

Developing Language through Narrative Skills

Based on Ideas from: Speaking and Listening Through Narrative, Becky Shanks and Helen Rippon, Black Sheep Press.

Ideally this programme be worked on 2 or 3 times a week for half an hour.

Who (orange)	Where (red)	When (green)	What happened (yellow)	The End (blue)
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Make 5 A5 sized coloured cards with the words and symbols on, as above.

1. Using the **WHO** card: collect pictures/photos/toys to discuss “Who is this?” Also pass the **Who** Card around the group – ask “Who are you?” You can also do activities like drawing favourite TV characters, asking questions like “who do we see if we are not well?” “Who comes down the chimney at Christmas?” etc. Spend at least one week working on “who”.

2. Using the **where** card: collect pictures/photos to discuss “Where is this?”
Pass the **where** card around the group and ask a “where?” question e.g. where did you eat breakfast? Read out sentences and ask “where” questions – “where was the man?” “Where was the car?” etc. Draw pictures of your favourite place.
Spend at least one week working on “where?”

- 3 Using the **who** and **where** Cards : put the cards on the table and sort the pictures into “who” pictures and “where” pictures.

- 4 Discuss very familiar/traditional stories, or have simple stories available to read, and practise identifying **who** and **Where** - characters and settings.

Encourage the children to talk about who's where in pictures, in the classroom, at home, in stories etc..

Spend at least a week doing points 3 and 4.

- 5 Make lists of words for children to underline with orange (who words) and red (where words) e.g. baker, you, in a tree, John, in the house, next to the desk, at school etc. Or read out words that are on cards and the children can place them either on the “who” card, or the “where” card.

- 6 Go through simple sentences underlining who (orange) and where (red) words.

You can also play games with toys – who’s under the box? Teddy’s under the box! Where’s teddy? He’s under the box! Etc. Children could also play hide and seek and tell you where someone was. Can you find some pictures to match who goes where? E.g. a clown at a circus.

When you are confident that **who** and **where** are understood and can be identified, and the children can use a sentence with a person and a place in it correctly, move on to 7.

7 Introduce the **when** Card: pass the card round the group and ask simple ‘when’ questions e.g. when do you get up etc, when do you go to bed and so on. Spend at least one week on this. Find some objects or pictures that relate to a particular event, e.g. goggles, tinsel, a fork, a pillow, and ask when you use them.

8. Discuss time generally. Introduce concepts of days, weeks, months, seasons etc if the children are old enough to understand this, and earlier concepts if not, for example morning – get up etc., night - bed time and so on. Spend at least one week on this.

9. Introduce other time vocabulary: now, later, earlier, soon, never etc. Check children’s understanding of these terms and teach them if they don’t know them.

10. Discussing the same familiar stories from 4, talk about when the story is set, **when** the action happen.

Go through the story identifying **when** /time words.

11. Now **who,** **where** and **when** Sort/underline words (orange, red, green) from stories and lists of words. Read “stories” that are up to a few sentences long only e.g. “Joshua came home from school and felt very hungry, so he made himself a sandwich.” Ask who was the story about, when did he make himself a sandwich, where was he? Spend at least one week doing this.

12. Introduce **what happened** Yellow card. This can be linked to the concept the of a verb if appropriate. Mime an action and hold up the **what happened.** Write card the verb on the board. Play a “Simon Says” type game – talk about all the different doing words/verbs/actions they can do. Can the children think of some actions to do?

13. Write down some sentences for the children to underline (yellow) the verb. (It may be appropriate to discuss use of the past tense at this point. It may require extra work).

14. Identify actions in the familiar stories and underline them (yellow). Read the beginning of a story and ask what do the children think happened next.

15. You could now present a colour-coded sequence of familiar story beginnings,

e.g. **one day** **goldilocks** **went for a walk** **in the woods**
green orange yellow red

16. Can the children retell some story beginnings using the question cards to prompt themselves.

17. Can the children retell an event/experience they've had like this,

e.g.	yesterday	I	went	to a shop	to buy milk
	green	orange	yellow	red	yellow

18. Work through these events and discuss what happened in

The End.

19. Work through the familiar stories and discuss what happened in	<table border="1"><tr><td>The End</td></tr></table>	The End
The End		

20. Work now, using picture prompts (e.g. pictures from a story book) and the colour-coded cards to retell short "stories" i.e. 3-4 sentence maximum. You can make colour-coded footprints and tell part of the story as you step on each footprint. Spend at least one week doing this.

21. As a group you can take turns to retell the very familiar traditional stories, again using colour-coded cards to prompt each section. Take at least 2 weeks for this activity. At this point it might be worth introducing some connectives for co-ordinating /subordinating clauses (for older children).

22. As a group you can make up stories. Discuss characters

orange

 and settings

red

 what happened

yellow

 and when

green.

 What else might happen

yellow.

 How will it end

Blue.

23. Start stories and encourage children to predict what will happen.

24. Retell some of the traditional stories with errors. Can the children identify which colour-coded card contained the error?

25. Can the children retell events in sequence cards using these concepts?

26. Can the children retell an event with several actions (e.g. when they went on holiday?) using all the concepts.

You can further develop all the colour-coded cards by working on descriptions, adjectives, adverbs etc to extend these activities.

Please note: If the written activities are too difficult, try these ideas:

- Read out a word that you have on a card. The children can listen then place that card on the appropriate coloured question card.

- Read out simple sentences. The children can hold up the appropriate card when they hear a certain part e.g. they hold up the orange card when they hear a person named.

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