

# The Storyteller Within



North Summit Elementary, Utah



READING ART  
ENRICHES  
WRITING



## Introduction

Children are natural storytellers. Their favorite stories tend to be about something or someone they know well or ones that imagine a new reality that draws out their dreams. This project invites children and family members to find a story within themselves and draw it out.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

#### Children will:

- explore a dream or an imaginary situation that could pertain to themselves or others;
- determine the story's main idea (intent), audience, and voice;
- create an image to represent the main character in the story;
- develop a poem based on the image; and
- share the art and poem.

## Vocabulary

story  
dream  
imaginary  
reality

thoughts  
feelings  
main message  
self

others  
poem

### Supplies

- Crayola® Colored Pencils
- Crayola® Watercolors or Markers
- Paint Brush or Cotton Swab
- Paper (for writing and sketching)
- Water Cup
- Paper Towels

### Prepare

Children love painting. If watercolors are not available they can dip a paintbrush or cotton swab in water and use it to paint over a drawing made with markers to create a watercolor effect. Experiment with color mixing and varying the amount of water for a range of color intensity from very bold to quietly subtle. Either way, the water can get a little messy. So together, prepare the work area and explain the clean-up process so everyone can enjoy the experience and beautiful outcomes.

## Essential Questions

- Everyone has *stories within them*. How can you express your inner ideas in a poem or prose?
- What questions will help reveal some of the stories that are within you? What big message do you want to present? How will descriptive details paint a picture with words and help communicate your main idea?
- What role do visual images play in inspiring storytellers or in clarifying a story's details?

## Guiding Questions

- Think about a story that you remember. What was the important message that stuck in your mind?
- How did visuals and visually descriptive words help to make the story memorable?
- How does creating visual representations in a story help clarify the big ideas?
- How can writing poetry help convey ideas with a few carefully selected words that paint an image?

## Intentional Writing Framework

### INTENT –

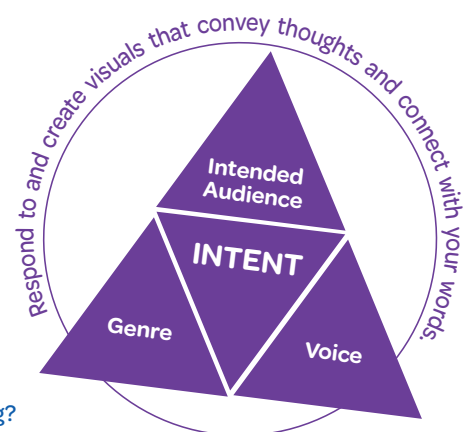
What is the intended message or main idea you want to convey?

### INTENDED AUDIENCE –

Who will read what you are writing?  
How will you adjust your writing to meet the needs of the intended audience?

**VOICE** – Will your voice be emotional, logical, or credible? How will you appeal to the readers and help them understand your point of view?

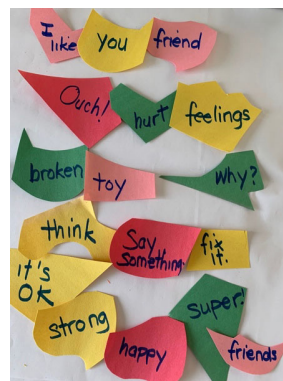
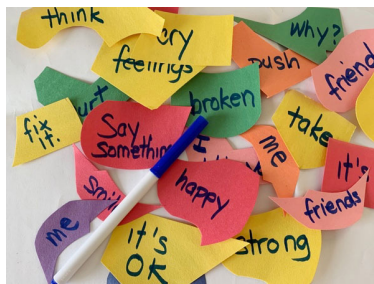
**GENRE** – What genre will you select that is best suited to convey your intent to your intended audience? What additional writing genres would work well for communicating your message?





- Ask everyone to think of a story about themselves, others, or something they heard or read. Adults can share a childhood story to help children see connections to the new one they will create.
- Have children shape their new story by considering what made the story memorable. Talk about the main point—the *intent*—of the remembered and new stories. What main idea would they like others to remember from their new story?
- Help children jot down big ideas and descriptive words that paint a mental picture of details.
- Have children identify, sketch with pencils, then paint with watercolor or marker ink the scene and main characters that convey the story's main idea.

- Talk about types of poetry that can express a story. Discuss what makes poetry a special genre to explore.
- Have children experiment with free verse poetry by writing words or short phrases on small pieces of paper, then arranging and rearranging them to create a combination that best presents the story.



- Decide on the *intended audience* and have children share their art and poems.

- Plan and practice a presentation that describes the process of remembering a story, finding a new *story within*, and writing a poem that conveys the main idea of that personal story.



- Children should respond to the feedback they heard during their presentation. They might repeat the poetry-building exercise by writing another type of poem, this time using insights from the feedback.

- Family members who heard the presentation might be inspired to create their own original poems and ask the young writers/illustrators to guide them through the creative process.



- Discuss examples of positive communication and learning that emerged as the family participated in this project, as either an audience or as a writer/illustrator. Ask everyone for ideas on how storytelling, poetry writing, and illustrating could become part of your regular routine, perhaps as a weekly family experience.

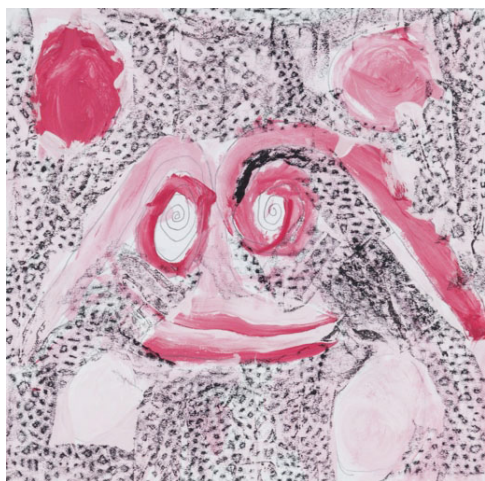
- Connect storytelling with family and cultural traditions. For all of human history storytelling has been a vehicle for sharing lessons between generations. Stories help children understand their own culture and those of others.

## For Younger Children

- Children of different ages are at different stages of literacy development. Some have mastery of letter formation and are learning to decode text from left to right and top to bottom. They can help arrange their poem's word pieces in that way. Preschoolers might not have experience in forming letters yet, but can contribute simple sketches that match the words.
- This project's poetry-building exercise helps children become flexible thinkers who explore the shifts in meaning when words are combined in different ways. Even if they cannot read the poem, each time they see a new arrangement of words and think about what is read to them, they see the power of words and how meaning can shift based on their arrangement.

## For Older Children

- Older children can arrange word phrases in creative ways and merge this technique with others they are familiar with such as haiku or haibun poetry. (Haiku is three unrhymed lines of five, seven, and five syllables. Haibun is a highly descriptive depiction of a scene or special moment that is usually involved in an actual or imagined journey that incorporates a haiku.) They might use the word and small images as a border around their main image, or add the words to the main image using a collage technique.
- Older children often are so busy learning factual content that they lack the time to process important personal experiences. This project is an opportunity for you to urge them to write about their strengths, styles, successes, and concerns. Writing poetry and creating illustrations are powerful ways to help pre-teens and teens reduce stress and confront their fears.



Aram G.



Cierra M.

## Child Reflections

- What questions helped you find and develop the story that was within you?
- How did your poem focus on the main message you identified?
- How did the art making and poetry writing inform one another?
- What aspects of this project were most satisfying or challenging? What distracted you while you worked on this project?
- What did you learn about yourself while doing this project?

## Adult Reflections

- How did the personal nature of this project help your family members learn more about each other?
- What other social and emotional projects would you like to try with your children to help build their self-awareness?
- What types of poetry would you like to explore for your personal self-expression and to help your children articulate their thoughts and feelings?

## Standards and Skill Development

Educational standards outline what children should know and be able to do. They guide educators and families on what to focus on as students learn important information, express their own ideas, and develop key skills. Standards-based projects should also evolve around children's interests and needs. This project addresses the following educational standards:

### LANGUAGE ARTS

- Determine central ideas or themes of a text. Analyze the development of a story. Summarize the key ideas and supporting details.
- Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how word choices shape meaning and tone.
- Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

### MATHEMATICS

- Include knowledge of mathematics habits of mind and operations in original writing, as appropriate.

### SCIENCE

- Explore connections across the four domains of science: Physical, Life, Earth and Space, and Engineering as they pertain to original writing.

### VISUAL ARTS

- Make art with various materials and tools to explore personal interests, questions, and curiosities.
- Demonstrate safe and proper procedures for using materials, tools, and equipment while making art.
- Elaborate on visual information by adding details in an artwork to express the meaning.
- Select and describe works of art that illustrate daily life experiences of oneself and others.