

Myths & Legends

Why do we tell stories?

By Charlotte Rance

Segment: Adult

Level: Intermediate

Materials: The reading passage, worksheet, and blank paper for story writing

Teaching Objectives	Learning Aims
To raise awareness of the importance of storytelling	I can explain why people use stories
To understand the main content of a paragraph and select an appropriate heading	I can summarise the content of a paragraph by choosing an appropriate heading
To develop group working skills through discussion and collaborative writing	I can work effectively as part of a group to make decisions
To use creative thinking skills to find a solution to a problem	I can work as a group to create a story



The lesson

1. Write the words *myths and legends* on the board and ask students to work in pairs to come up with a definition. Choose one or two pairs to share their definitions and encourage the other students to respond to each other's ideas.
2. Explain that in today's lesson you will be looking at why myths and legends exist. Arrange students in small groups. Ask students to work together to come up with any reasons they can think of for why people tell each other stories. At the end of the discussion elicit any ideas that the groups came up with and write their ideas on the board.
3. Hand out copies of the reading passage and read the introduction as a class. Explain to students that the five numbered paragraphs each mention a different reason for the importance of stories. Read the six potential headings for the paragraphs as a class and check how many of their ideas are included. Remind the students they will only need five of the six headings to complete the activity.
4. Encourage the students to work on their own to match the headings to the paragraphs. Once students have completed the headings ask them to check their answers with a partner before checking as a class.

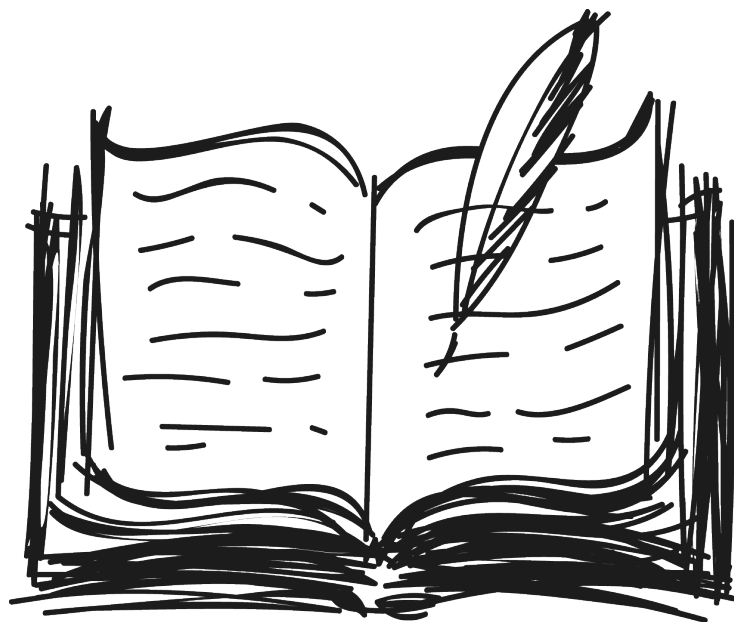
Answers

1. b
2. f
3. e
4. a
5. c

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5. Arrange the students in small groups of four or five and hand out copies of the storytelling worksheet. Ask students to look at the two discussion questions at the top of the page. Allow students time to discuss their ideas in their groups and then take feedback.
6. Explain to the students that they are going to work together on a piece of collaborative writing. Ask the students to look at the five topic areas in the vocabulary box on the worksheet and choose one that they want to write about.
7. Students should now work in their groups to brainstorm any problems connected to their chosen topic area. When they have come up with some potential ideas for their story, encourage them to choose one for their group to write about.
8. Explain to the groups that they should now work collaboratively to write their stories. Each group's story should be a maximum of 250 words and should contain a message for the listener connected to the group's chosen topic. Monitor the groups as they write their stories and help with grammar and vocabulary when necessary.
9. When the groups have completed their stories, ask all the students to sit together in a group. Ask one volunteer from each group to read their story to the class. At the end of each story, encourage the class to share their opinions on the moral of the story.



Myths & Legends

Why do we tell stories?

Wherever you travel in the world, you will find people telling stories of their homelands, families, landscapes, histories and much more besides. They are a part of every culture on the planet and many of these stories have been passed down through many generations.

1. _____
Stories were often told to bring communities together. They helped people understand difficult concepts and united the way they thought. Stories often provided a message or value and members of the community were giving it their vote. Things that people found scary, infuriating or desirable all found their way into the stories and they were passed on because people wanted to be sure that other people felt the same way about these things.
2. _____
Stories have long been used to help people understand how they should behave. You may be able to think of some well-known stories like this; which not only explain how you should behave, but also explain what happens if you don't. In many of these stories, the pain or embarrassment which the characters suffer is caused by their own stupidity, greed, dishonesty, carelessness or pride.
3. _____
In the 21st century, we understand much about how our world works and why things happen as they do. We know why the sun rises and sets each day, why it gets dark every night and why the moon appears in different places and is different sizes at different times, even why an eclipse happens. But, before scientists were able to explain the natural world people created many strange and wonderful stories to try to explain why such things happened.
4. _____
Before the invention of the internet, before computers and TV, how did people entertain themselves and their friends? Dancing, singing and music have been popular for many centuries but, for even longer, people all over the world have entertained each other by telling stories. People would gather together and listen to storytellers who wandered from town to town, entertaining the crowds wherever they went.
5. _____
Nowadays, the education systems in a country are responsible for teaching us most of what we need to know. However, this is still a fairly recent method of learning. Until the 20th century, most people around the world weren't able to read, so stories were a way of learning. They were often used by older members of a community to pass on the history, such as the outcome of battles and tales of courage, and important knowledge about the land they lived in and where danger might be lurking.
 - a. **Just for entertainment**
 - b. **Bringing people together**
 - c. **Passing on knowledge**
 - d. **For money and fame**
 - e. **To explain how the world works**
 - f. **Controlling behaviour**

Regardless of why stories were told, many of these old myths and legends remain popular today. Although communities may spend less time swapping stories around the fireside, the tradition of storytelling continues in the form of urban legends, television and film. Many older stories also live on in current day carnivals or festivals, which have their roots in a very different past.

Myths & Legends

Why do we tell stories? - Worksheet

Discussion

1. Do you think that stories are a useful way to teach people? Why? Why not?
2. The article mentions that “*storytelling continues in the form of urban legends, television and film*”. Can you think of any examples of these that teach people a lesson?



Writing a story

You are going to work together to write a story that will teach your classmates an important lesson. Look at the topics below and choose one idea for your group to write about. Think about any problems connected to your chosen topics and brainstorm a lesson you would like to teach through your story.

Social media	Education	Money
The environment		Discrimination

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