



Communities guide – Storytelling Week

30 January – 5 February 2023



This guide has been developed to encourage you to explore Storytelling Week themes and embed its messaging into activities and events across local areas from January 30. You may wish to deliver some of these opportunities directly with your young people, parents group, community centre or work collaboratively with partners.

Whether you are a youth worker, librarian, volunteer or a young person, this communities guide will hopefully give you some tips and ideas to help build excitement around Storytelling Week within your local area and community.

Please feel free to share this with volunteers who are interested or able to facilitate storytelling sessions. You can do as little or as much as you are able to.



Changing life stories



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



What is National Storytelling Week?

Everyone has a special and unique story to tell. Storytelling helps us to connect with others and our heritage, develop oracy skills and build confidence.

National Storytelling Week is a fantastic opportunity to get to know other people and celebrate their experiences. It's a wonderful way to learn about family history and different cultures while boosting literacy skills.

To support celebrations, the National Literacy Trust has created this quick guide for community leaders, youth workers and facilitators to lead storytelling-based activities with children and young people. Many of these activities can be equally enjoyed by adults, too!

This guide has been developed with a special focus on podcasting and interviewing – a fantastic way to share, hear and record stories in a creative way. These activities inspire children and young people to discover world of stories at their fingertips while broadening their perceptions of storytellers.

We hope it helps to build children and young people's awareness of the importance of sharing stories and experiences with each other.

Story sharing: Conversation starters and quick activities

Here are some quick ideas to build into your storytelling activity:

- **Exchange a story**

You may wish to pick your own topic for this, or choose one of the questions:

- *What was the most surprising or unusual journey you went on?*
- *What traditions have been passed down your family?*
- *What is your favourite family recipe? Do you know which country it comes from?*

In pairs, ask one person to share and one person to listen to the other's answer. Then switch so the other person is talking or listening. Ask for volunteers to retell the story they heard or do this in smaller groups.

- **The story of your name**

You may wish to pick your own topic for this, or choose a question like this:



- *What do you know about your name – do you know why it was chosen or whether it means something in another language?*

Pair everyone up and ask them to share what they know about their name (this could be first name, middle name or surname). Why was it chosen? Do they know the name's origin? Does it mean something else in another language?

- **Fortunately, unfortunately**

This works best with a group of people sat in a circle:

1. First person begins their sentence with 'fortunately', and introduces the first sentence of a story.
2. The next person builds on the story by starting with the word 'unfortunately'.
3. Everyone goes round in circles, taking turns with alternative 'fortunately' and 'unfortunately' sentences.

This activity encourages creativity, humour and some unexpected endings!



- **Put yourself in someone else's shoes**

Pin or draw a few characters or animals on the board and then get the children or young people speak for two minutes from the subject's perspective. Consider what might be most relevant or interesting for that age group.

You may wish to answer these questions for one-minute before rotating:

- *Where have they travelled?*
- *What have they seen?*
- *What are their likes and dislikes?*
- *Where do they spend their time in ___ (city/town)?*



At the end of the activity, you may wish to ask the group some questions or get them to write their reflections on sticky notes. They could write their responses to these questions:

- *How did it feel to step into another character's shoes?*
- *What did you learn during this activity?*



Upskill in storytelling



Building on from the ‘exchange a story’ activity above, you might like to encourage the children or young people in your group to interview each other, a peer or family member. They could find out a bit more about their childhood, a journey they’ve experienced, or an amusing life story.

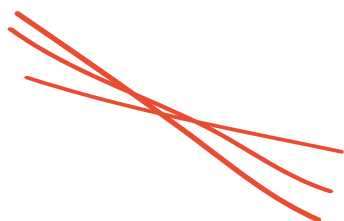
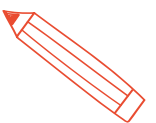
For example, they could explore a physical journey like growing up, moving house or country, or a lesson learnt from an experience!

To get started:

1. Get each person to pick someone in the group, a friend or family member to exchange a story.
2. In the pairs, one person should tell the other about an experience or journey from their life so far. You might like to encourage them to write down some notes as they listen!
3. The person who was listening should try telling the person’s story back to them!
4. Once you’ve completed the story reading, they should have a go at interviewing them again – but this time about how it felt to hear their story read back to them!

If your group includes children aged 7-11 or 11-14, you might like to download or print our free activity booklets on Words for Life.

The news report booklet (ages 7-11) and podcast activities (11-14), explore a world of podcasting and interviewing to help children share stories before archiving their own piece of history. These resources develop children’s interviewing and oracy skills, while getting to know more about the special people in their life.

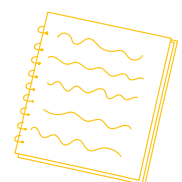
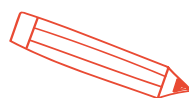


Let's talk about podcasts



To get started, ask your group to share their existing experience of podcasts. Does anyone listen to them regularly or have any favourites? How do they compare to books and reading? In groups or pairs, you could ask everyone to:

- Recommend a podcast series or audiobook! You might pick a title which includes characters or experiences you feel you can relate to, has inspired your friends and family members to discover a new hobby or interest, or sparked interesting conversations about your family's heritage, culture or traditions.
- Film or write a podcast review: Create a short 2-3 minute video about a favourite story, which has been adapted into a podcast series, or record yourself in conversation about key themes from a recent episode you listened to. For example, you might have unlocked a special memory of an older family member when listening to the Fun Kids Story Quest 'Adventures Through Time' series or want to explore your personal journey after listening to 'Goodnight Stories for Rebel Girls'.
- Create a comic-strip based on the events during one episode of a podcast.
- Become a journalist and host your own TV chat show! Pick three friends or family members and interview them about their life story.
- Recommend your top wellbeing or motivational podcasts.
- Create a quiz, based on a favourite podcast, for the group to complete.
- Find a podcast which matches your interests or hobbies and produce an advert or poster for it.
- Film a 'panel event' with two or three friends speaking to the camera about all the different kinds of podcasts you listen to or are available – highlighting how podcasts open up access to a wide range of stories and experiences!



Prompts for listening to podcasts



- **Consider music and tone of voice**

Is the music well suited for the conversation? Can you pick out any accents? Do the speakers sound serious, excited, or curious?

- **Allow time to introduce the topic**

If you decide to listen to a podcast as a group, make sure you introduce the broader topic first. Who is the podcast designed for? Is it more about information-giving, entertainment, or relaxation?

- **Try another activity at the same time**

Why not try listening to a podcast while doing another activity such as drawing, tidying, travelling, or using public transport?

- **Try a few different genres**

Ask your group whether they would be more interested in audio dramas, interview or non-fiction content.

- **Choose podcasts where zoning out is encouraged!**

Give your group the freedom and space to not completely concentrate. For example, you could try a meditation or relaxation-themed podcast then discuss it afterwards.



What next?



If you enjoyed delving into the world of podcasts and storytelling, head to Words for Life for more fun activities on these themes:

- Search 'storytelling' on Words for Life and download free tips for story sharing at home
- The National Literacy Trust works in communities and local areas across the UK to deliver events and free activities. Find out what's happening in your local area: literacytrust.org.uk/communities
- Free activities and tips from National Storytelling Week: sfs.org.uk/resources/factsheets
- If you or your group have young children, head to the National Literacy Trust website and download our translated Time Together booklet here

