will lead the group through each of the items on Handout G.
- The Recorder will record the group's answers.
- The Summarizer will review the completed chart.
- The Clarifier will ask for clarification from the group when confusions arise.

When the groups have completed the task, process/debrief it with them. You should have Handout G on the overhead as you do this.

Ask students to write/reflect in their journals or on paper. What have they learned about stories from different times and cultures?

If you prefer, you can select other stories that are available on the web. Students can listen to storytellers read these stories.

- An Anansi story is available at <http://www.storyteller.net/stories/audio>
- Alaskan Native stories can be heard at:  
<http://www.lksd.org/kongiganak/kongiganak/Kong/storytelling.htm>
- Aesop's fables are available at <http://www.aesopfables.com/>.

### **Handout 3A: Why We Tell Stories**

Stories are everywhere. We hear them at home, at family gatherings, on television and radio, in school, on the bus. Whenever and wherever people get together they tell stories. Some of the stories describe movies or television programs. Others tell of funny, exciting or interesting things that happen. Still other stories are passed down in families—stories of how our parents met or how our grandparents endured great hardships to raise their families. We tell our own stories about mistakes we made, things we did or didn't do, or experiences we should have avoided. We tell tales of events we learn about in the news that are interesting or sad.

We tell stories for enjoyment, of course. But we also tell stories to make sense of the events that happen to us, our families, or people and events we hear about in the news. Stories also give us lessons about life. Dylan Pritchett, an African American storyteller who travels the country with tales from Africa and stories about African American life, explains,

“So many things happen to us everyday that it is sometimes hard to make sense of them. Storytelling helps us do that/ Storytelling helps us give order to our lives. It helps us organize our past and plan our future. Stories help us identify actions and behavior so we can avoid repeating mistakes.”

Storytelling is as old as civilization. Before there was the written word, storytellers entertained people or passed on important information. The Greeks and Romans told myths about gods and goddesses that helped them explain things in nature that they couldn't understand. Folktales, hero tales, tall tales, and animal stories such as Aesop's fables, which date back many hundreds of years, teach about morals and how we should or should not behave.

Storytelling and the oral tradition are part of many cultures. African Americans, Cape Verdeans, and other cultural and ethnic groups have a long history of storytelling to describe hardships and hopes, to tell jokes, riddles, proverbs, and folktales. For African Americans, the stories might be of Anansi the spider or Brer Rabbit. Cape Verdean tales feature Nho Lobo, Mr. Wolf, and his nephew, Tubino. Nho Lobo is usually portrayed as lazy, greedy, and constantly hungry. He always tries to trick Tubino into doing his work or getting his food for him.

Stories play a special role in other cultures including Native American and Alaskan and Hawaiian Native cultures. Each of these groups has a strong oral tradition. In these cultural communities, Elders are valued as “Keepers of Wisdom” who pass on cultural knowledge. Through their stories, Elders provide community members with tools for making sense of life events such as birth, marriage, and death. They pass on lessons about life, history, beliefs, and values from generation to generation through stories. One should not be greedy, or selfish, or boastful. It is wrong to make fun of others, or take

advantage of weaker people. The tales and legends told by the Elders teach the right thing to do. In Alaska Native cultures, stories rarely have stated morals, because each story means something different to everyone who hears it. Adults know that stories help their children learn how to learn – because it is the child’s job to listen carefully, and then figure out why the adult told the story, and what it is about the story that is important to know.

### **Handout 3B: A Story of Nho Lobo from Cape Verde**

Nho Lobo was walking along a path when he came upon two men sitting in a clearing. As usual, he was hungry and when he saw the pair, he thought they would make a good meal.

He approached them and smiled his warmest smile. He saw they sat before a fire with a covered pot between them. As he grew nearer, he noticed that they were very sad.

"Why such long faces?" said Nho Lobo.

"We were all set to make our cachupa when we realized we don't have any onions," said the first man.

"There are plenty of wild onions in the woods," said Nho Lobo. "Why don't you go out and get some?"

"Because we are old men," said the second man. "I have arthritis in my knee and he has problems with his back. If one of us were to leave here, we might have an accident or get lost then we would both be trapped here forever with no one to look for us."

Nho Lobo studied the men. His stomach growled and he began to imagine how the cachupa would taste with onions. He also thought the cachupa would serve as an excellent appetizer.

"If I go into the woods and bring back some onions, will you give me some of your cachupa?" he asked.

"Oh yes!" The men said in unison. "You will have the largest portion!"

Nho Lobo hesitated, then went into the woods heading north. He found some wild onions not far into the woods, dug them out of the ground and carried them back.

"Here are your onions," said Nho Lobo. The men were overjoyed. They thanked Nho Lobo and began to cut the onions. "When will the cachupa be ready?"

"Soon, soon," said the first man. They went about their work for a minute or two with Nho Lobo looking on.

"You know, while you were gone, we were thinking how good this cachupa would taste with some mandioca," said the first man.

(Mandioca is a plant that has large edible roots. Inside the roots is a starchy white vegetable with the consistency of a yam or sweet potato. It is a staple food in Cape Verde.)

"Yes, that would be tasty," agreed the second man. Nho Lobo thought so too. "Would you be able to get some mandioca from the woods?"

Nho Lobo sighed. He was tired but he could almost taste the cachupa with the mandioca and his mouth began to water.

"OK, but I want a larger portion of the cachupa," he said as he headed south into the woods.

"Yes! Yes!" The men called after him. "You will have half and we two shall share what's left."

In the woods, Nho Lobo found some mandioca, dug it up and returned to the men. They were so happy and began adding the mandioca to their pot.

"When will it be ready?" Nho Lobo asked, his stomach growling.

"Soon. Very soon," said the first man.

"But we were thinking," said the second man. "What would make this cachupa even tastier would be if we could add some meat." His friend agreed.

"Yes, but we have no meat," said Nho Lobo. "And I am hungry now."

"We saw some rabbits when we entered the woods from the west. Maybe they are still there."

Nho Lobo paused. He was tired and wanted to eat, but since the men put the idea of adding meat to the cachupa, he began to crave it. So, he stood up and headed west.

"This is the last time. When I come back, I want my cachupa," he said over his shoulder.

"And you'll have it," said the first one. "My friend and I will each have only a small cup, the rest will be for you."

Satisfied, Nho Lobo entered the woods without looking back. He had gone only a few steps when his foot got caught in a trap.

Before he knew it, he was hanging upside down by one foot from a large tree.

Upon hearing the "snap" of the trap, the two men laughed then looked at each other.

"We will have plenty of meat for our cachupa now," the first man said to the second.

"And a tastier cachupa, thanks to the wolf."

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This folktale was written by Ann Marie Lopes, a member of the Cape Verdean American Community. Ms. Lopes lives in New Bedford, Massachusetts, writes for the New Bedford Standard Times, and works at the Center for University, School, and Community Partnerships at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth.



### **Handout 3C: How Stories Came to Earth (Africa)**

Anansi, a trickster and hero in west African tales, is depicted in the form of a spider. His father is Nyame and his mother is Asase Ya. In some stories Anansi is the creator of the heavenly bodies. In others he is portrayed as a teacher of wisdom bearer. Additional information about Anansi can be found at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anansi> or <http://www.pantheon.org/articles/a/anansi.html>.

The tale, “How Stories Came to Earth,” can be found at <http://www.anansi.org/webwalker/story1.htm>. If you don’t have access to the Internet, you will find many Anansi stories in the library or at your favorite bookstore

### **Handout 3D: Crane and His Blue Eyes (Yup'ik)**

You can **listen** to a story by John Active, a Yup'ik storyteller from Bethel, Alaska. The story, which explains how cranes came to have blue eyes, was told to him by his grandmother. It can be found at the following website:

<http://www.lksd.org/kongiganak/kongiganak/Kong/storytelling.htm>

### Handout 3E: Pu`ui`aiki and the `Opihi of Moa`ula

#### (Na Wahi Pana o Kaho`olawe-The Sacred Stories of Kaho`olawe)

A certain man from the island of Hawai`i, named Pu`ui`aiki, left the shores of Kohala on his small canoe to fish. Midway between Alanuihaha channel, his canoe was swamped then overturned by waves and he could not make it move as he wished. He even tried to upright it so it would float properly but he failed. So instead of heading for his shores of Kohala, he decided it best that he swim to the island of Kaho`olawe, since the wind blew him along in that direction, making it easy for him to land there.

As he swam towards the island, which he saw in the distance, an *opihimakai`aui* appeared before him. “What a strange sea limpet this is. It doesn’t sink into the sea as all others would. What kind of thing is this, and what does it mean?” he said. Pu`ui`aiki then reached out and grasped the shelled sea animal in his hand while wondering over and over what it was all about and what its presence meant.

O readers, in truth this was an *opihimakai`aui* sent by the prophet Moa`ula. And that high mound-named after the prophet-standing on Kaho`olawe is the only mountain of that island. Moa`ula was sorry for Pu`ui`aiki so he sent *opihimakai`aui* to help him. And soon you will see how it helps Pu`ui`aiki.

But first let us look at Pu`ui`aiki swimming in the sea. Soon after he grabbed the *opihimakai`aui*, a giant shark swam by with its mouth open wide. The shark was so large that its upper jaw stretched up to the surface of the waves while its lower jaw reached down, touching the depths of the sea.

Pu`ui`aiki shouted, “If you bite me, my spirit will be released and I’ll live. But if you swallow me whole, I’ll be trapped in your stomach alive, until I die-but I’ll never escape, even as a spirit.”

The shark swallowed Pu`ui`aiki without scratching any part of his body, as the fisherman had hoped.

Holding his *opihimakai`aui*, Pu`ui`aiki slipped between the jaws of the shark into its stomach. There, the fisherman used the sharp-edged shell of the *opihimakai`aui* to scrape the flesh of the shark for three nights and three days.

In great pain, the shark landed at the bay of Kanapou on Kaho`olawe and died.

You see now how *opihimakai`aui* helped Pu`ui`aiki.

Out crawled Pu`ui`aiki, now having a shiny, hairless head because he had been in the darkness of the shark’s stomach much too long-thus, he became the first bald-headed man of Hawai`i. Tired, he crawled up from the beach to where *akulikuli* plants and

*pohuehue* vines grow over the sand. Picking the cool, soft leaves of the *pohuhue*, he put them on his bald head for protection from sunburn.

Pu`ui`aiki rested on the beach until other adventures happened to him.

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This story is adapted from a legend written by A.D. Kaha`ulelio in the Hawaiian language newspaper, *Ka Nupepa Ku`oko`a*, later translated by Hawaiian scholar Mary Kawena Pukui.

Edited by Thomas Cummings of the Bishop Museum Education Department, December 17, 2004.

### **Handout 3F: The Fables of Aesop**

Aesop's Fables are well known throughout the world. According to legends, Aesop was born a slave and lived during the sixth century BCE. He was granted freedom, became involved in public affairs, and, as a result, traveled a great deal, telling stories as he made his way from place to place. His stories usually involve personified animals and almost always teach a moral lesson. Some of the best known are 1) The Fox and the Grapes, 2) The Tortoise and the Hare, 3) The Boy Who Cried Wolf, and 4) The Ant and the Grasshopper. You can find these and many others at [http://www.pagebypagebooks.com/Aesop/Aesops\\_Fables/](http://www.pagebypagebooks.com/Aesop/Aesops_Fables/). If you do not have access to the Internet, you can also find collections of these well-loved stories at your library or your favorite bookstore.

You can find additional information about the legendary Aesop at <http://www.umass.edu/aesop/history.php>.

Handout 3G: Comparing Stories from Different Times and Cultures

Story Title and Other Information	Characters	Problem	Setting	Solution	Lesson Taught	Explains Things in Life
Nho Lobu A Story from Cape Verde						
Anansi: Africa						
Crane: Alaska						
Pu`ui`aki A Story from Hawaii						
Aesop's Fables						

## Teachers' Notes: The Storytelling Traditions and Culture

Much of teaching and learning focuses on the printed word. In our current educational environment, teachers are required to “teach to the standards,” and often note that with testing and direct teaching, the “fun is gone” from school. Storytelling may seem “frivolous” because it’s just too much fun. However, as we have seen, storytelling can serve many purposes in the classroom-as a vehicle for learning about stories, as a means of developing students’ listening skills, and to promote the language development of English Language Learners.

Storytelling can also serve as a vehicle for building knowledge about other cultures. When students tell their stories, they help us learn about their cultures, experiences, and relationships. This is particularly important in our diverse classrooms, especially in Alaska, Hawaii and other geographic regions whose people have a particularly rich oral culture.

Stories play a unique role among Native Americans and Alaskan and Hawaiian Native cultures which share a strong oral tradition. Elders are the “Keepers of Wisdom” who pass on cultural knowledge through stories. Morals, life instructions, historical knowledge, taboos, social mores, life lessons, ceremonial knowledge, and spiritual beliefs are transmitted from generation to generation. Through their stories, elders also provide community members with tools for making sense of life events such as birth, marriage, and death.

Charlene Fisher, an Alaskan Native, provides a first person account of her grandmother’s storytelling and how she passed on traditions to younger generations. “From the time I was a young girl I have always had memories of my grandmother telling countless fascinating stories of the past. It has not been until recently that I have recognized the importance of this custom of storytelling. My grandmother is a tradition-bearer of many valuable resources but I am only going to concentrate on the significance of storytelling. My grandmother and all other elders like her are fountains of information that is relevant to us all as an aboriginal society which we as a younger generation must soak up and again pass on.”

Fisher provides examples of story themes and purposes-why the raven is black, or how to kill a whale. The full text, which captures important understandings about Alaskan storytelling, is available at:

<http://www.faculty.uaf.edu/ffrdi/Native%20American%20Lit/TRADITIONAL%20STORYTELLING.html>

## Storytelling: Lesson Four Gathering Cultural Stories

### Objectives for Students:

- To develop an interview protocol
- To conduct an interview with an older person in their family, community, or neighborhood

### Materials:

### Handout 4A: Interview Protocol

### Activities

*1. Identify a person in your family, community, or neighborhood who will be the subject of a story you will develop and tell.*

Ask students to brainstorm a list of older people in their family, community, or neighborhood. This can include people in school, churches, neighborhood organizations, stores in the neighborhood, etc. Remember that your student may consider an older person to be someone who is in his or her 20's or 30's. Be clear about your expectations. How old is older?

Ask students to consider the people on their list. How will they identify the person that will give them a good story?

### Questions to help them determine whom they will interview:

- Is there someone who is particularly funny or interesting?
- Is there an elder in your community you've always wanted to meet because he tells great stories?
- Is there a story about fishing that you've heard your grandfather tell over and over at family gatherings?
- Your neighbor immigrated to America from Cape Verde many years ago. Do you want to learn about that experience?
- Are you curious about what your town was like many years ago? Are there elders you could interview?
- Your grandmother knows about telling stories with chants and the hula. Should you interview her to learn more?
- Your grandparents tell stories about Raven all the time. Would you like to hear one of those stories?
- Your parents moved to town from the village before you were born. What was life like for them when they were growing up in the village?

Ask students to identify the person they will interview.

## 2. *Choosing and creating interview questions*

The next step is for students to identify or generate appropriate questions for their interview. Donald Davis (1993) in *Telling Your Own Stories* suggests asking questions about people and places, events, and photographs. Heather Forest, who has developed a storytelling website, offers a list of possible interview topics and related questions:

- Places you remember,
- People you remember,
- Important life events,
- Important transitions, and
- Memorable objects such as photographs or jewelry

These are available at her Story Arts Website:  
(<http://www.storyarts.org/classroom/roots/family.html#questions>).

Forest suggests including the following questions to ensure that students will get all the information/components of a story they need to tell a good story:

- Where did the story occur?
- Who was in the story?
- What happened in the story?

## 3. *Developing an Interview Protocol*

Refer students to the Story Arts Website (above) or download the questions and make them available. Students will need them to complete their Interview Protocol.

Distribute Handout 4A: Interview Protocol. Ask students to review the information on this handout. Point out that there are questions at the beginning and end. Students will fill in the blanks with their own questions. Students will complete the Interview Protocol.

Ask students to write why they chose those questions in their journals or on paper. This will help them determine whether they'll get the information they need.

Do a "Think-Pair-Share." Ask students to work with a partner. Each partner will tell:

- The person to be interviewed
- Why that person was chosen
- The questions they've developed for the Interview Protocol

## 2. Choosing and creating interviewing teams

Ron Adams is a distinguished and experienced teacher who works with the New Bedford ECHO Project in Massachusetts. Ron, whose students have gathered oral histories that are housed in the library at Radcliffe College, offers the following advice regarding the use of interviewing:



- Never send students out alone to conduct their interviews. They should be in interview teams. This will allow them to get as much information as possible. Team

members can take different roles: the interviewer, the videographer, and the note taker are some examples.

- Be aware of students' safety as they go into the community. Interviews conducted in your classroom, at the public library or school library/media center are best.
- You should send a permission form and letter to the parent or guardian, informing them about the interview assignment and encouraging their help with transportation and supervision/chaperoning.
- Parents want to know who/what/where/when/how. They want their children to be safe. "My best experiences involve a letter to parent, student interview teams, interviews during or after school in the media center or interviews in the public library after school with the consent and participation of the children's librarian."
- Interviews in a home are never allowed unless a parent agrees to supervise the entire interview.
- Brainstorm a list of the things to do and things not to do with your students:
  - Students typically say "do ask follow up questions or ask what a word means." They also give good common sense safety responses.
  - Students typically say things like "Never go in anyone's house alone or without a parent." Or they might say, "Don't give your home address or phone number to a person who is not in your family."

Ron continues, "With all those suggested safeguards, **I still assign interviews**. They are invaluable in connecting generations and cultures. With parent permission, with students in teams, with meetings in public places like the school or the public library, interviews are sensational! The telephone works well, also. Email is a possibility, but lacks the 'live voice' of a storyteller."

Remind students to take down words or phrases that are interesting or descriptive, or words that are not English-the Hawaiian words, kahuna (elder) or kohola (humpback whale; the Tlingit word for grandfather, l'eelk'w, or the Portuguese word for sailing, navegação. All of these will add richness to the stories students weave.

Handout 4A: The Interview Protocol

Name of the Interviewee \_\_\_\_\_

Relation to You \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

1. What is one memory you have about growing up?

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. Is there a lesson you've learned about life that you think I should know?

**\*When you're listening to the story, be sure to learn where the story took place, the people who were present, and the outcome.**

Questions adapted from Dylan Pritchett, Storyteller.

## Storytelling: Lesson Five Composing and Telling Your Story

Objectives for Students:

To Develop a Story

Materials:

Handout 5A Effective Stories  
Handout 5B: A Storytelling Rubric  
Handout 5C: Telling Your Story with a Storyboard  
Handout 4A: The Interview Protocol  
Handout 1A: The Story Guide

### *1. Characteristics of an effective story*

Ask students to brainstorm what they have learned about the components of a story (Handout 1A). They should write in their journals or on paper. As students write, you should check for understanding. Identify those students who need additional instruction on the components.

Place a copy of Handout 1A on the overhead. Process and review where necessary.

Q: Ask, “What stories can you think of that you consider great stories?”

Q: Ask, “What made them “great?” Brainstorm on the board or chart paper.

Ask students to read the information in Handout 5A: Effective Stories. As they read, they should place a check ✓ in the margin when and if they are reminded of a story they already know. Ask them to tell a partner about the story and why they remember it (2 minutes each).

Distribute Handout 5B: A Storytelling Rubric with students. The rubric describes the characteristics of a good story. Students will be familiar with much of the information on the rubric. The new information is about the language used by storytellers (see Notes for Teachers). Storytellers “show” they don’t “tell.” They use dialogue and vivid language that paints verbal pictures. For additional information, see the Story Arts Website by Heather Forest:

<http://www.storyarts.org/classroom/usestories/storyrubric.html#composition>

Students will view a well-known African American storyteller, Jackie Torrence, as she tells a story, “The Woman who Lived in the Vinegar Bottle”. You will find it at:



<http://www.bookhive.org/zingertales/default.asp?storyID=6>

As they view the storyteller, students should look for the characteristics of a good story that are included in the Storytelling Rubric.

After viewing the storytelling, students should be placed in heterogeneous groups of four. As in lesson three, assign roles to each student:

- The Discussion Director will lead the discussion.
- The Recorder will record the group’s answers and report out.
- The Summarizer will review the completed chart.
- The Clarifier will ask for clarification from the group when confusions arise.

Students will go through the rubric, discussing the storytelling they’ve viewed and noting examples of each item in the rubric.

Place a copy of the Storytelling Rubric on the overhead. Students will report out. Review the rubric with students, checking for understanding as you proceed.

## *2. Developing your story*

Students will now develop their own stories using the information they gathered in their interviews.

Tell students that they are not to write out every word of the story. Rather, they are to plan their stories and practice telling them, using notes and a storyboard to help them remember the story.

Step One: Students begin by putting notes about their story in each of the boxes in the Story Guide (Handout 1A). Students can work in their interview teams and help each other, or they can work independently.

Step Two: Students should create a storyboard to help them develop their stories. The three or four events they include in the Story Guide can be written in the Storyboard Handout (5C). Students can do actual sketches that depict the events of the plot or use symbols that help them remember the events of their stories (for example, a book and stick figure to represent school).

Step Three: Students can “talk out their stories” as they plan them. You’ll probably want to remind them to use a “three inch voice.” They can practice talking to each other until they know how loudly they should speak. This is well worth the time and effort it takes.

Step Four: Circulate among students. When they’ve begun to have a story to tell, place them in pairs and let them tell each other their stories. This is a very informal activity and should just be fun for students; however, they should be helping each other to include all the items in the Storytelling Rubric.

Step Five: Give students the opportunity to perform. Hold your own Storytelling Festival (<http://www.storyarts.org/lessonplans/lessonideas/index.html#festival>) or videotape students telling their stories and make the videos available for viewing.

## Handout 5A: Effective Stories

We all know a good story when we hear one. As the story begins, the storyteller pulls us in with an opening that is clear and inviting. We want to know what's coming next. As the story unfolds, the storyteller paints word pictures of the characters and setting with beautiful and descriptive words and phrases. We see the fisherman in the stormy waters. We feel the chill and the snow and the blowing winds. We learn that there is a problem. The fisherman needs to be rescued. A woman has gone to a forbidden place. A child is under a spell. We wonder how the problem will be solved. Will a magic helper save the fisherman? Will the woman use her wits and cleverness to rescue herself or will she perish? Will the spell that has been cast on the child be broken?

As the events of the story progress, we come to the conclusion of the story. The main character is rewarded or is wiser. Perhaps he or she finds a gift or treasure or is transformed, or changed, in some way. We've learned a lesson about life that we can carry with us.

**Handout 5B: A Storytelling Rubric**  
 (Adapted from Heather Forest at <http://www.storvarts.org/>)

<b>Story Structure: Your story should have:</b>	<b>Describe how your story addresses each of the items in the rubric</b>	<b>Check √</b>
A clear and engaging opening that grabs the reader.		
Strong characters		
Setting: time and place		
A problem		
A sequence of events that is easy to follow		
A solution and sense of closure		
A lesson or moral or meaning to the story		
<b>The language of your story should:</b>		
Be descriptive and clear		
Describe what is happening (show, don't tell)		
Include the words of the person you interviewed		

Handout 5C: Using a Storyboard to Develop Your Story

Drawing: Event 1	Drawing: Event 2
Text: Event 1	Text: Event 2
Drawing: Event 3	Drawing: Event 4
Text: Event 3	Text: Event 4a

## Teachers' Notes for Lesson Five: Composing and Telling Your Story

In this lesson, students view a storytelling session by Jackie Torrence, a well-known African American storyteller. Students will also compose their own stories, based on the information they gathered in their interviews.

Handout 5A is a narrative for students about effective stories. Handout 5B consists of a rubric that includes the characteristics of effective stories. This rubric is adapted from one developed by Heather Forest on her Story Arts website.

In his very useful book, *The Power of Personal Storytelling*, Jack Maguire (1998), a distinguished storyteller and author, suggests that stories include dialogue that will “snag a listener’s attention, convey the personality and feelings of the characters, and lend a sense of immediacy and authenticity to the events taking place” (p.158). He also stresses the importance of describing rather than reporting events (show don’t tell), and gives specific examples for storytelling. Maguire also recommends teaching students to appeal to the five senses, use interesting language, and include interesting facts in their stories.

Jack Maguire also includes chapters on using visual tools, such as storyboards, to develop and practice a story. There are specific examples and explanations.