

Story Elements

Use your kitchen tabletop to review the key elements that make up a story. This activity is fun for a family or group of children to do together!

Supplies

- storybook
- paper tablecloth to fit your kitchen table
- crayons
- paper
- additional art supplies (optional)

Preparation

Read a story with your children. Spread the paper tablecloth over your kitchen table and put out the crayons and art supplies.

What to Do

Explain to your learners that all fictional stories are made up of four basic parts: the characters, the setting(s), a problem, and a solution to that problem. Talk with your learners and identify the main character, supporting characters, and the problem(s) they faced in the story. Ask questions to promote discussion about the ways in which the characters interacted with one another and problem-solved together.

Then take some time to discuss the setting where most of the story took place. Have your children describe the setting using their senses. What did the place look like? What scents might they smell if they visited this place? What types of textures might they be able to touch there? Encourage your youngsters to use their descriptions of the setting as a guide while they draw it on the "tablecloth." Tell them you want the setting to fill the whole tablecloth. They will need to work together to determine who will draw what. If desired, your children can use additional art supplies to enliven their drawings (i.e. glue cotton balls in the sky for clouds or sprinkle glitter in an ocean.)

When the setting is finished, it's time to create the story characters. Children can simply draw a picture of a character, color it, and cut it out. Or they could use Popsicle sticks and make their story characters into puppets. There is no right or wrong way to do this. Have fun and let your children's imaginations soar!

A wonderful finale to this activity is to re-create the story using the setting and character puppets. Ask one child to narrate the story in his own words or to re-read the book. Allow the other children in the group to move the characters throughout the scene in conjunction with the narrator's words.

This is a fun performance to share with other family members or friends!