



Story Studio

PARENT'S GUIDE

Using the Story Map to Create a Story

Introduction

Writing a story at home doesn't need to be a daunting task. You can use our StorySheet 'Story Map' (as well as other StorySheets found in the Learn section of www.storystudio.ca) The Story Map will support your child in gathering ideas and generating a plot. This will make writing a story a fun and engaging activity that can be done independently.

Starting Out

The first thing every story needs is a character. Your child's character can be absolutely anything: a taco, a pencil, a cloud, a fairy with a unicorn horn, a half narwhal/half puppy, a magical spy, etc. Encourage your child to think outside of the box of typical characters, or combine ideas from their favourite stories to create new unique characters.

Have your child describe their character. To help with the character development you may ask your child the following questions:

1. What could this character be?
2. What is their name?
3. What is this character good at and not so good at?
4. What are they afraid of?
5. Most importantly, what could this characters' goal be? What is something they want to happen?
6. Where might your character be? What are they doing there?

You can download the 'Character' StorySheet on our website to create a deeper description for the character, or just have your child draw a picture of their character as you write the description into the Story Map. The questions above will help to create the introduction of the story, describing who the character is and where they are, or perhaps what they are doing there. The character's goal is very important as it will develop the plot, and become the ultimate ending for the story. Encourage your child to illustrate or design their character and setting. This will encourage them to think creatively and with imagination.

Once your child has decided on a character and setting, they will need to think of a problem stopping their character from achieving that ultimate goal. Again, encourage your child to think outside of the box and use their imagination, the problem should not be easily solved. When discussing what problem the character will face, you will also want to encourage your child to think about the way their character will feel and react to the problem - are they shivering and hiding, maybe they stand strong and confident, or are jumping with joy, etc.

Now, that feeling we get when reading a book, or watching a movie, where we are super interested and excited, at the edge of our seats waiting for what will happen next... that is called suspense, or tension and authors create suspense by making their characters work incredibly hard, trying many different unsuccessful attempts, before finally solving their problem. In the 'obstacles' box, have your child think of two or three things that will stop

their character from solving their problem and achieving the goal - things that they try to do to solve their problem that don't work, or obstacles that make the problem bigger.

When your child is ready to move from the story map into story writing, they will use the order of these ideas to create their story.

- Start with an exciting action sentence - something their character is doing in the setting.
- Stop and introduce the character and who they are, some of the things they like or are afraid of, and what their goal is. Have your child use their five senses to describe where their character is. These descriptions create key details in your child's story.
- After the character has been introduced, writers can return to the action and introduce the problem in the story and how the character feels.
- Then start adding suspense - two things the character tries to do to solve the problem, but they don't work.
- Once characters have worked really hard, your child can decide on how the character finally solves the problem, leading to the ending of the story.
- Have your child write a big emotion last sentence to end the story in a strong way.

Take a look at the story examples and other resources on our website for more support.