

9

This unit looks at

- how activities from Units 2–7 can be adapted for use with stories
- more follow-up ideas and activities that you can use with stories
- how stories provide a meaningful context for children when they are acquiring a language.

SUMMARY OF CONTENTS

Introduction

9.1 Things to do after retelling a story

Adapting a story

A 'make and do' activity based on the story

LANGUAGE FOCUS

Reading with feeling

Starting a feedback chat

9.2 Getting children to add to a story

LANGUAGE FOCUS

From speaking to story writing

PRONUNCIATION POINT

Sound /s/. Clusters /st/, /sn/, /sl/, /str/

9.3 Making up a story

LANGUAGE FOCUS

Story structure

9.4 Using stories for project work

A favourite story project

9.5 Correction and project work

LANGUAGE FOCUS

Useful expressions for correcting and improving children's language

Story activities

Introduction

We can use stories to give children more practice at listening, speaking, reading, and writing, as well as to stimulate their imagination and creativity. Some examples follow.

1 Listening

'Listen and do' – the children act like a character in a story, for example, Red Riding Hood walking in the forest, or the wolf, etc.

'Listen and perform' – they act out a story, such as *The Fox and the Cheese*.

'Listen and identify' – they point to the picture in a story.

'Listen and respond' – they listen and clap if the teacher makes a mistake in the story, for example, *Once upon a time there was a little girl called Little Blue Riding Hood ...*

'Listen and colour' – they follow instructions to colour a story poster.

'Listen and draw' – they draw three things Red Riding Hood had in her basket.

'Listen and make' – they trace and cut out a face mask of a character.

2 Speaking

Children can get valuable speaking practice through:

— saying rhymes and singing songs. Some books have rhymes about stories, or you can make up a simple question-and-answer rhyme about the story. Or use a rhyme pattern that you know, such as:

This is the way she walks through the wood

walks through the wood

walks through the wood

This is the way she walks through the wood

On a lovely summer morning

— playing vocabulary games. Make picture cards for matching games: collect pairs or classifying sets, for example,

the pig and the wolf from *The Three Little Pigs*.

— practising new sounds. Let them play 'I spy' with items from the story, in *Little Red Riding Hood*: *I spy with my little eye something beginning with 'b'.*

— starting to speak freely. Elicit personal talk, for example,

you are the fox – talk about yourself: I am Mr Fox. I live in the forest. I have three brothers. I like cheese!

— playing speaking games, led by you, for example,

they pass the ball and answer questions about the story, such as: *What did the animals always say to Elmer?*

— speaking in groups. They can prepare a guessing game for the class, together, for example,

We live in three little houses. One is made of straw, one is made of sticks, and one is made of brick. Who are we?

3 Reading

When children are learning to read, you can help them with these techniques:

- Look and say – they point to words as you tell the story, labelling a story poster
- Phonics – they group all the words in the story with the same sound, for example, *hood, house*
- Speaking to reading – helping sound and word recognition. You use pictures of the new words in the story and giving the children the syllable beats – two for *basket/forest*, etc.
- Speaking to reading – helping children to recognize phrases and make phrases from single words, for example,
the big bad wolf/covered with elephant berries
- The alphabet – practising the names of the letters and drawing attention to the letters in stories
- Reading independently – asking the children to find information, for example,
What did the elephants say when Elmer shouted 'Boo'?

4 Writing

These activities will help children with starting to write and with spelling:

- Classifying and copying selected words and phrases from story books:
nature words, action words/phrases: he walked and walked ...
- Labelling pictures from stories, for example,
Here are the three little pigs outside their house ...
- Finishing comments, such as
The bird felt angry because the fox ...
- Gap-filling from a story, for example,
She put the ... and cakes in her basket.

9.1 Things to do after retelling a story

Adapting a story

If you change the plot of the story a little bit, but keep the characters and setting similar, you can use familiar words and phrases but still hold the children's interest because of the new story line.

This is what the teacher in **9A**, Juan, does. (You have already heard Juan in **1E**, **1J**, **2E**, and **3C**). Juan's story is adapted from another story about a very hungry caterpillar.

The children are very excited because they have been playing a game and now they have to be quiet and listen. They have heard the story before and know that they can join in.

9A

Retelling a story the children know

TEACHER: OK, OK, now listen ... listen.

It's time to tell a story, OK, it's time to tell a story, it's time to tell a story, OK, a story, a story in silence, OK, in silence, we must be silent, OK ... sh ... OK ... we'll sit on the floor. In silence we must be. OK.

This story ... this is the story of the green caterpillar. OK. Now in silence we must be. OK ... so ... sh ... OK.

This is the story of Mr Caterpillar. Sh ... OK, OK. Once upon a time there was a green caterpillar. He was always hungry. One day he met a banana. 'Mmmm mmmm,' he said, 'I'm very hungry!'

So he ate it. But surprise, surprise. His head became yellow. And he walked and he walked.

(The teacher gestures to all the children to join in.)

CHILDREN: And he walked and he walked ...

Juan with seven to eight year olds.



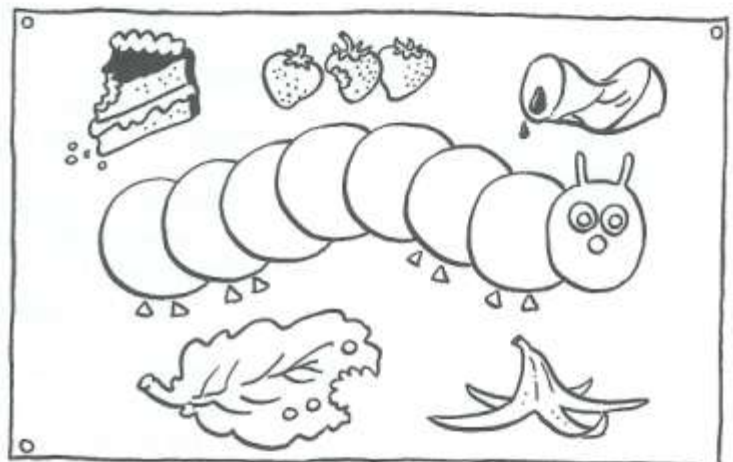
Listen to Juan's story in 9A and think about what activities you could do with this class by using this story.

This caterpillar walks on and meets lots of things that he eats and drinks. He changes colour according to what he eats. The children join in with the storytelling and gain a lot of speaking practice.

A 'make and do' activity based on the story

Here is a follow-up activity that another teacher used. He

- gave the children a plain drawing of the caterpillar
- let each child choose seven types of food or drink for their caterpillar
- let the children colour all the caterpillars. The caterpillars were the same colour as the food and drink.
- asked some children to describe their caterpillars to the class
- put all the new caterpillar drawings on the wall as a display. They were all different colours.



While the children coloured their drawing the teacher repeated parts of the story. He also went round the class and talked to individual children about what they were doing. (*Why has your caterpillar gone green? Because ...?*)

So the children listened and spoke about the colours and food and drink that they were familiar with.

You could also ask children to write the names of the things their caterpillar ate and the colours that he became.

LANGUAGE FOCUS 9.1

Reading with feeling

- 🎧 Listen to Juan beginning the story in **9A**, and try to imitate the way he tells the story. Notice especially the way he says these three phrases:
He was always hungry Mmmm mmmm but surprise, surprise

Then read it out loud from the transcript. Record yourself and see how similar your intonation is.

Starting a feedback chat

Here are some things you can say to children who are working on their own, colouring, writing, or drawing. The context for this table is the caterpillar story.

- ➡ Choose a story you might do this activity with. This table is about the caterpillar story. Change some of the words, comments, and questions in the tables to suit your story. Your aim is to encourage individual children to have a short conversation or chat with you about their work.

That's a	very nice	caterpillar!	Can you tell me more about it?
	lovely	picture!	Why did you do that bit yellow?
	wonderful		How many things has he eaten?
	fantastic		Wow, has he eaten all those things? or only some?
That's	really good	colouring	What things does he like best?
	pretty good	writing	My goodness – he's got a lot of legs! Can he walk very fast?
	very neat	drawing	So now, what are you going to draw/write/colour next?

RECORD Practise four or five feedback examples, then record them.

Extension ideas

Get children to tell the story from another point of view. What would the wolf say in *The Three Little Pigs*? (See Resources, page 142, for the published version.)

TEACHING TIPS

Working on activities about a story

- ✓ As you go round the class,
 - encourage children to talk to you about what they are doing or have done
 - ask questions with one- or two-word answers, as well as questions which make children talk more
- look at what they have done and talk about it, even if they won't understand everything you say
- give your shy pupils more chance to talk to you individually than you give confident students (who talk in class anyway!)
- ✓ You can use the same kind of feedback chat when you go round the class to check children's homework.

9 B

Starting a story and letting the children continue

TEACHER: Now I will tell you a story.

Now please listen to me carefully and try to memorize the story. Now close your eyes. Close your eyes. Everybody. There is a wonderful zoo in Kitakyushu. You are in the zoo. This zoo is very nice, but it's a funny zoo. It's a little bit unusual.

(Teacher also explains about this unusual zoo in her mother tongue.)

Let's walk around in the zoo. Now try to remember what I tell you. OK. Now some blue birds are singing and some pink birds are playing tennis. *(Some pupils laugh.)*

TEACHER: A lion is eating a hamburger. A tiger is reading a book and a sheep is dancing. OK.

(Some pupils laugh.)

TEACHER: OK, open your eyes. Now, I would like to check your memory. *(later in the same class)*

TEACHER: OK, very good, you remembered very well. Now boys and girls, can you make another funny story about this zoo?

(Some pupils answer in their mother tongue.)

MATSUDA: A dog is ...

TEACHER: Yes. What is the dog doing?

MATSUDA: A dog is playing violin.

TEACHER: A dog is playing the violin. Good. Any more?

TEACHER: No? OK, you have ... oh yeah! Sagisaka-kun.

SAGISAKA: A snake is riding a bicycle.

TEACHER: A snake is riding a bicycle!

CHILDREN: A bicycle.

Fumiko with ten year olds.

9.2 Getting children to add to a story



In 9B you are going to listen to another teacher, Fumiko. You have listened to Fumiko's class before, in 5D. They were looking for four differences in their pictures. The differences were all about what people were doing.

The short story that Fumiko now tells her class is also about actions. She tells her pupils a story about a strange zoo. In this zoo the animals do unusual things. The story allows the children to revise a grammatical structure in a fun way. Notice how Fumiko starts the story and then lets the children continue.



Before the extract in 9B, the pupils had been talking about what people are doing in pictures.

Now they are being creative and using what they know to communicate new ideas.

After this, they could each write their own stories about the zoo.

LANGUAGE FOCUS 9.2

From speaking to story writing

To help your class write their own story about the strange zoo, you might use tables such as these – see boxes 1–4.

BOX 1	
Last week-end	my family and I went to the zoo.
Last week	
Last Sunday	my friends and I went to the park.
Last holidays	

BOX 2	
Near the entrance,	we saw a tiger reading a book.
Further on,	we heard a monkey singing.
Then,	there was a snake riding a bicycle.
Round the corner,	there were some white deer dancing.
In one cage,	a panda was swimming in a pond.
Near the lake,	
Near the exit	

BOX 3

It was all very funny/interesting/strange/silly.
It was great fun and very entertaining.

BOX 4

We had a great/wonderful day out.
We got home and told everyone all about it.
But nobody believed us! Not even my Dad/Grandmother!
We hope to go back again soon.

- Choose a set of sentences from the boxes that could make a story. Read them out loud to the class, pointing to the phrases as you read them. Read slowly, as if the children were reading along with you. Read one sentence from Box 1, and three or four from Box 2. End your story with two or three sentences from Boxes 3 and 4. Practise reading your sample story out loud with lots of expression.

RECORD Record one version of the story on your cassette.

- Think of a story that you could use for an activity like this – a story familiar to one of your classes. Make up your own set of boxes for this story that your class could read from and then write their own story from.

Pronunciation point

Sound /s/. Clusters /st/, /sn/, /sl/, /str/

- Say these words and decide how you would group them. You can put them into five groups.

<i>surprise</i>	<i>slap</i>	<i>story</i>	<i>stamp</i>
<i>snap</i>	<i>supermarket</i>	<i>stand</i>	<i>step</i>
<i>sneeze</i>	<i>start</i>	<i>strawberries</i>	<i>sleep</i>

Practise saying these clusters smoothly. The letter *s* blends with the next consonant sound.

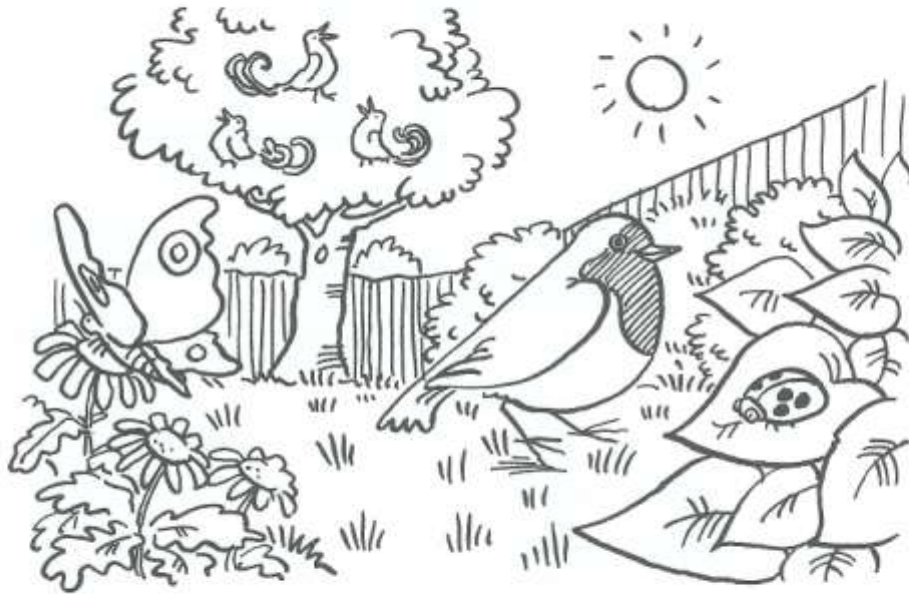
9.3 Making up a story

In the Resources section (page 142) there is a list of published story books that teachers have recommended. But you can also make up a story of your own for your class. If you make up a story you can

- make it more personal and local – about people/animals/places the children know well
- include language the children are familiar with
- include topics they are learning about
- use materials you have already used but in a different way, for example, photos or pictures of animals.
- prepare it so that the children can do follow-up activities such as colouring or mime.

- Here is a sample story made up for a class. Read it silently, imagining in your head the actions, the gestures, and the intonation and expression you would use to get the meaning across. Read it again and underline any phrases that you might use at other times in class, or that your children might be familiar with.

RECORD Finally read it out loud to someone, and record it on your teaching cassette, so that you can use it in class.



Alva and the robin

Alva is a little girl.

She lives in a house with a lovely garden.

She likes talking and singing and playing with her friends.

But today her friends are away with their families.

She is on her own and feels very sad.

She walks out into the garden – all by herself.

She sees a robin in a tree.

'Hello robin,' says Alva. 'How are you today?'

'Oh, I'm fine. How are you?' says the robin.

'Oh,' says Alva, 'you can speak.'

'Yes,' says the robin, 'and I can sing too.'

'Oh,' says Alva, 'what else can you do?'

'Well, I can fly, of course,' says the robin.

'Oh,' says Alva, 'I can't fly. I wish I could fly. I want to visit my friends.'

'Would you like to meet some of my friends?' says the robin. 'They are here in the garden.'

Alva looks around. 'I don't see anyone.'

'Oh, you have to look carefully,' says the robin.

'Look over there, there's a ladybird.'

'Where?' says Alva.

'Over there,' says the robin, 'under the big green leaf.'

And Alva walks over and picks up the leaf and there's the ladybird.

'Oh, I can see you, ladybird,' says Alva. 'Good morning, ladybird.'

'She's in a hurry,' says the robin.

'And here is a butterfly,' says the robin.

'Where?' says Alva.

'Over there,' says the robin, 'in those flowers.'

And Alva walks over and looks in the flowers.

'Can you see all his colours?' says the robin.

'There's red and yellow and blue and purple and orange and brown.'

'Oh, I can see you, butterfly,' says Alva. 'Good morning, butterfly.'

'And now,' says the robin, 'here are my other friends.'

'Where?' says Alva.

'Over there,' says the robin, 'on top of the tree.'

And Alva walks over and looks in the tree and there are lots of birds.

'Oh, I can see you all,' says Alva. 'Good morning, birds.'

'Now,' says the robin, 'you know all my friends.'

'Thank you, robin,' says Alva. 'I am having a nice time.'

Extension ideas

Adapt this story by

- using local birds, insects, or small animals your pupils are familiar with
- putting in other samples of positions these creatures are found in, for example, *under a stone, on a wall, behind a bush*.

Do a project on Alva and her new friends. Make a wall display based on the natural environment in your area. Let the children

- suggest what creatures to have in the display
- draw or make a collage of each creature where it is usually found, for example, *a butterfly on a flower, an insect on a stone*
- use labels if they are starting to read.

You can use this kind of **cross-curricular** activity as part of an English lesson and in your natural science lessons. Children learn in this way that all language is about meaning.

LANGUAGE FOCUS 9.3**Story structure**

The story of Alva and the robin shows one very common structure for a story.

— **Situation**

Who Alva is and what she likes (lines 1–3).

— **Problem**

Alva is on her own as her friends are away (lines 4–6).

— **Solution**

She talks to the robin who introduces her to his friends (line 7 to the last line).

— **Evaluation**

Alva comments on her experience (last line).

Traditional stories often follow this pattern. They usually start with a character and a situation, then they introduce the problem, for example, *Goldilocks was very hungry*.

Then there are one or more solutions, for example, *Goldilocks found the bears' house and ate the porridge*.

And the story usually ends with a positive comment, for example, *They all lived happily ever after*.

- Think of a story that follows this pattern and think how you would tell it to a class.

RECORD Practise reading it out loud, then record yourself reading it.

9.4 Using stories for project work

Children use language in a natural and spontaneous way when they are active.

Projects

- help co-operation between children
- can be organized so that all skills are practised while you are planning and preparing it together.

REMEMBER

You do a language project to

- bring together all the language work you have been doing in class
- build on and extend what your pupils already know
- allow children to work together and co-operate
- give everyone in the class a chance to contribute
- achieve something worthwhile that other people can see and that everyone can be proud of.

A favourite story project

When children have read a few stories, you could do a story project.

Talk to the children about

- why you are doing it (they can show how much English they know)
- what they want to make or do:
 - a wall display, a big book, a performance, a puppet show based on the story*
- what they want to put in it:
 - characters, events from the story*
- how they want to do it,
 - in groups, the whole class together*
- who will come to see it:
 - their parents, other classes, other teachers*
- where they will display it or perform it when it is finished:
 - in their classroom, in a another part of the school.*

Make a plan together and decide when you want to finish. Decide how often you are going to work on the project:

- once a week.*
- Make sure that everyone is clear about what they have to do and what they have to achieve:
 - draw and colour a picture of a story character and be able to say something about this character.*
- Plan what the group/s have to do each day up to the final day.
- Allow starting and finishing time to take out and put away all the materials the children will use.

Decide how many stories are going to be in the project, for example, one/two favourite stories. This is the children's choice and also depends on

- the number of children in the class
- how much work they are going to do on each story.

Make sure the children know it is their project and their work.

- You have to help with organization.
- You might be able to get the art teacher to co-operate with the drawing/painting that is needed.



Use English all the time while you are working on the project (but explain quickly in the children's mother tongue anything that they find really difficult).

Here are two sample plans for a project on favourite stories. But first let the children pick their favourite story.

For a wall display children could produce

- drawings of characters
- coloured/painted backgrounds
- collages – pictures made from coloured paper and other materials
- labels – naming all the people and places in the story
- cards saying what they like and why.

They could

- invite their families and other classes to see the display
- write invitations or notices in English
- decide how they are going to show the display, e.g.
 - who will be at the door to tell people where to start*
 - who will show each part*
 - what each person will say and do on the presentation day.*

For a performance, children could

- decide how to perform, some could read parts of the story while others could mime
- take parts and plan what to say; to do this you could help them write out what they want to say and they could rehearse like actors
- make the story into a musical by adding songs on the themes
- make masks for their parts – with similar masks several children can act as one character
- make puppets for each part
- bring in or make simple props and/or costumes
- prepare and draw invitations for their families and other classes
- make a poster advertising their performance
- choose music to go with the story
- hold rehearsals.

9.5 Correction and project work

If children are going to perform in public, or write for an outside audience, it is important that what they say or write is well-organized, tidy, and as **accurate** as possible. This will make a good impression on the audience.

You will need to act as their language adviser

- 1 Find out what meanings they want to express.
- 2 Suggest new words and phrases that help them express these meanings.

Keep some dictionaries in the classroom while you do projects, so that children can check their own spellings and look up useful words and phrases.

Be prepared to

- encourage children to be creative and to use their imagination
- help them improve and correct their speaking or writing.

- At the preparation stage – to prepare the final draft
- correct the project
 - explain to the children that this is correction time
 - let them do as much correction as they can.

The children

- know they are performing or displaying to a wider audience
- are likely to take more notice of corrections in these circumstances
- should be involved in as much of the correcting process as possible.



A project should also

- encourage co-operation
 - give children more confidence
 - give you the opportunity to praise children's efforts
 - give children a chance to show what they can do apart from English.
- So be realistic!

REMEMBER

- You will not be able to correct all their mistakes.
- They may not remember the correct forms in the future.
- Expect only as much as their current language level will allow.
- Take care not to over-correct (which might worry them and make them lose confidence).
- Don't stifle their creativity (which takes the fun out of a project).

When children are performing or showing their work, stand back – this is their time. Do not correct at this stage. It could discourage a child and damage their self-esteem.

When the project is finished, use it as an opportunity to praise and encourage the children.

LANGUAGE FOCUS 9.5

Useful expressions for correcting and improving children's language

- o* 1 Here are five corrections. There is one of pronunciation and one of writing. What kinds of errors are the other three teachers correcting?

- a TEACHER: Let me just check.
Let's see. These are fine.
But here – what's missing? *u, v, w, x, z*?
CHILD : *y*.
TEACHER: Yes – *y*, good.
- b TEACHER: That's a really good word, but can you check the spelling? What do you think it should be? Look it up!
- c CHILD: Gloves.
TEACHER: Are they gloves or mittens? Look – no fingers!
CHILD : Mittens.
TEACHER : Mittens, right.
- d TEACHER: Listen carefully! I didn't say 'How many calendars?' but 'Where's the calendar?'
- e TEACHER: No, not 'He's music' – He's ...? Yes? – He's listening to music.
- f CHILD: Spier.
TEACHER: Can you repeat that, please – spider.
CHILD: (very quietly) Spider.
TEACHER: (nodding) One more time? A bit louder?
CHILD: Spider.
TEACHER: Good!

RECORD 2 Read these examples again, out loud, then record yourself taking the teacher's part. Play it back – do you sound sufficiently encouraging?

Further ideas

- **1** Try out the Alva story or the story you made up in one of your classes. Prepare pictures for it, and prepare to tell it once and then retell it a second time in a different way.

RECORD Record the lesson where you do this.

Try to get the children's feedback. Did they like the story? Which bit did they like/not like? Can they think of a different/better ending? If they tell you this partly in their mother tongue, recast what they say in English as far as you can.

After the lesson, play back the tape and see what you notice about the way you told the story and the way the children reacted. Write notes on how you might do it next time.

- 2** Discuss project plans with another teacher if you can. Make any changes you feel necessary to the suggested schedule. Then try it out with one of your classes.

Keep a diary while you do this – fill it in after every lesson where you do something on the project.

Try to evaluate the project.

- What was the audience feed-back?
- Did the children enjoy preparing for it?
- Did they enjoy the final performance or display event?
- Would they like to do another different project next term?
- Have you noticed any differences in individual children? Are they more or less confident/talkative/willing to use English in class?

- 3** Read Chapter 2 from Wright, Andrew. 1995. *Storytelling with Children*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- 4** If you have a computer, take a look at these two Websites for [storytelling/books for children](http://www.storytelling/booksforchildren).

<http://www.storyarts.org/classroom/index.html>

<http://www.realbooks.co.uk/>