LENS Project
Seven Sentence Story

Ages  All Ages!

LENS Skill  Negotiation

Why?  When I listen to others’ ideas and build upon them with my own ideas, we can create amazing things together.

Materials  Seven Sentence Story Starters (see Directions)

Vocabulary  Improvisation (or Improv): form of live theatre in which the plot, characters and dialogue of a game, scene or story are made up in the moment.

Summary

In this activity, participants will use sentence starters and their own creativity to tell imaginative stories together. With each participant taking turns contributing a sentence to the story, everyone has the chance to practice Negotiation skills by listening to and exploring the ideas of others in order to add to and complete the story.

Directions

1.) Establish Understanding

Discuss the concept of improvisation. Improvisation means saying the first thing that comes to your mind, thinking on your feet, not preplanning what you’re going to say or do. When improvising with others it’s important to “make offers” which means contributing ideas and suggestions and to “say yes” or accept the ideas of others. This activity uses improvisation skills to create stories. Make sure everyone playing knows what contributes to strong story structure (i.e. characters, setting, rising action, and climax).

- Consider brainstorming a list of characters, situations, and/or themes to be used as suggestions in this activity.

2.) Sentence Starters

Share the sentence starters with everyone on a large piece of paper, whiteboard, or on paper copies so everyone can see them. These will be used for group stories which everyone will create together.

Each person in the group will take turns using one sentence to tell a part of a story. The next person will continue the story that has been started using the next sentence starter.

Seven Sentence Story Starters:

- Once upon a time…
- And every day…
- Until one day…
- And because of this…
- And because of that…
- Until finally…
- And ever since then…

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• Consider doing a practice round where one person tells a whole story with the sentence starters, demonstrating how to start, develop, and conclude the story within the seven sentences.

**Example 1: Fantasy/Animals**

*Once upon a time there was a turtle named Sam.*  
*And every day Sam would wander through the jungle looking for a friend.*  
*Until one day he came upon a sloth named Mortimer.*  
*And because of this Sam wondered if he might have finally met a friend.*  
*And because of that Sam began talking with Mortimer and found out they had a lot in common.*  
*Until finally Sam and Mortimer agreed to be friends and look out for each other.*  
*And ever since then Sam and Mortimer became inseparable, living out their days under the best tree in the jungle.*

**Example 2: Realism**

*Once upon a time there was a girl named Jessie.*  
*And everyday she sat on the couch, doing nothing to help around the house.*  
*Until one day her father said she must help out by doing her chores.*  
*And because of this Jessie complained.*  
*And because of that he said no more screen time until her chores are done.*  
*Until finally Jessie realized that helping out was the right thing to do.*  
*And ever since then Jessie only needs two reminders to get busy on her chores.*

3.) **Tell Stories**  
Using this seven sentence starter format, tell as many stories as time allows!

4.) **Reflect**  
Discuss or write your thoughts about the following reflection questions.

- What was easy and/or difficult about this process?
- Did everyone work together to tell a story that made sense?
- How did you make space for others in this activity?
- How did you make a plan for what to say or do?
- If there were conflicts, how did you work through them?

**Other ways to Play:**

1. Consider playing this game virtually with friends or family members.

2. Write out the stories and make illustrations as if it were a picture book.

3. For more writing practice, write a prequel (what happened before our story) or sequel (what happens after) to this story using any format you wish. Also, consider writing a monologue (one person’s perspective in a paragraph-like format) for a character of your choice.

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