

DIRECTOR'S CHAIR: BEGINNING, MIDDLE, AND END



Kids build a short original story with a clear beginning, middle, and end, then plan it shot by shot on a storyboard like a real film crew. The site's Director's Desk page can help them try out ideas.

Learning goal Kids will plan a short story with a beginning, a middle problem, and an ending, and show it as a six-box storyboard.	Ages 6-11	Time 20-30 minutes
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Group: 1-12 kids, alone or in pairs

Materials

- Storyboard Blank printable, one per kid or pair
- Pencils, erasers, and crayons or colored pencils
- A device to open the site's Director's Desk page (optional)

Before you start

- Print the Storyboard Blank sheets.
- Think of a quick 3-sentence example story to model, such as: A snail wants to win a race. It starts way behind. It takes a shortcut under a leaf and crosses the line.
- If you'll use the Director's Desk page, open it and try it once yourself.

Step by step

- 1 Tell the example story and ask kids to spot the three parts. The beginning shows who and where. The middle has a problem. The end shows how it turns out.
- 2 Warm up out loud: go around the group and build a silly 3-sentence story, one sentence per kid.
- 3 Each kid picks their own made-up character and a place. Keep it original, not a character from a movie or show.
- 4 Answer two questions: What does my character want? What gets in the way?
- 5 Try ideas on the site's Director's Desk page, or jot them on scrap paper.
- 6 Split the six storyboard boxes: two for the beginning, two for the middle, two for the end.
- 7 Sketch each box. Stick figures are fine. Simple sketches are all a storyboard needs.
- 8 Mix up the shots. Make at least one close-up (just a face) and one far-away shot (the whole place).
- 9 Under each box, write one line of what happens or one sound effect you'd hear.
- 10 Present it: each director holds up the storyboard and tells the story box by box.

Safety

- Keep stories kind. Don't use real classmates' names in a way that could hurt feelings.
- If anyone wants to share a finished storyboard online, a parent or caregiver decides, and it goes up without the kid's full name or photo.

Talk about it

- What was the problem in the middle of your story?
- How did your character change from the beginning to the end?
- Why would a film crew draw a storyboard before they start filming?
- When would you use a close-up instead of a far-away shot?
- If you added one surprise in the middle, what would it be?

Make it easier

Use three boxes, one each for beginning, middle, and end. A grown-up can write the captions while the kid draws.

Take it further

Add a twist in the middle, then turn one storyboard box into a short flip book. Or add sound cues from the Foley activity and perform the story with sound effects.

No screen? No problem

Skip the Director's Desk page. Label three paper plates B, M, and E and have kids tell the story out loud while holding up each plate, then draw it afterward.

Sources

Poetics, Part VII (trans. S. H. Butcher), The Internet Classics Archive, MIT. <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/poetics.1.1.html>

Online Learning: Storyboards, ACMI (Australian Centre for the Moving Image).

<https://www.acmi.net.au/education/school-program-and-resources/film-it-storyboards/>

Not tied to any curriculum standard. Adapt freely for your group. Free to print for personal, classroom and event use.