



Stories Alive! Story Machine Residency Program

Classroom Curriculum

Developed by Jeanne Reneaux

Updated by Zoey Belyea, 2018

The Story Machine Program is a whole-school, K-5 literacy program. We provide 3-week long literacy instruction workshops taught by literacy specialists with expertise in guiding students to hone their technical writing skills while letting their imagination flourish. Stories Alive publishes all complete, original student work (writing & illustrations) in a book made available in their school and local public library. We also create a live show of original student work, developed and performed by professional actors and perform in the school day for the entire student body.

Stories Alive provides 14 consecutive school days of writing and literacy instruction to all students in the school chosen grade. Grade level options range from 2-5. Stories Alive instruction focuses on National, State, and district standards in writing and integrates with concepts and ideas identified by classroom teachers.

Program Outcomes

- o Students in Stories Alive residency classrooms will measurably improve in at least one of our targeted writing areas: Word Choice, Organization, Ideas, and Voice
- o Students in Stories Alive classrooms will identify as capable writers. Students will express confidence in their ideas and the desire to continue writing.
- o Students in Stories Alive classrooms will cultivate targeted 21st Century skills: Collaboration, Problem Solving, Creativity, and Resilience.
- o Students across Stories Alive campuses will identify their ideas as meaningful, valuable, and worthy of sharing.

Outline of Residency Sessions

Day 1 -- Assessments & Surveys

Activity	Time	Description
Introductions & Agreements Materials: Agreements Poster Markers	10 mins	<p>Purpose: create the space, establish expectations</p> <p>Welcome to Stories Alive!</p> <p>Instructor: <i>"Hi I'm _____ and I'm so excited to be in your classroom every day for the next three weeks. Today we're going to get to play some games to help get to know each other, and then we will do a little bit of writing. I'm here to help you learn more about how to be a writer, so don't worry if you're not sure exactly how to write a story today. The writing that we do today is really helpful for me to know more about you all, and for Stories Alive to make our program even better for other students in the future."</i></p> <p><i>"You all have lots of thing you agree to do when you're in your classroom. Who can give me one example of something you all do in your classroom to make sure that everyone stays healthy, happy, and safe?"</i></p> <p>Students list classroom rules.</p> <p><i>"These agreements are great things for us to follow together when I'm here. But we also have a few special Stories Alive agreements for our time together. First, we're all going to have LOTS OF IDEAS. This means we have lots of opportunities to try things out. You might not get to finish every single story that you start, but maybe if you have extra time during another class activity or at home you can finish your stories then. Second, we're going to agree to SAY YES TO EVERYONE'S IDEAS. Sometimes we're going to be writing stories in groups, so it's important to incorporate input from every member of the group. Those two things, combined with all the awesome agreements you have in your classroom, will help us all have a really fun time together"</i></p>
Yes Circle, Name Circle	10 mins	<p>Purpose: Learn names, acknowledge each student, focus energy</p>
Materials: None		<p>Students get in a circle in a clear area of the room or stand up and push their chairs in at their desks.</p>

		<p>Each student says their name, and every other student says. "YES!" super loud like that person's name is the best news you've heard all day.</p> <p>Next, each student says their name and does one motion with their body. All other students repeat the name and motion.</p>
Survey Assessments	15 mins	Purpose: to asses students' attitudes towards writing
Materials: Pre-Assessment Surveys		<p>Instructors pass out pre-assessment surveys. Explain that surveys are anonymous; this means you don't write your name on it. Explain that assessments help us to know your class better and to make our program better for students in the future.</p> <p>Instructor explains how to fill out assessments by circling the number that best matches how you feel about each sentence.</p> <p>Instructor reads each question out loud and reminds students what to circle if they really agree, what to circle if they really don't agree, etc.</p>
Story Assessments	15 mins	Purpose: to asses students' writing proficiencies
Materials: Pre-Assessment Story sheets		<p>Instructors pass out story sheets.</p> <p>Every student should write a story to the best of their ability. Remind students to be creative and that they will not be graded on these stories.</p>
Journals	5 mins	Purpose: Build excitement for the rest of the residency
Materials: Journals Markers, crayons, etc.		<p>As students finish with assessments, instructor passes out one journal to each student and encourages them to write their name, decorate the cover, etc.</p> <p>Explain that these journals will live in your classroom and we will use them each week to practice writing our own stories.</p>

Day 2 -- Basic Story Structure

Activity	Time	Description
Introductions & Agreements	10 mins	Purpose: create the space, establish expectations
Materials: Agreements Poster		Each day instructor reviews agreements. Asks students to read agreements aloud, and all students to give thumbs up to recommit to the agreements that help make Stories Alive a fun learning experience for everyone.
Yes Circle, Name Circle	10 mins	Purpose: Learn names, acknowledge each student, focus energy, warm up body & voice.
Materials: None		<p>Students get in a circle in a clear area of the room or stand up and push their chairs in at their desks.</p> <p>Today, explain that everyone in this class is a writer <i>and</i> an actor. Actors need three important tools to create stories: body, voice, and imagination.</p> <p>Each student says their name, and every other student says. "YES!" super loud like that person's name is the best news you've heard all day.</p> <p>Next, each student says their name and does one motion with their body. All other students repeat the name and motion.</p>
Prop Transformation	10 mins	Purpose: encourage imagination & lots of ideas
Materials: One unique object (roll of masking tape, handkerchief, plastic cup, etc.)		<p>Students stay in circle.</p> <p>Instructor: <i>"Today we're going to write one story as a whole class. Our agreements will be really important, but it will also be important for everyone to have their big imaginations turned on so we can come up with lots of ideas. We warmed up our voices by saying our names, and our bodies by doing everyone's motions, but we still need to warm up our imaginations. I have this prop here with me. What is this usually used for? (student response). Great! So we're going to use this prop as anything except what we usually use it for."</i></p> <p>Student go around the circle, each student says "this is not a roll of tape, it's a doughnut" and uses the tape as if it were a doughnut, or steering wheel, or monocle. Everyone else in the class repeats, "It's a doughnut." And does the same motion with their hands.</p>

Class Story	30 mins	Purpose: familiarize students with story process and story spine
Materials: Story Spine Poster Blank sticky paper markers		<p>Students sit on the floor if there is open space or return to sit at their desks.</p> <p>Brainstorm:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -- Students are given 1 minute to come up with as many characters as possible. Instructor tries to write every idea up on the board. -- Students are given 1 minute to come up with as many settings as possible. Instructor tries to write every idea up on the board. -- Instructor chooses one character and one setting to make more fun/interesting/specific. <p>First Draft:</p> <p>Instructor leads students through story spine, getting input for each sentence from the class.</p> <p>Story Spine:</p> <p>Once there was [character] [setting]. He/She/It/They Wanted... And every day... Until one day... Because of this... Until finally... And ever since that day...</p> <p>Revise:</p> <p>Instructor briefly models the revision process. They circle words that could be more fun or more specific. They ask questions to help the story make more sense, they help the class come up with a title for their story</p> <p>If time allows, students should get up on their feet and make a frozen picture of the beginning, middle, and end of the story. Tableaux skills will be further explained in the next class meeting.</p>

Day 3 — Word Choice

Activity	Time	Description
Introductions & Agreements	10 mins	Purpose: create the space, establish expectations
Materials: Agreements Poster		Each day instructor reviews agreements. Asks students to read agreements aloud, and all students to give thumbs up to recommit to the agreements that help make Stories Alive a fun learning experience for everyone.
Yes Circle, Name Circle	10 mins	Purpose: Learn names, acknowledge each student, focus energy, warm up body and voice
Materials: None		<p>Students get in a circle in a clear area of the room or stand up and push their chairs in at their desks.</p> <p>Each student says their name, and every other student says. “YES!” super loud like that person’s name is the best news you’ve heard all day.</p> <p>Next, each student says their name and does one motion with their body. All other students repeat the name and motion.</p>
Big, Bigger, Biggest	10 mins	Purpose: Define “verbs” and “adjectives”, practice making words more descriptive, specific, and extreme
Materials: None		<p>Instructor: <i>“We’re going to do an activity that helps us to think about the words we use. When we’re writing stories, we try to be as specific as possible (Ask students to define the word specific). Sometime when we want to be more specific, a good way to do that is to make out word more extreme (bigger or smaller). We’re going to do an activity using our bodies to show how words get more specific when you make them more extreme. I will be calling volunteers to make frozen shapes with their bodies that show a picture of certain words. These frozen shapes are called tableaux, and they are always silent and still. Let’s all practice making some tableaux together. Everyone in the room, stand up next to your chair, push your chair in, and on the count of three, make the shape of you doing your favorite activity. Great, shake it out. Now on the count of three make the shape of your favorite snack, make sure to freeze with your body and your voice, so I can see the shape you’re making as I walk around the room. Awesome, you got it. Everyone can sit back down in their chair. I will call</i></p>

		<p><i>on people quietly listening and raising their hands to make more shapes during this activity."</i></p> <p>a. What is a verb? Get responses from students.</p> <p>b. Instructor models word choice through tableaux: Walk (show example) Jog (show example) Sprint (show example). Use tableaux that are still and silent. Explain that each word is different and more extreme, more descriptive than the last.</p> <p>c. get an example verb from the students (or choose one to start). Choose one volunteer to make the shape of that verb. Now think of a more extreme way to say that verb, call on another student to make that shape. The first student stays at the front so everyone can see the different. Repeat with a third, more extreme, verb and student. You can repeat this process with a few verbs. Try to get some that get bigger as they go and some that get smaller.</p> <p>c. What is an adjective? Get responses from students.</p> <p>d. Repeat (c) with adjectives (mad, sad, happy, etc) instead of verbs</p>
Class Story	20 mins	Purpose: integrate word choice into story writing process
Materials: Story Spine Posters Big sticky paper Markers		<p>Write a class story using the story spine. In the first draft, don't ask for more specific verbs, let the students use the language they choose naturally. Go back through the story. Ask for more details about characters and settings, adding adjectives and encouraging the students to make them more extreme or more specific.</p> <p>In each sentence, circle one or two words (usually adjectives or verbs) to replace with a more extreme or more specific word. You can also ask for more details (how did he run? How long was she asleep, etc). There is also sometimes the opportunity to replace a noun with a more specific noun (changing she ate a snack to she slurped a banana smoothie. Changing shoes to rainbow boots with wings, etc). Ask questions like, What kind? How did s/he feel? What was ___ like? And how questions that don't necessarily have to do with plot structure (we'll get to organization late). How many? How long? How big? In what way?</p>
Tableaus of Class Story	10 mins	Purpose: Practice performance skills

		<p>Talk about the last step in the writing process: publish. Publish means to share your work with others, and with Stories Alive we publish by acting things out.</p> <p>Have the students act out the class story using tableaux. Either you can have the whole class build a tableaux for each sentence or section of the story, or you can narrate the story and cue tableaux as appropriate E.G. Instructor: <i>“Once there was a rainbow princess...okay everyone stand up near their desks and show me with your body what you think the rainbow princess looked like. And she wanted a fuzzy dog. You choose, do you want to make a shape of the fuzzy dog or show me what the rainbow princess looked like when she really wanted that dog”</i></p>
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Day 4 — Word Choice (Characters)

Activity	Time	Description
Introductions & Agreements	10 mins	Purpose: create the space, establish expectations
Materials: Agreements Poster		Each day instructor reviews agreements. Asks students to read agreements aloud, and all students to give thumbs up to recommit to the agreements that help make Stories Alive a fun learning experience for everyone.
Yes Circle, Name Circle	10 mins	Purpose: Remember names, acknowledge each student, focus energy
Materials: None		<p>Students get in a circle in a clear area of the room or stand up and push their chairs in at their desks.</p> <p>Each student says their name, and every other student says. “YES!” super loud like that person’s name is the best news you’ve heard all day.</p> <p>Next, each student says their name and does one motion with their body. All other students repeat the name and motion.</p>
Character Maps	10 mins	Purpose: to use specific, descriptive words to describe characters
Materials: Character map worksheets Pencils		Instructors pass out Character Maps

Crayons/markers		<p>Students have individual time to fill out character maps, with some prompting and help from instructors/teachers/volunteers. Go through each section bit by bit as a class, to make sure everyone understands the instructions. Reminder about words that are specific and more extreme</p> <p>Stories Alive Instructors becomes the host of a talk show. A few students can bring up their character maps and get interviewed as their character. Brief lesson on changing voice and/or walk when acting out characters.</p>
Character interviews	20 mins	Purpose: practice performance skills, discover more details about characters
Materials: Filled in Character Maps		<p>Stories Alive Instructors becomes the host of a talk show. Ask students to help come up with the name of the talk show. A few students can bring up their character maps and get interviewed as their character. Instructor may provide a brief example of changing voice and/or walk when acting out characters.</p>
Individual Story Writing	10 mins	Purpose: Explore writing creative characters, practice story spine and process
Materials: Journals Pencils		Students are given time at the end of class to write stories in their journal.

Day 5 — Dialogue

Activity	Time	Description
Introductions & Agreements	10 mins	Purpose: create the space, establish expectations
Materials: Agreements Poster		Each day instructor reviews agreements. Asks students to read agreements aloud, and all students to give thumbs up to recommit to the agreements that help make Stories Alive a fun learning experience for everyone.
Yes Circle, Name Circle	10 mins	Purpose: Remember names, acknowledge each student, focus energy
Materials: None		<p>Students get in a circle in a clear area of the room or stand up and push their chairs in at their desks.</p> <p>Each student says their name, and every other student says. "YES!" super loud like that person's name is the best news you've heard all day.</p>

		Next, each student says their name and does one motion with their body. All other students repeat the name and motion.
I'm Not Who You Think I Am	20 mins	Purpose: think about character's unique voices
Materials: None		<p>In this game one student at a time changes their voice and words while other students try to guess who said the mystery phrase.</p> <p>All students sit with their heads down at their desk. Instructor chooses one student to come to the front of the room and say the mystery phrase. They may change the words and they may change their voice.</p> <p>Mystery Phrase" I'm not who you think I am." Example of changing the phrase for different characters; "Like, you have literally no idea who I am." "You shall never learn my secret identity" "No one knows me!" After mystery student says the phrase, other students guess who said it.</p>
Individual Writing	10 mins	Purpose: continue work on characters, introduce dialogue in writing
Materials: Journals Pencils		<p>Instructors briefly talks about how to write dialogue, especially review punctuation.</p> <p>Students are given time to expand their stories from the previous day or to write new stories, incorporating a conversation between characters.</p>
Author's Chair	10 mins	Purpose: students share their ideas and support one another
Materials: Author's Chair		Instructor chooses a few students to sit in the Stories Alive Author's Chair and read all or part of a story they've written in their journal so far.

Day 6 — Word Choice (settings)

Activity	Time	Description
Introductions & Agreements	10 mins	Purpose: create the space, establish expectations
Materials: Agreements Poster		Each day instructor reviews agreements. Asks students to read agreements aloud, and all students to give thumbs up to recommit to the agreements that help make Stories Alive a fun learning experience for everyone.
Yes Circle, Name Circle	10 mins	Purpose: Remember names, acknowledge each student, focus energy
Materials: None		<p>Students get in a circle in a clear area of the room or stand up and push their chairs in at their desks.</p> <p>Each student says their name, and every other student says. “YES!” super loud like that person’s name is the best news you’ve heard all day.</p> <p>Next, each student says their name and does one motion with their body. All other students repeat the name and motion.</p>
Yes, Let’s	10 mins	Purpose: explore lots of settings; think about works that describe <i>environment</i> .
Materials: None		<p>Instructor chooses one student to choose an environment. That student says “Let’s go to the moon.” All students silently act out what it would look like to be on the moon.</p> <p>For the first few examples, instructor models descriptive words. “<i>Everyone looks really bouncy on the moon, everyone is moving slow, Kate is playing in the moon dust, etc</i>”. For later examples, instructor can call on students to provide these descriptive observations.</p>
Table Stories (picture prompt)	20 mins	Purpose: students collaborate, students practice describing settings in rich detail
		<p>Students will write stories in their table groups or small groups made by the Instructors.</p> <p>Each small group will get a picture. They will brainstorm characters and settings from this picture. They will choose one character, one setting, and follow the story spine to write a story inspired by the picture, using lots of specific descriptive words. Instructors, teachers, and assistants will facilitate collaboration among group members.</p>

Story Sharing	10 mins	Purpose: students practice performance skills, students collaborate to “publish” their story
		Each group will have a chance to act out their story, or to share using tableaus. Instructor will read story while the group acts out.

Day 7 — Organization

Activity	Time	Description
Introductions & Agreements	10 mins	Purpose: create the space, establish expectations
Materials: Agreements Poster		Each day instructor reviews agreements. Asks students to read agreements aloud, and all students to give thumbs up to recommit to the agreements that help make Stories Alive a fun learning experience for everyone.
Yes Circle, Name Circle	10 mins	Purpose: Learn names, acknowledge each student, focus energy
Materials: None		<p>Students get in a circle in a clear area of the room or stand up and push their chairs in at their desks.</p> <p>Each student says their name, and every other student says. “YES!” super loud like that person’s name is the best news you’ve heard all day.</p> <p>Next, each student says their name and does one motion with their body. All other students repeat the name and motion.</p>
Class Story (story scramble)	30 mins	Purpose: create a challenging story to model organization
Materials: Story Spine poster Story Spine slips		<p>Instructor leads brainstorm for characters and setting. Instructor chooses one character and setting to use for this class story and adds more details.</p> <p>Instructor breaks class up into groups. Each group is assigned one piece of the story spine. Groups write their sentences without knowing what other groups are writing.</p>

		<p>Instructor intro organization. Organization is what helps your story make sense. Today we've written a story that makes no sense, but we're going to ask questions to help ourselves add details, rearrange things, and give each event in our story a reason for happening.</p> <p>Instructor writes each sentence on the board (leaving lots of space for edits). Slowly the instructor will lead the class through revision for the scrambled story, asking lots of questions until it all makes sense.</p>
Act Out Class Story	10 mins	Purpose: practice performance skills, "publish" story
Materials: None		Instructor leads class to act out story in tableaus or with motion, depending on the energy of the class.

Day 8 — Organization (Beginnings)

Activity	Time	Description
Introductions & Agreements	10 mins	Purpose: create the space, establish expectations
Materials: Agreements Poster		Each day instructor reviews agreements. Asks students to read agreements aloud, and all students to give thumbs up to recommit to the agreements that help make Stories Alive a fun learning experience for everyone.
Yes Circle, Name Circle	10 mins	Purpose: Remember names, acknowledge each student, focus energy
Materials: None		<p>Students get in a circle in a clear area of the room or stand up and push their chairs in at their desks.</p> <p>Each student says their name, and every other student says. "YES!" super loud like that person's name is the best news you've heard all day.</p> <p>Next, each student says their name and does one motion with their body. All other students repeat the name and motion.</p>
What are you doing?	10 mins	Purpose: Students practice building on ideas that come from others
Materials: None		Students stand in a circle. One student enters the circle and begins an activity (e.g. brushing teeth). The next student says "What are you doing?" The first student

		replies with an activity <i>different from the activity they are already doing</i> (e.g flying an airplane with a broken wing. The second student must say yes! To that student's idea, and begin acting out that activity.
Partner Stories	20 mins	Purpose: Students collaborate to organize stories, students share ideas
Materials: Journals, pencils		<p>Students break up into pairs. Students work together to brainstorm characters and settings, and then choose one character and one setting to both write about.</p> <p>Students switch journals. Each student writes the beginning of a story about that character. Students should write the following sentences as the beginning:</p> <p>Once there was [character] [setting]. He/She/It/They Wanted... And every day...</p> <p>Then students switch journals back and write the ending to the story their partner started.</p>
Author's Chair	10 mins	Purpose: students share their ideas and support one another
Materials: Author's Chair		Instructor chooses a few students to sit in the Stories Alive Author's Chair and read all or part of the story they wrote with their partner.

Day 8 — Organization (Endings)

Activity	Time	Description
Introductions & Agreements	10 mins	Purpose: create the space, establish expectations
Materials: Agreements Poster		Each day instructor reviews agreements. Asks students to read agreements aloud, and all students to give thumbs up to recommit to the agreements that help make Stories Alive a fun learning experience for everyone.
Yes Circle, Name Circle	10 mins	Purpose: Learn names, acknowledge each student, focus energy
Materials: None		Students get in a circle in a clear area of the room or stand up and push their chairs in at their desks.

		<p>Each student says their name, and every other student says. “YES!” super loud like that person’s name is the best news you’ve heard all day.</p> <p>Next, each student says their name and does one motion with their body. All other students repeat the name and motion.</p>

Day 9 — Organization (Conflict)

Activity	Time	Description
Introductions & Agreements	10 mins	Purpose: create the space, establish expectations
Materials: Agreements Poster		Each day instructor reviews agreements. Asks students to read agreements aloud, and all students to give thumbs up to recommit to the agreements that help make Stories Alive a fun learning experience for everyone.
Yes Circle, Name Circle	10 mins	Purpose: Learn names, acknowledge each student, focus energy
Materials: None		<p>Students get in a circle in a clear area of the room or stand up and push their chairs in at their desks.</p> <p>Each student says their name, and every other student says. “YES!” super loud like that person’s name is the best news you’ve heard all day.</p> <p>Next, each student says their name and does one motion with their body. All other students repeat the name and motion.</p>

Day 11 — Main Idea

[illegible]

Day 12 — Peer Revision

[illegible]

Day 13 — Story Readings and Performances

[illegible]

Day 14 — assessments

Activity	Time	Description
Introductions & Agreements	10 mins	Purpose: create the space, establish expectations
Materials: Agreements Poster		Each day instructor reviews agreements. Asks students to read agreements aloud, and all students to give thumbs up to recommit to the agreements that help make Stories Alive a fun learning experience for everyone.
Yes Circle, Name Circle	10 mins	Purpose: Learn names, acknowledge each student, focus energy
Materials: None		<p>Students get in a circle in a clear area of the room or stand up and push their chairs in at their desks.</p> <p>Each student says their name, and every other student says. “YES!” super loud like that person’s name is the best news you’ve heard all day.</p> <p>Next, each student says their name and does one motion with their body. All other students repeat the name and motion.</p>
Survey Assessments	20 mins	Purpose: to asses students’ attitudes towards writing
Materials: Post-Assessment Surveys		<p>Instructors pass out pre-assessment surveys. Explain that surveys are anonymous; this means you don’t write your name on it. Explain that assessments help us to know your class better and to make our program better for students in the future.</p> <p>Instructor explains how to fill out assessments by circling the number that best matches how you feel about each sentence.</p> <p>Instructor reads each question out loud and reminds students what to circle if they really agree, what to circle if they really don’t agree, etc.</p>
Story Assessments	20 mins	Purpose: to asses students’ writing proficiencies
Materials: Post-Assessment Story sheets		<p>Instructors pass out story sheets.</p> <p>Every student should write a story to the best of their ability. Remind students to be creative and that they will not be graded on these stories.</p>

