

Storyboard Activity for Learning to Tell

Create a Storyboard

Each person needs a copy of the story on card stock and something to draw with. Pens, markers, crayons, pencils all work fine. Multiple colors (like a box of 8 crayons) slow down the drawing but increase options and are generally appreciated. Markers will work with card stock, which is stiff enough to use on the lap, if you want to keep things simple. Crayons, pens, or pencils require a harder surface like a clipboard. Hopefully the group is seated in a semi-circle of chairs and not at tables (unless you are working with children in which case tables are a good idea).

I print the story on one side of white cardstock and have participants create their storyboard on the other side. I give them strict instructions not to look at the printed story during the storyboard activity OR while telling the story to each other. Most people dutifully follow these instructions; I ignore the occasional infraction. For this activity the goal is to rely on ears for hearing and remembering the story (vs. the eyes looking at printed symbols). The minds' eye is, however, brought into play for visualizing the unfolding of the story.

A chime or bell is a nice touch for indicating when it is time to open eyes. The [Woodstock Zenergy Chime](#) is popular and inexpensive. Google it online.

Here are the steps for creating a storyboard:

1. Look at the sound map for the story you are telling to see how many parts there are in the story (generally 2-4). Ask participants to draw lines to divide the paper into that many sections. Have them number the sections.
2. Explain that you are going to tell the first part of the story. Instruct participants to close their eyes, or focus on the candle if you have one centrally located, and see what is happening in their mind's eye as you tell the story.
3. Tell part one of the story. Speak slowly, and pause when done, so people have time to visualize.
4. Ring the chime and say, "Okay, now open your eyes, and in square number one draw a picture of what you saw in your mind's eye as you listened to the first part of the story." Warn them that they will have limited time, so they should make simple drawings, and not try for great works of art. Give assurances such as, "Stick figures are fully acceptable." They can draw symbols, numbers, or include a few words. Give them a 30 second warning before ringing the chime as a signal to prepare to hear the next part of the story.
5. Repeat this process for all parts of the story.

Partner Telling

When the storyboard is complete, instruct participants to pair up and tell the story to each other using their storyboards as an aid to memory.

They should refrain from looking at the printed out story until both partners have told it once. Then they can read the story and evaluate how they did—what they remembered and what they left out or added in extra.