

Story String Directions

The goal of story strings is for students to use a few sentences from a text to make predictions about a story or book they will be reading. As the students make these predictions, it will generate curiosity and enthusiasm for the text. It is also a way to introduce some vocabulary words.

1. Select the book or story that the students will be reading.
2. Do not share the title or any other information about what they will be reading.
3. Select several sentences from the text. You are looking for sentences that will provide information about the characters, setting, and plot. Some of the information will be *right there* information; other information will be inferred.
4. Divide the students into groups equal in number to the sentences you selected. For example, if you selected 10 sentences from the text, then you will have 10 students in each group because each student will be given one sentence to share. If you need to have a group of fewer than 10, than some students will be given two sentences to share.
5. Classroom management tip: print the sentence sets on different colors of paper. Students are then assigned to a group by color. For example, if you have 30 students and you selected 10 sentences from the text, you will need three groups: blue, pink, and yellow. If you have 30 students but selected 6 sentences from the text, you would need 5 groups: blue, pink, yellow, green, white. Everyone in the group will be sharing one sentence from the text. They must share with only their group. Each group will have the same sets of sentences.
6. Students now mill about in their assigned color group and share sentences with one another. As they hear more and more sentences, they begin to make predictions about the text they will be reading. Explain to the students that they are NOT to try and put the sentences in chronological order. Their goal is to make predictions and inferences about the characters, setting, and plot.
7. Allow students 10 to 15 minutes to share their sentences and begin making predictions.
8. After all of the groups have had opportunities to share, you will lead a large group discussion.
9. Ask the class, “What do you know about the characters?” As they share information, ask them if that is *right there* information or are they making an inference (*author and me*)? For example, a student might say, “One of the characters is a grandmother.” Ask the student, “Is that right there info or did you have to infer?” If someone in the group had a sentence that used the word Grandma, it is right there information – found directly in the text. Or perhaps a student says, “The man who plays music is crabby.” Ask the student if it is *right there* info or an inference. If the text did not specifically say that the musician was crabby, then how do they know that? They have made an inference from his actions. The student might say, “One of the sentences showed him yelling. And in another sentence, he was chasing children out of his yard. Based on that, he seems crabby.”
10. Continue in this same fashion to gather information about the setting and the plot.

Story Strings Method 2 Directions

This method of story strings works well for primary students or for groups of students who might need a more controlled environment.

1. Select the text students will be reading.
2. Select the sentence clues.
3. Students remain in their seats.
4. Reveal the sentences to the students one sentence at a time.
5. As each sentence is revealed, ask the students for predictions about characters, setting, and plot.
6. Demonstrate how they can use information from several sentences to make predictions.