

PROCESS and BASIC STORY FORMAT

The process and basic story format are an adaptation of a product created within the Chain stories project (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zOA8usCCKH4>) in 2008; the Chain stories project focused on writing a chain story within a partnership of partners whose mother tongue belongs to the same family (e.g. Latin origin). The procedure can be adapted to suit all types of partners.

Coordinating school/school/group/child initiates the chain. Partners establish the order in which they will enter the chain. The coordinator assigns the exact time frame for each partner before the elaboration of the story is initiated.

Section 1 – Introduction

A strong introduction makes for a good start.

Elements to be found in this section:

- A narrator
- Choice of main characters (for the section) – maximum of four/five characters
- The story begins in a particular context (time, place).
- The space and time coordinates for the development of the story are briefly defined but they can be changed to suit the story as it moves along.
- Narrator characterizes the main characters; basic physical and intellectual features that define them are outlined.
- The story finishes with the first problem situation that is left for the next school/class/group/ child to solve.
- The problem situations in each section do not necessarily need to be resolved – that responsibility can be passed onto next section of the story.

Once completed, each section is sent to the next school/class/group/child in the chain. The text can also be accompanied by visual clues (drawings).

Sections 2 - 4

Main coordinates for these sections

- Characters develop and meet new challenges – see list
- Possible changes in location / time
- New characters may be introduced or the initial characters from section 1 may be preserved.

After each section is complete, the process is repeated.

Section 5 – Conclusion

- The main story has a positive outcome, “all’s well that ends well”;
 - The main characters meet and talk about their experience, draw conclusions, decide to act in ways that reflect the things they have learnt throughout the story;
- Once the story is complete the chain is complete.

Observations

The teachers that guide the children will avoid the following:

- offensive language of any kind
- the use of cultural / racial / sexual stereotypes
- excessive violence or depiction of violent, antisocial, harmful or destructive behaviour
- main characters are essentially “good”, even if they occasionally stumble or hesitate, they always end up making the correct choices
- the main characters “grow” throughout the story as a result of their experiences, they acquire better

knowledge of themselves and the others

- secondary characters provide help and enforce the development of such attitudes as tolerance friendship and increased awareness towards the existence of other cultures, behaviours, etc
- at least one character is preserved from beginning to end to ensure coherence
- the text is narrative, with occasional dialogue and description
- the problem situations are always dealt with in such a way as to benefit the main characters
- the overall conclusion of the story is a positive one

The structure described above should be observed within certain limits, so as not to discourage the children's creativity; the children should be let write freely – the teacher and children can later edit the completed story with target group in mind.

CHOICE OF MOMENTS AND PROBLEM SITUATIONS

Moments and contexts that need to be defined at the beginning

- time (past / present / future) OR out of time (dream, illusion, hallucination, etc)
- time of day – morning, midnight, twilight, etc.
- season, weather (if action takes place outdoors)
- time span (interval) – a day, an hour, a year, etc.

Problem situation that can initiate or intervene in the development of the action (end /beginning of section)

- meeting a new character (strange, unexpected)
- a spaceship that lands
- disasters: (a shipwreck, an avalanche, floods, earthquakes, etc)
- lack of communication (misunderstandings, arguments, etc.)
- classic “scary movie” situations:
 - the lights go out
 - suddenly everything goes still and quiet
 - the doors open/close on their own
 - strange noises are heard coming from behind a locked door
 - a secret entrance is found
 - a character (dis)appears out of thin air
 - someone / something appears suddenly behind the protagonists and frightens them
- taking part in activities for the local community (that lead to discovering an aspect that the characters are not satisfied with and wish to remedy)
- first aid situations
- someone / something disappears / goes missing
- civic behaviours (cleaning a park, finding a shelter for abandoned pets, etc.)
- taking part in school surveys / research activities
- going away (on holiday, on a summer camp, etc.)
- writing / doing research and documentation for a project, portfolio, etc.
- visit to a museum
- finding a device that facilitates time travel meeting famous (fictional or legendary) characters.