



Story Element Icons

A narrative is a story told by presenting a sequence of events connected through characters, setting, a problem, and its resolution. Narrative instruction involves using telling and retelling stories to teach key language skills. Intentional narrative instruction is an evidence-based practice that can improve academic achievement and social outcomes (Spencer & Petersen, 2020).

These story elements icons were created to help students learn the general structure of a story and to support story retelling using key narrative elements. Visual icons provide a scaffold of support, helping make the abstract concept of storytelling more concrete.

The five icons provided in this set represent:

- **Character**—who the story is about
- **Setting**—where the story takes place
- **Problem**—the challenge the character needs to fix
- **Action**—what the character does to try to solve the problem
- **Ending**—how the story finishes

To Use:

1. For Teachers: Keep a large copy of the story icons on the board, referring to each story element as you read a story to students. After reading the story, use these icons to model retelling the story, highlighting key story elements. Remind students that every complete story includes each of these components.
2. For Students: Provide each student with an individual bookmark to support their retelling of the story. Students can practice story retelling in pairs after initial teacher modeling. The same icons can also serve as visual scaffolds as students create their own stories, both spoken and written.

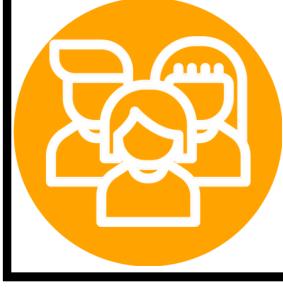
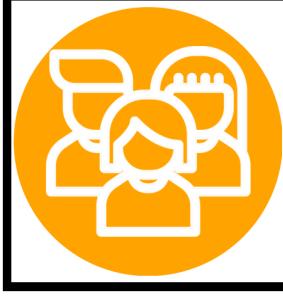
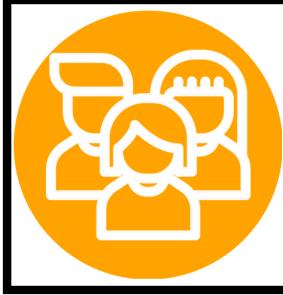
Expanding Storytelling Skills:

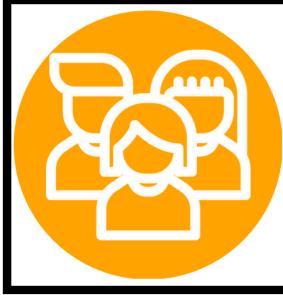
- As students develop their narrative skills, these story elements can be expanded to include additional components, such as how the character feels about the problem, the consequences of actions, and how the character feels at the end of the story.
- Once students demonstrate mastery of story structure, these visual supports can be gradually faded, allowing teachers to shift instructional focus to other language features when retelling stories, such as targeted grammar and vocabulary skills.

Reference

Spencer, T.D., & Petersen, D.B. (2020). Narrative intervention: Principles to practice. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Sciences in Schools*, 51(4), 1081–1096.
https://doi.org/10.1044/2020_LSHSS-20-00015









Character



Setting



Problem



Action



Ending