

Storytelling: Techniques

A vivid story, well told, will reach the hearts and minds of the audience.

In Speech New Zealand syllabuses the skills involved in storytelling begin at Grade 2 level in both our Speech and Drama and Public Speaking syllabuses, and are found in our Oral Communication in Schools syllabus. The skills developed through the Learning Outcomes in each grade will lead to the ability to present a vivid, well-chosen 'story'.

The following are suggested to assist teachers and students to craft their stories with ideas for structure and delivery.

Choosing the story: Ensure this is:

- Appropriate to the occasion
- Appropriate for the specific audience
- Comfortable for you to tell.

The Structure:

Keep it simple but effective:

- Choose an evocative opening
- Keep to a limited number of characters
- Set up the scene:
 - Use description to create a vivid picture
 - Use narrative to move the story on
 - Use direct speech, where appropriate, to add interest and create lively characters.

Shape the story:

- Plan an event with a clear climax (high point) and/or a punchline to end.
OR
- Plan a problem with two attempts to solve and resolution on the third

Consider:

- Triple telling
- Repetition of key phrase
- A twist in the end
- Re-incorporation of some idea dropped
at beginning of the story
- Explore even more structures in story-telling . . .

Craft the story:

- Choose vivid words to create a clear simple picture
- Adapt ideas to needs of your specific audience

Telling the story: The presentation

Connect to your audience with imaginative involvement in telling story:

- Use vivid imagination
- Create characters to deliver dialogue
- Create the mood – atmosphere – feelings
- Be fully engaged and emotionally involved in telling the story.
- Use movement and gesture to suit the story, the space and the audience.
- Consider the use of simple props and/or pictures to help connect the story with chosen audience.
- Use vocal techniques to suit the story, the space and the audience.