

PART 1 STORY ON A STICK: - SEQUENCE RODS / LINES

Stage 1 Model the process with a simple, familiar story

- Collect or sketch about 6 images representing the main parts of the story. These should be more like visual reminders, prompts or notes rather than a picture sequence type of storyboard. For example, Cinderella may have a mop and bucket, a wand, a pumpkin, a shoe and crown to represent some of the main events. Draw/paste them onto A4 or A5 cards.
- Show the class the images and ask them to fix these along the wall or board in the correct order.

Stage 2 – Pupils make their own rods/lines using a familiar story.

- Pupils will need a ruler or rod and a pack of small sticky notes.
- Select another simple well-known story and verbally remind the pupils of the main events.
- Ask pupils to work on their own or in pairs to make their own images or symbols of the key events in that story and attach them to the ruler or rod in the correct sequence. Tell them that this is called a story on a stick. They should be able to retell the story using the images on the stick to remind them of the sequence of events.
- Encourage the pupils to make the first and last images and place them on the stick, before making a middle one. Then they can see how many more will fit on the stick.
- It's common for pupils to create too many images so this activity encourages them to be concise and focus on the most important events.
- Ask a few pupils to retell parts of the story using their sticks as prompts.

Stage 3 – Pupils create and plan their own stories and then make their own images of key points to place on the stick. They can retell the story

or parts of their stories to the rest of the class before writing the full story on paper.

This technique can be used as a planning/ plotting tool when pupils are writing their own stories. It can be adapted to just drawing images in their books to represent key moments in sequence. It is also an excellent way of encouraging pupils to gain confidence in speaking by using the sticks as prompts to tell stories.

Paragraphs and connectives

This technique can be adapted for work on paragraphs. Use cards with short sentences or phrases to summarise the main points in the paragraphs. They can be organized along a stick or piece of paper or on string attached with paper clips like a washing line. Connectives can then be added if appropriate.

Cross curricular

Sequence rods/lines can be used for instructions, historical events and other sequences in subjects across the curriculum.

PART 2: THE SILENT MOVIE

PREPARATION

- Select a text with a storyline such as a short novel, part of a novel or a narrative poem or play. Choose a text with plenty of action or interaction and make individual name tags or sticky labels for each character. This works best as an introduction to a new text.
- Summarise the text by pairing it right down to what the characters actually did, so you can read out a speeded version of the bare bones of the action in a short space of time.

THE LESSON

- Define the lesson objective as helping the class become familiar with the main actions in the chosen text.

- Explain that some pupils will be asked to walk through the main events in the text, as if they were in a silent movie, but without the characteristic rapid movements.
- Allocate a performance area.
- Use the name tags to allocate pupils to the characters and ask them to sit or stand near the performance area, ready to perform on cue.
- Explain that the characters should react appropriately to your fairly rapid reading of the main events, by walking the moves and using brief actions or mime, but no speech.
- Read out the main events and ask pupils to perform what they hear, as if in a silent movie. This will be a little chaotic at first, so you will need to run a rehearsal before a final version. This is meant to be fairly light hearted and should not involve paying any attention to acting skills or accuracy of mime. The main purpose of this activity is to enable the pupils to see the events unfold rapidly, so that a sense of the whole as a sequence of events can be appreciated.

Alternative version with more challenge:

Organise pupils into small groups;

- Select a smaller part of the text and divide it into sections of about 100 lines per section. Then allocate one section to each group and ask them to perform it after a short practice.

Differentiation

Either

a) give each group a summary of their section to practise and then perform a silent movie version or

b) ask each group to summarise their section themselves. They should describe what is happening in fairly short sentences. The sentences should answer the questions: Where is it set? Who is there? What do they do?

- As an extension task for either of the above, ask the groups to decide how their section might be staged in term of set, costume and lighting, together with reasons for their choice;

PLENARY

- Ask pupils quick questions to test their memory of the main events.

PART 3: PLOT BOXES AND PLOT BOOKS

Preparation

- A plot box is a shoe box or similar container with a few objects inside, that could represent aspects of the plot of a story. It is useful to have a genre or theme in mind when collecting items for the box. The objects could include a small toy character or something a character might own and a selection of objects relating to the theme or genre. For example, a magic theme might have a figure or picture of a wizard, a mirror, a toy tree, a toy cat or a small pot to represent a cauldron. If you are using a shoe box you can put a piece of black velvet on the base and/or cover the lid with stars. You will need to make one as a model, but pupils will be keen to make their own boxes either in class or for homework. Themes for stories could include space, underwater/mermaids, animals, sport, horses, pop stars etc. to reflect the interests of the pupils.

The Lesson

- Show the plot box to the class and invite suggestions for a possible story plot, linked to the items in the box.
- Listen to a few ideas and then model the process by writing up and answering the next 6 questions:

What is the title?

Who is in the story and where are they?

Who else is in the story?

What happens in the story that is exciting, interesting, dangerous or unusual?

How does your story end?

What is the blurb to persuade someone to read the story?

For example, the Goldilocks story plot would look like this:

Goldilocks and the Three Bears / A girl called Goldilocks is in the forest/
three bears live in the forest / Goldilocks eats their porridge, breaks a
chair and sleeps on one of the beds/ the bears come back and chase her
away// Read this story to find out what happens when a girl finds an
empty house in a forest.

- Give pupils time in pairs or threes to answer the same questions about another plotline of their own, using the same items in the box or different items if you have another box.
- Stress the difference between a plot and a full-blown story. The plot should be expressed briefly in only one phrase or a sentence per section. They should record each part of the plotline on sticky labels or small pieces of paper about 8cms square to ensure brevity.
- Ask pupils to fix their plot pages together to form a plot book and collect them in. Explain that anyone should be able to make up a story using one of these plot books but they would all be slightly different because of the added details. The small size of the plot books helps pupils remember that a plot is the bare bones of a story and therefore much shorter.
- Ask pupils to make their own plot boxes, by selecting items that could make a good story and designing an appropriate box on a theme. They are then allowed a few minutes to play around with the items to help them construct a plot before making a plot book to go with the box. The making of the box, the composition of the plot complement each other.

Variations

- Older pupils can make plot boxes for younger children.
- Pupils can write the full story using their own or other pupils' plot books and boxes.
- Pupils can make plot boxes for existing stories.
- Collect the plot books to make a library of plots to develop as stories.

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