

# THE SECRET SOCIETY OF STORYTELLING

Only you will know the exciting, engaging activities that occur when involving students in the craft of storytelling. Integration of books, writing, and games make the gathering a "telling" event! Shhhhh, only YOU are invited.

If you are a dreamer, come in.  
If you are a dreamer, a wisher, a liar,  
A hope-er, a pray-er, a magic bean buyer...  
If you're a pretender, come sit by my fire,  
For we have some flax golden tales to spin.

Come in!

Come in!

-Shel Silverstein

From *Where the Sidewalk Ends*

**Storytelling can happen, even when you don't realize it is! Our brains are hot wired to sink in those stories of the day into our long-term memories! Let it happen in your library!**

**Here are some engaging games that can easily be activated in your library!**

## **Cross the River (Julia Perlowski)**

Use this activity in a variety of ways: prereading activity, icebreaker, story brainstorming, or culmination of a story told/read:

Directions: Form two lines of participants (don't need to be equal sides) face each other about 6 – 10 feet apart. Participants are asked to cross the river if what is said pertains to them.

Example: "Cross the room if..."

- ...you have been lost
- ...you are allergic to cats
- ...you live in an apartment
- ...you've had someone who believes in you
- ...you're scared of spiders

For a story, let's say you're going to share Charlotte's Webb: Cross the river if..."  
...you have been to a country fair  
...you ever felt lonely  
...you visited a farm  
...you think pigs and spiders can talk

Using the above questions, you could extend this by asking the participants to turn and talk to their neighbor about why they crossed the river.

### **I Have Never** (Burcher and Burcher)

Objectives: Community building, group dynamics, listening and thinking, energizing the group

Directions: Group sits in a circle with one less chair than there are people. Extra person stands in the middle and makes a statement about something s/he has never done.

Examples: I have never seen the Eiffel Tower.

Everyone sitting who HAS seen the Eiffel Tower must get up and move to a new chair while the statement maker tries for a seat as well. Whoever is chairless stands and makes a new statement of something they have never done.

The statements MUST be something that is possible to do (cannot say I have never been to Mars). Often hard to stop this game once it gets started!

**Body Stories (Nonverbal Expression with a storytelling partner)** This takes two volunteers. One will be the nonverbal teller and the other will be the storyteller.

My students LOVE this activity! Ask for a volunteer or you be the actual storyteller. Your job will be to tell an exciting story (personal or a retelling) You won't be seen because you'll be sitting down behind the nonverbal volunteer who is standing in front of you, facing the audience. This nonverbal volunteer has no idea what story will come out of your mouth but must be listening well because his/her hand motions, facial expressions, and movement of the mouth and eyes are all that will tell the story.

Writing Activities:

1. What story/research concept are you going to teach? Create a bridge to this concept by beginning where the students are first.
2. Conversations are easy to come by if asking the write questions? Example: How many of you own pets? Boom – here come the stories – good, bad, and ugly!
3. Think – Ink – Pair – Share: Students aren't allowed to talk after you ask a particular guiding question that lends to your lesson. They are then asked to write down their thoughts. Now comes the time where each share out what they wrote down to each other. You can then ask for one from each table to share out from each table to the entire class!

4. Use of origami – create a simple house from a 8 1/2 x 11” sheet of paper. Ask students to think about their favorite rooms in their home (or grandparent’s home) – kitchen, bedroom, playroom, backyard, etc. – jot down ideas and details. Select your favorite room with great details to write out a story you’ll be able to share with others when completed. (You, the teacher, will need to model your own special room of your home) – Storytelling at it’s best. There are wonderful picture books that lend to this idea such as *The hickory Chair* by Lisa Rowe Fraustino.

Conclusion:

“Storyteller’s Creed: I believe that imagination is stronger than knowledge. That myth is more potent than history. That dreams are more powerful than facts. That hope always triumphs over experience. That laughter is the only cure for grief. And I believe that love is stronger than death.”

–Robert Fulghum from  
*All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*

# Fantastic Storytelling Resources for Beginning a Storytelling Club

## Storytelling Books

*Children Tell Stories: Teaching and Using Storytelling in the Classroom.* Martha Hamilton & Mitch Weiss, Richard C. Owen Publishers (2005)

*Raising Voices: Creating Youth Storytelling Groups and Troupes.* Judy Sima and Kevin Cordi, Libraries Unlimited (2003)

*Stories in My Pocket: Tales Kids Can Tell.* Martha Hamilton & Mitch Weiss, Fulcrum Press, 1996.

*The Storytelling Classroom: Applications Across the Curriculum.* Sherry Norfolk, Jane Stenson, and Diane Williams, Libraries Unlimited (2006)

## Websites

**Sue Kuentz's Storytelling Club Blog (Great place to fetch fun activities for your own club. I add helpful websites, youtube videos, a bit of everything that would help students and their storytelling)**  
[www.Door2lore.com](http://www.Door2lore.com)

**Beauty and the Beast (Martha Hamilton and Mitch Weiss's website) – games, activities, lessons**  
<http://beautyandthebeaststorytellers.com>

**Digital Storytelling**  
<http://www.schrockguide.net/digital-storytelling.html>

**Heather Forest's website – fun activities to try out with the kids**  
<http://www.storyarts.org/>

**National youth Storytelling Showcase:**  
<http://www.nationalyouthstorytellingshowcase.org/NYSS/Welcome.html>

**Storytelling in Education? YES! (position paper)**  
<http://www.storynet.org/resources/YES%20Position%20Paper.pdf>

Bedore, Bob. *101 Improv Games for Children and Adults.* Hunter House, 2004.

Burcher, Anthony. *101 Games That Teach Storytelling Skills.* Healthy Learning, 2013.

Collins, Rives. *The Power of Story; Teaching through Storytelling*. Waveland Press, 1997.

Farmer, David. *101 Drama Games & Activities*. [www.dramaresource.com](http://www.dramaresource.com), 2007.

Haven, Kendall. *Super Simple Storytelling; A Can-Do Guide for every Classroom, Every Day*. Teacher Ideas Press, 2000.

Joy, Flora. *Storytelling Delivery Skills; A Step-by-Step Handbook for Guilds, Classes, Clubs, or Individuals*. National Storytelling Press. 2006.

Kinghorn, Harriet R. *Every Child a Storyteller; A Handbook of Ideas*. Teacher Ideas Press, 1991.

Lipman, Doug. *Storytelling Games*. Oryx Press, 1995.

MacDonald, Margaret Read. *Teaching with Story; Classroom Connections to Storytelling*. August House, 2013.