

Thinking about Storytelling Week?

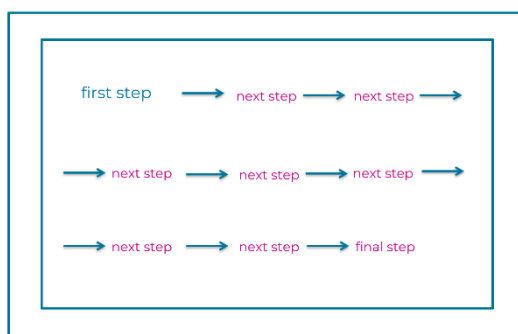
<https://literacytrust.org.uk/resources/national-storytelling-week/>

National Storytelling Week takes place each year at the start of February and is a celebration of the power of sharing stories. Here are some ideas for how metacognitive tools might be used to support children's storytelling in the primary school years.

Visible Thinking Routines: are routines to deepen pupils' thinking and to help make that thinking "visible." Thinking routines help to reveal pupils' thinking to the teacher and helps them identify and reflect on the thinking processes they are using.

Thinking Frames: are visual scaffolds to help structure thinking. Utilising Dual Coding Theory, pupils can scaffold thinking and learning with increasing confidence, skill and dexterity, just the same way as their use of physical tools for multiple everyday tasks can be developed.

Many **Visible Thinking Routines** may be useful when storytelling. The **See-Think-Wonder** routine for example provides an interesting method for introducing pictures/images or real objects/artefacts as a stimulus for discussion and response, and which could lead to storytelling orally or in writing. The stimulus would be shown to the children, who would initially describe exactly what they see, before reflecting on what they think about the stimulus and what it might make them wonder, or what questions they may have. The **Beginning-Middle-End** Thinking Routine could be used to further support this activity, which is described as a routine for "harnessing the power of narrative to observe connections, patterns, and meaning".

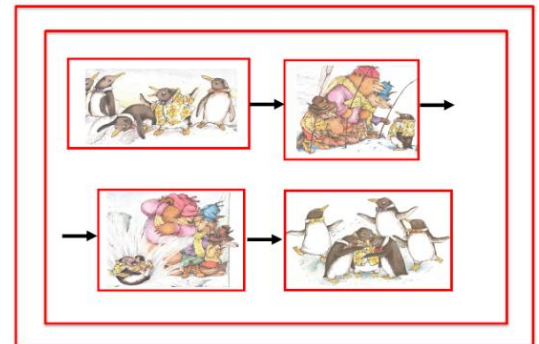


The Thinking Frames, or metacognitive visual tools also offer useful scaffolds for children's storytelling and response to stories. As stories are generally based on a narrative of events in order of time, the **Sequencing Frame** may be used to support the retelling of stories, from familiar tales in the early years to summarising key events in more complex stories in later years.

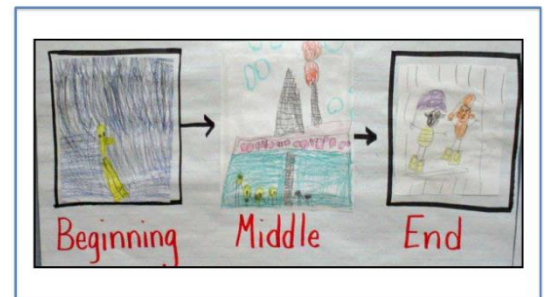
In the early years, where oral storytelling is an important stage of language and literacy development, large card arrows may be laminated to provide a visual prompt for children as they work collaboratively to recount events or retell stories. Or the Sequencing Frame can be reproduced vertically and placed on the floor to enable individual children to tell their story as they 'walk' each step.



As they move towards key stage one, teacher modelling of use of a Sequencing Frame to retell a story could be followed by opportunities for children to cut and paste key events from a story in order.



As children begin to create their own stories, simple templates can be provided in which they draw pictures or write simple sentences to identify the beginning, middle and end of a story. As children develop skills as independent writers, the Sequencing Frame becomes a useful scaffold to note the key elements of the plot of a story they wish to create.

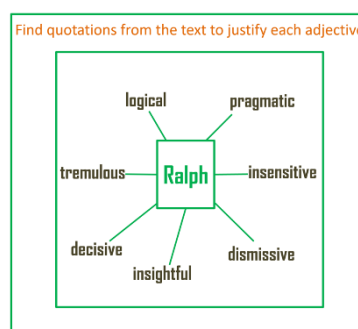
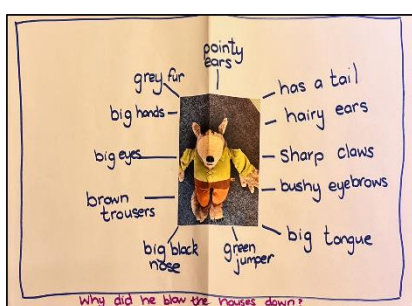


The **Defining Frame** can be used in a whole group session to record children's understanding of the features of effective stories, which can then be displayed as for reference in the classroom. At a later stage, children may be asked to create their own Defining Frame identifying the features of effective stories as an assessment.



The Defining Frame is also useful when generating lots of ideas to stimulate children’s creativity at the start of a storytelling or story writing lesson.

As children explore characterisation in stories, the **Describing Frame** is a particularly useful tool to explore their comprehension and enrich their use of descriptive language. In the early years, teachers may model completion of the Describing Frame for main characters in stories read to or by the children. As children’s capacities for independent writing develops, they will take increasing responsibility for creating their own Describing Frames and may use this technique to shape characters for stories they are telling or writing. In the examples below, note how the **Reflective Lens** might be used to assess children’s comprehension of the story and requires them to justify their responses.

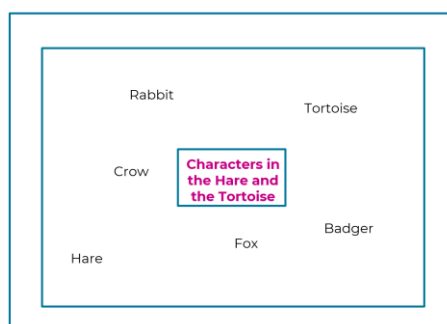


The [Step Inside](#) Visible Thinking Routine is also useful for older children to explore characterisation by tasking them to step inside the role of a character in a story they have heard or read, or who they may be writing about. Three core questions guide students in this routine:

1. What can the person or thing perceive?
2. What might the person or thing know about or believe?
3. What might the person or thing care about?

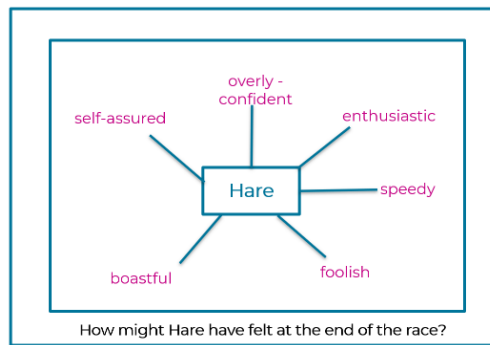
Thinking Frames might be used in the context of the story of [The Hare and the Tortoise](#), one of Aesop’s fables for example by:

- Assessing children’s memory of the main characters using a **Defining Frame**.

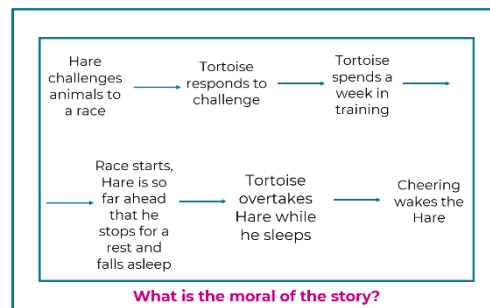


A **Reflective Lens** question could be asked challenging the children to identify their favourite character and to explain their reasons why.

- The **Describing Frame** could be used to prompt children's analysis of either of the two main characters in the story.



- Retelling the main parts of the story using a **Sequencing Frame**, with the **Reflective Lens** question asking to confirm understanding of the moral of the fable.



- The **Defining Frame** could then be used to task the children with capturing ideas for elements which they might include in their own fable, with key events then noted in a **Sequencing Frame**.