

— — — — StoryStitch Workshops — — — —  
Create stories for and with your child



What story could you create for/with your child...?

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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This is the Six Part Story Making Technique - developed by Mooli Lahad. Work your way through each of the boxes, write, draw or think and at the end you will have a story. I have used it with very small children and with adults. Be as brief or as detailed as you like.

<p>Who is your hero?</p>	<p>What is their problem?</p>	<p>What/who could help them? (A friend, special skill, tool etc...)</p>
<p>What is their obstacle? (a baddie/enemy/barrier to getting what they want)</p>	<p>How do they resolve this problem?</p>	<p>The Ending (were they successful, how do we leave them?)</p>

## Creating your Hero

Think of your child/ren and the sort of characters they are drawn to. Your hero can be anyone or anything you like, if your children loves woodland animals go for that, if they love superheroes invent your own with special powers you know your child will love to hear about. There is no right or wrong - this is your story. It can be about an elephant, a spoon, a cat, a magical rug, a little boy, an invisible mouse, a tired boat, a stone, an elderly woman who can fly... whatever you like!...

When you have an image ask yourself questions about your character, or ask your children to help you and ask them questions. In this way you will build up a rounded character...here are some starting questions:

- \* Where does your character live?
- \* What is your character's favourite food?
- \* What is your character's favourite colour?
- \* What makes your hero laugh?
- \* What sort of world does you hero exist in (real world, fantastical, historical setting etc)? (see Rules!)
- \* What is your hero most afraid of?
- \* What is your hero's biggest secret?
- \* Who is their best friend?
- \* What style clothes do they wear?
- \* What do they want most in the world?

This will lead you into the 2nd part of your story...

What is their problem...?

## Rules

If the story can be anything that you want it to be do we still need rules?

Yes! There are some important rules that make sure that you have the freedom to write your story! Without the rules nothing will hold the story together, it will have no shape. Within these rules you have utter freedom... and if you adhere to the rules then there is no right and wrong the story is up to you...and if we don't have rules there would be no rules to break!

### Rule #1: The story must begin

The character and the world you are about to enter exist so you have to decide where and how you enter their lives. You have to choose one moment, the best moment to begin. In Alice and Wonderland we enter the story as Alice is on a picnic and feeling bored. We don't enter when the idea of the picnic is first discussed or at the point the sandwiches are being made. We enter at a point where something is about to happen. You can choose, you can begin at the end, 'Joe had saved the world so he decided to buy himself a chocolate chip cookie and think about how it all happened. He supposed it all started when Helen had knocked at the door that morning.' or you can start in the middle 'Ivor was curled very small in a hole in the wall, he could hear the men talking and felt sure they would start looking for him again soon.' As soon as you start, you create a path that your child is going to walk along.

### Rule #2: Be consistent

Decide the rules of your story world and stick to it. Ask yourself what sort of story is this? Is it a fantastical story? Can there be strange beasts? Can people have wings and fly? Is this a real world story? Are all creatures natural and normal creatures? You can create your world from scratch and that is entirely up to you, but once you have that world stick to it and make sure your decisions are part of that world.

### Rule #3: Don't be afraid of the obvious

It is tempting to want to be very clever and come up with an entirely new story that no-one has ever told before. You don't have to, in fact trying to be clever can end up with us trying to hard. It is ok to be obvious, it is ok to tell a similar story to another one, sometimes the obvious solution can be very pleasing for the listener. I have a whole range of stories about my adventures with Frog. Frog and I always get stuck somewhere, Frog always calls for the little frogs throughout the world, the little frogs throughout the world always come, they always sing the same song 'We are the Frogs' and they always save us. My son always loves these stories and when we are rescued he begins giggling with excitement at the very obvious, unfaltering outcome of salvation. By all means consider lots of possibilities, but don't be afraid of the obvious.

### Rule # 4: The story must end.

Endings can be tricky. Sometimes when you start the story you have an end and sometimes you don't. That is fine. You can work your way through and find the ending, then go back and shape the events to fit the ending. The ending needs to tie up the story, end the path and deliver us home.

### Rule # 5: Don't stray from the path or the wolves might get you

Philip Pullman says we can imagine a story like a path through a wood. We can enter a little into telling our listeners about the wood, the world of the story but we must not leave the path or we have lost the story. So, yes, give information about the world and the backdrop but only if it adds to the story, otherwise we get lost. If you give some information your child will use their imagination and add in all the rest of the detail. I can say 'the trees were tall and the wood so thick that it was always night time in the woods'. I could enter into all the different types of trees but need to ask myself whether it is important, if later in my story a squirrel uses some acorns to throw at some ghastly robbers then it might be important for you to know those are oak trees...

#### Rule #6 Break the rules

If it works to break the rules, do it. Who cares. A teacher of mine used to say 'Nothing is impossible, you just have to make it work.' It's your story after all...and some wonderful art is created by breaking all the rules.

## Adventures in Magical lands

Lots of children's stories are set in magical lands or strange new places, like Narnia, Neverland, Wonderland...

Draw a map of your magical land for your story. Mark any special features and areas it has. This can be a great starting point for a story. You can draw this with your child, what exciting areas would they include? The Wood of Wolves, the Lake of Sorrows, the Bridge of screams, the village of the ghouls, the cave of wonders, old Grey's Cabin, the Great Oak?...

