



ARTS INTEGRATION AT HOME

SENTENCE-AT-A-TIME STORY

Through these arts integration activities we want to offer a few simple, creative, educational, and arts-based ways to spice up your distance learning. The directions for the activity are shared in two ways - for caregivers/teachers and for kids who can read so they can do the activity independently. Have fun, and feel free to share what you do with us.

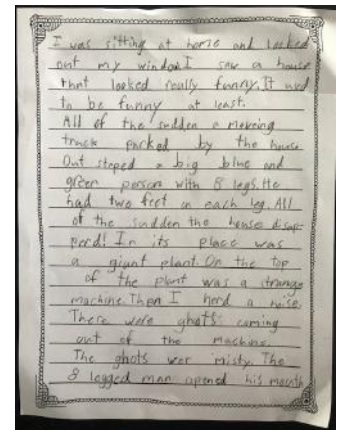
Tips for how to utilize these strategies:

- Use this strategy today, or print it out for a later date.
- Feel free to use a strategy more than once. Repetition will help students become familiar with the directions and then be able to take more ownership of sharing what they know through the activity.
- Play them for fun - you don't have to stick to talking about school information.

SENTENCE-AT-A-TIME STORY

Today's at-home activity is a classic improvisation game - Sentence-at-a-Time Story.

This activity allows kids to a) practice their creativity and b) work on sequencing, word choice, and descriptive details.



This activity is a modification of a well-known improv game - **Word At A Time Story**. You can see a longer description of the activity in the link below from the [Drama-Based Instruction](https://dbp.theatredance.utexas.edu/teaching-strategies/one-word-phrase-storytelling) website created by Drama for Schools at The University of Texas at Austin.

One-Word/Phrase Storytelling: <https://dbp.theatredance.utexas.edu/teaching-strategies/one-word-phrase-storytelling>

Sarah Coleman, Portland Ovation Co-Director of Engagement | School Programs, is a theatre educator, an arts integration specialist, and a former classroom teacher who has taught students in grades K - college as well as led professional development workshops for teachers around the country for over 15 years.





ARTS INTEGRATION AT HOME

SENTENCE-AT-A-TIME STORY

DIRECTIONS FOR CAREGIVERS/TEACHERS

Explain that you are going to create a story together, one sentence at a time. The first person starts the sentence with “Once...” After they share one sentence, the next person says a follow-up sentence that connects to and continues the story. This continues until the story finds its natural finish. See an example story on the next page.

Depending on the ages of the kids, it is helpful to set up a few parameters.

For elementary-aged students

- have them retell a story they know
- invite them to use sequencing words to start each sentence (first, next, then, finally).
- remind them to think about the parts of a story (beginning, middle, end, character, setting, etc)
- decide on a setting ahead of time to help focus the story, or decide to focus on something they are learning about.

For middle/high school-aged students

- challenge them to think about a story with narrative arc (exposition, rising action/conflict, climax, falling action, resolution)
- focus on a theme, a book character, or on something they are learning about so they can share their knowledge
- challenge them to tell a story a word at a time (each person can only say ONE word).

Then what?

- Record the story - either on a phone or by writing it down.
- You can go back and revise it adding more details and clarifying the story structure.
- You can add pictures to make it a book or turn it into a play to perform.
- You can tell another story.

Follow up questions

1. Recap the story. What happened? Who were the main characters? What was the setting? Was there a conflict and resolution?
2. How did it feel to improvise, or come up with a story without planning? Did it get easier to improvise? Why or why not?

Follow up questions allow kids to practice [reflection and metacognition](#) (thinking about one's thinking) both of which are key parts of effective learning.





ARTS INTEGRATION AT HOME

SENTENCE-AT-A-TIME STORY

DIRECTIONS FOR KIDS

Today's at-home activity is an improvisation game called Sentence-at-a-Time Story. Use what you know about writing a story to tell one on the spot.

How to do this activity

1. Find a partner, or more than one, depending on how many people are in your house (or on a video call).
2. You are going to tell a story together, one sentence at a time.
3. The first person starts the story with one sentence that begins with "Once..."
4. The next person says a follow-up sentence that connects to the previous sentence(s). Remember only ONE sentence.
5. Repeat this, one sentence at a time, until the story comes to an end.

EXAMPLE

By Cole, grade 3, Portland

I was sitting at home and looked out my window. I saw a house that looked really funny. It used to be funny at least. All of the sudden a moving truck parked by the house. Out stepped a big blue and green person with 8 legs. He had two feet on each leg. All of the sudden the house disappeared! In its place was a giant plant. On the top of the plant was a strange machine. Then I heard a noise. There were ghosts coming out of the machine. The ghosts were misty. The 8 legged man opened his mouth and the ghosts flew inside. They took over his body. Then he disappeared. Then a dragon flew out of the machine at the tops of the plants. Suddenly, I woke up. I looked out my bedroom window and saw a ghost. I didn't know if it was a dream or not but I was scared.

Tips!

- For the first story, practice retelling a story you all already know.
- Pick a setting to help give your story focus, or a topic you are learning about.
- Remember to think about the beginning, middle, and end.
- Practice using descriptive details (adjectives, emotions, the five senses)

Then what?

- Record the story - either on a phone or by writing it down.
- Go back and tell it again. How can you make it a stronger and more interesting story?
- Draw pictures to make it a book
- Turn the story into a play to perform.
- Tell another story.

