

# World Read Aloud Day

## StoryTelling 101: The 5 Story Elements



On World Read Aloud Day, you can write and share your own stories! While there is no wrong way to tell a story, knowing about the 5 story elements can help make your story interesting and easy to understand!

**Character:** The characters are the people (or animals, or objects!) that experience the main action of a story. Interesting characters have motivations and personalities. The more well rounded and interesting your characters are, the more interesting your story will be.

*Tip:* Try to understand who your characters are before you begin writing your story. What are your characters like? Are they loud or quiet? Are they thoughtful or impulsive? Are they timid or bold?

**Setting:** The setting of a story is when and where it takes place. A story may take place in a city or a country, a house or a school. A story can also take place in a different time period, or in a magical or fantastical space as well!

*Tip:* Sometime it helps to do a little “world building” before you start writing your story. What is important about when and where your story takes place? Write down the rules your characters have to follow to make the setting believable. For example, if your story is set in the 1500’s, it wouldn’t make sense for a character to check the time on their cell phone!

**Plot:** The plot of a story consists of all of the events that happen in it! A good plot has a clear beginning, middle, and end.

*Tip:* Before you start writing your story, outline the big events that your characters will experience. Make sure all of the events lead up to or affect the climax- the most exciting part- of your story.

**Theme:** The theme of a story is typically the lesson that the reader learns from what the characters experience.

*Tip:* Before you begin writing your story, think about what you want your readers to walk away understanding. For example, maybe readers of your story can learn from your characters actions that they should “Always be kind to others.”



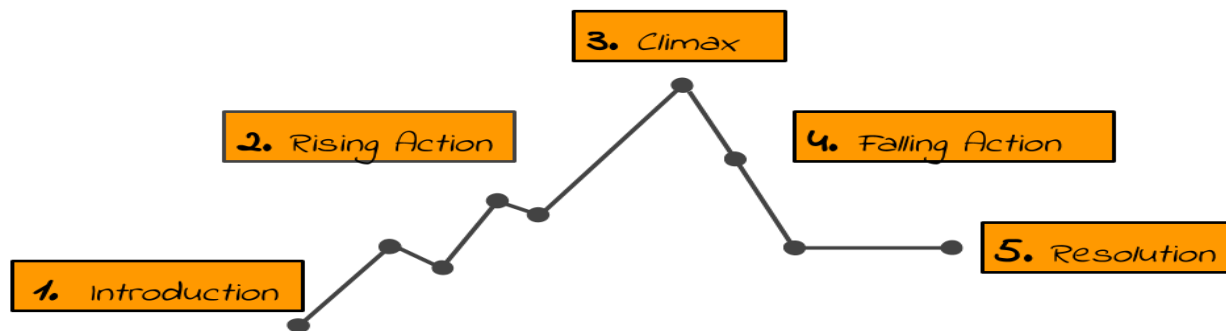
**Conflict:** The conflict of a story is the main problem. Stories need problems, it’s what drives the characters to do what they do!

*Tip:* The main conflict in a story may be between two characters. It could also be between a character and the society that the character lives in, or be between a character and nature. As you write your plot, make sure it revolves around how the characters address the main conflict.

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## StoryTelling 101: The Story Mountain

On World Read Aloud Day, you can write and share your own stories! Most narrative stories (stories with a beginning, middle, and end) have a familiar structure. You can use the story mountain to help you lay out the plot of your story so that it makes sense and is compelling.



### 1. Introduction: Start by introducing the main characters, the setting, and the problem.

*Ex: In the story of Three Little Pigs, we are introduced to each of the three little pigs and their personalities- we know that one little pig is smart and a hard worker and the other two pigs are not as clever and are lazy. We are also introduced to a hungry wolf who wants to eat them!*

### 2. Rising Action: The rising action is where your main characters encounter twists and turns as they attempt to solve the main problem. In traditional stories, there are often three obstacles that characters must overcome before they can do so!

*Ex: In the story of the Three Little Pigs, the hungry wolf first destroys the youngest brother's house made out of hay (obstacle 1), then the hungry wolf destroys the middle brother's house made out of sticks (obstacle 2), finally the hungry wolf attempts to destroy the eldest brother's house of bricks (obstacle 3).*

### 3. Climax: The climax of the story is the most exciting part! Here your main characters go for what they want. It's up to you whether they succeed or not.

*Ex: In the story of the Three Little Pigs, the hungry wolf tries several things to destroy the eldest brothers house of bricks; he tries to blow it down, he tries to push it down, and then he finally decides to climb down the chimney to get to the little pigs inside.*

### 4. Falling Action: The falling action is what happens right after the climax of a story. It's where we discover what happens as a result of the exciting climactic moment.

*Ex: In the story of the Three Little Pigs, the hungry wolf falls into a boiling pot of water the brothers placed under the chimney! He does not get the pigs and runs off with his tail between his legs.*

### 5. Resolution: The Resolution is the last part of a story. It's where we tie up all the loose ends and discover what lessons the main characters learned over the course of the story.

*Ex: The younger brothers learn to work hard like the eldest little pig. All three live happily ever after.*

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## Storytelling Games

World Read Aloud Day is an opportunity to celebrate stories in all of their forms. It is a day that empowers you to become a storyteller! Writing and sharing your own stories helps you share your voice with the world!

**Try these fun Storytelling activities alone or with a group to celebrate World Read Aloud Day!**

### It Happened To Me

This activity will help you share stories of small but important life moments with others. You can play this game in a group or use this method to think of stories you want to write about on your own.

#### Materials:

- Small slips of paper
- A hat, bucket, or cup
- Notebooks or paper for every participant
- Pencils or pens for every participant



#### Directions:

1. On each of the small slips of paper, write down one of the prompts below:
  - A time you learned an important lesson*
  - A time you were very scared*
  - A time you discovered something new about yourself or about the world*
  - A time you were incredibly happy*
  - A time you were incredibly excited*Feel free to add any other prompts you would like!
2. Put all the slips of paper into a hat, bucket, or cup.
3. Have all participants sit a circle
4. Pull one of the slips of paper from the hat, bucket, or cup and read what it says to the group.
5. Allow each participant 5 minutes to respond independently in their notebook or on paper to the prompt.
6. Complete 3 rounds of this- pulling a prompt and allowing participants to independently respond
7. Once each participant has responded to all three prompts in their notebooks, allow time to share. You can give each participant an opportunity to share what they wrote about any one of the prompts or allow people to volunteer to share on their own.

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## Tips:

- Never force anyone to share their writing. Creating an encouraging and positive environment for this activity will help make everyone more comfortable with sharing, but sometimes participants simply won't want to. Make sure you do not put undue pressure on anyone to do so.
- You may want to provide a reader's chair or stage area for participants to share their stories. After each participant shares their story, encourage others to clap, snap, or throw shooting stars their way!

## Story in the Round

Telling a Story in the Round is a fun, exciting, and creative way to share stories together! Don't be afraid to get silly!

## Materials:

- Optional-Chart paper

## Directions:

1. On a chart paper, write down the following reference prompts and hang it in a place where all participants can see:

Beginning: [ once Upon a Time...

Middle: [ Then...  
And...  
But...  
Next...  
So...  
After that...  
Because of that...

End: [ Finally...



*You can skip this step if you would like. The chart is for reference only.*

2. Have participants sit in a circle.
3. Explain that you will be creating a "Story in the Round" together. This means that each participant will add a sentence to a story you all create together on the spot!
4. Start the story with "Once Upon a Time." The first prompt should include some characters and a setting (for example; "Once Upon a time there was a young girl who lived in the woods.").

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5. The person to your right should continue the story. If needed refer them to the chart and encourage them to start their sentence with any one of the “Middle” transition words (for example: “*And she had a little dog who loved to wander around*”)
6. Each participant around the circle should continue adding sentences to the story. At any point, someone can use the ending prompt “*Finally*” to end the story.

## Tips:

- Encourage participants to listen to the prompts that come before theirs. Remind them that your goal together is to create a story that makes sense.
- It might help to announce a genre before the first prompt is given. You can create a scary story, a funny story, an adventure story, etc.

## A Picture is Worth 1000 Words

This activity helps participants create new stories using pictures and images! Feel free to get creative as you stretch your imagination!

### Materials:

- A collection of 3-5 images (*these can be famous pictures downloaded from the internet, pictures from storybooks, personal photographs or any other images you can find. Try to find a variety of subjects- one photo might be of groups of people or a person, one might be of landscapes, one might be abstract, or of animals, or drawings that the participants themselves have done*)
- A notebook or paper for each participant
- Pencils or pens for each participant
- Chart paper (optional)

### Directions:

1. On the chart paper provide the following story prompts:

*The Pixar Pitch:*

*once upon a time....*

*Every day...*

*one day...*

*Because of that...*

*Because of that...*

*Until Finally...*



2. Select one of the images and put it in a space that all participants can see.

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3. Tell participants that they will each write a quick story based on the image  
Encourage them to come up with characters, a conflict, a theme, and a plot based on what they see in the picture. They can use the “Pixar Pitch” to lay out the story by completing each sentence using the ideas they imagine after looking at the image.
4. Allow 5-10 minutes for each participant to write down a story.
5. Allow each participant to share the story they created based on the image.
6. Repeat the process for each of the images.

## Tips:

- Create a positive environment to encourage participants to share their stories. You may want to provide a reader’s chair or stage area for participants to share their stories. After each participant shares their story, encourage others to clap, snap, or throw shooting stars their way!