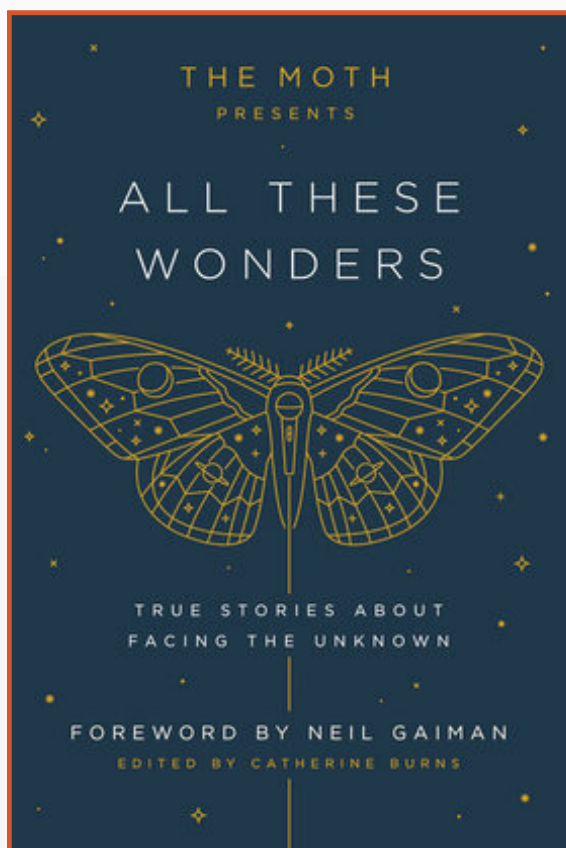


# STORIES & STORYTELLING FOR ADULT EMERGING READERS

FEATURING "THE MOTH PRESENTS ALL  
THESE WONDERS"





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# Stories and Storytelling for Adult Emerging Readers

## Introduction

This resource kit developed from two distinct needs that I heard repeated time after time within the very few first days of my time at Colorado State Library and continuing to this day:

1. The need to **support adults who are developing their English language skills** (usually referred to as Limited English Proficient, or LEP, individuals) because English is not their first language and they are not in formal education settings where English language skills are taught.
2. The need to **support adults** for whom English *is* the first and, often, *only* language spoken but **for whom literacy, reading fluency, and perhaps generally communication skills are not very strong**. These adults are either unable to or uninterested in seeking formal education in college settings. They may not be interested in workforce readiness. These adults can have some underlying learning disability that perhaps was never diagnosed *or* these adults can have just never had the desire to practice reading.

Regardless of the “type of adult” in either of the scenarios presented above – and posed to me, there was a common secondary concern—we may even call it a point of frustration: Many libraries *want* to serve adults, but don’t see those adults coming to programs. We *want* to foster community. We *want* people to feel like they belong. *But* adults aren’t coming to the library for traditional library programs like they used to.

The “Stories and Storytelling for Emerging Adult Readers” resource kit posits that libraries can do both: support emerging adult readers *and* create a community that self-perpetuates, with programs that:

- Are familiar to librarians/ library staff, i.e., book-based programs
- Seem—to library patrons and visitors—to align with what they know of and expect from libraries, i.e., book-based programs, story-focused programs
- Require reading of short texts rather than long texts

- Include reading texts that use natural language, i.e., conversational style writing, less complex writing, realistic and reality-based situations
- Feature real-life stories that are easily relatable to a majority of adults with varied lived experiences
- Require the borrowing/ use of a single book with many chapters/ sections so participants do not need to “find” books for each meeting (reducing barriers to access)
- Engage both *listening* comprehension and *reading* comprehension

And most importantly: **Create a safe-space for adult readers to make mistakes, learn from others, connect with stories that are similar to *and* different from their own, and feel like they *belong* in their neighborhoods, among their neighbors, and at their libraries.**

To support these outcomes, this kit is available for a three-month loan period.

Each kit is intended to provide libraries three things:

- A book club/ book discussion group set for your library (10 copies for patrons to borrow over their time as a program participant)
- A recommended program outline and additional materials for each of the included programs (there are three programs included in this kit)
- Ideas for doing *something else entirely!* or for expanding the activities

## Who is this kit for?

This kit is meant to be a starting point to help libraries reach and support different populations within their communities. It includes activities for:

Adults experiencing intimidation, fear, or anxiety about their literacy skills, reading fluency, or English language speaking skills

## Inside this binder

- Activities & Programs
- Worksheet: Identifying Community Resources
- Worksheet: Facilitating Community Conversations

- Additional Resources
- Kit Contents List (on clipboard)
- Feedback Form (on clipboard)

## Feedback and Sharing

Please help us improve this kit by sharing your comments, experiences, and suggestions. You can contact Kit Support ([KitSupport@coloradovirtuallibrary.org](mailto:KitSupport@coloradovirtuallibrary.org)) for guidance at any point along your journey. When you return the kit, please fill out and include the Feedback Form found on the clipboard. With your permission, we will update this kit's Online Resources page on [cslkits.cvlites.org](http://cslkits.cvlites.org) with the ideas and activities your library shares. Help us learn from your experiences and share those learnings with others.

## Loan period

The loan period for the **Stories and Storytelling for Adult Emerging Readers** is **three months**.

If you would like to keep it longer, please contact Kit Support ([KitSupport@coloradovirtuallibrary.org](mailto:KitSupport@coloradovirtuallibrary.org)) to make arrangements before the loan period expires. If it is not on hold for another institution, we will do our best to extend the loan by another month.

## Returning the kit

As you prepare to return the kit, please verify that it is complete using the *Kit Contents* checklist on the clipboard. Also, be sure to include your completed Feedback Form so that we can improve the experience for everyone.

# Kit Contents

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Please verify that this resource kit is complete before returning it to Colorado State Library at Courier Code 912. You may copy any of the pages from the binder, or download a copy from the key shaped USB.

You can also find information on <https://cslkits.cvlites.org/category/programs/>

Contact Kit Support ([KitSupport@coloradovirtuallibrary.org](mailto:KitSupport@coloradovirtuallibrary.org)) with any questions.

## Items

- Resource Kit binder
- Green key shaped USB “flash” drive
- Program: **Reading Stories Like Ours**
  - “First the Words/ Then the Ideas” Bookmarks *for participants to take and keep*
  - Bookmarks double-sided *master copy*
- Program: **Storytelling with Pictures**
  - “Storytelling with Pictures” full presentation
    - PPT slides print out in folder
    - Full presentation PPT in USB
  - Excerpt from *Kindred* by Octavia Butler
  - Blank comics pages
  - Drabbles collection
- Program: **Building Our Own Story**
  - Blank comics pages
  - Game/ Boxed Card Deck: **Moth: A Game of Storytelling**
- Resources: **Storytelling**
- Book: *The Moth Presents: All These Wonders* (10 copies)
- Book: *How to Tell a Story* (from The Moth) – 1 copy, for reference/ program facilitator use
- Clipboard with evaluation form to **complete** (we really want your feedback)

**Note: Please use all master copies for making copies** and then return them with the kit. All print outs are also available in PDF on the USB drive.

## Program:

# Reading Stories Like Ours

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## Introduction

“Reading Stories Like Ours” will be a familiar program for many adult services librarians. Like a typical book discussion group or book club program, it relies on a group of participants and a shared reading experience. Most book-based programs feature a single, long text discussed per session or meeting, while this program does not.

Instead, this **program is centered on a group reading of a single book of collected shorter works over a series of meetings**. The featured text is a non-fiction text with short non-fiction writings from different writers. Book recommended for the “Reading Stories Like Ours” program:

- Contain short non-fiction and essays
- Include works by non-professional writers and storytellers
- Feature stories about relatable, day-to-day experiences

They have been selected for their wide accessibility due to relative ease of reading and for their real-world experience-based themes. Most of the writers featured in these works are not professional writers. The stories are told in conversational, natural language, making the writing accessible to most general adult readers – even those with limited English language proficiency.

Additionally, the titles selected have companion audio or video media to support readers at different levels of English language proficiency, reading fluency, or preferred formats for engaging with stories.

The format of the “Reading Stories Like Ours” program is designed to lower the barriers to entry for participants. There is no requirement for reading between sessions, though it is encouraged. Participants are encouraged to attend each session, but attendance is not required to participate. The goal of the program is two-fold: to support reading and speaking fluency/ comprehension, and to create a supportive community of readers.

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Although this program is not an English language learning class, it may function as a space for English language learners to practice reading fluency and engage in conversation to improve both reading and oral fluency.

**In this program description, you will find:**

- **Framework/ description of program and meeting activities**
- **Book list (also included in the resource kit)**
- **Links to audiovisual/ digital performances of each story from the books**

## Intended Audience

Adults, general readers, English language learners with some English language proficiency

## Activity Goals

Participants will:

- Practice vocabulary, fluency, and reading comprehension through short, non-fiction stories and essays
- Engage in facilitated small group discussion using vocabulary, concepts, and themes from readings
- Establish a community centered on shared experience (reading, storytelling)

## Description

“Reading Stories Like Ours” is a story discussion group that works through a text of collected non-fiction stories and essays at a slow pace, reading two stories per week on their own, then coming together to listen to/ view/ read one story together and discuss it during their meeting. The recommended books for this program have companion audiovisual/ digital formats and participants experience them together in their meeting.

Meetings may be scheduled weekly or biweekly, but it is not recommended that they are scheduled *less* frequently as a main component of this program is shared experience with a goal of community-building.

The basic components of this program are:

- Selection of book (recommended book list below and included in this resource kit)



- Weekly/biweekly meetings (60-90 minutes)
- Assignment of 1-2 stories per meeting
- Pairing a text-based selection with a companion audiovisual/ digital presentation
- Reading along with audiovisual/ digital presentation during meeting
- Review of unfamiliar terms/ concepts
- Discussion of stories, themes, terms, etc.

With that basic framework, “Reading Stories Like Ours” can (and should) be adapted to the needs of your community, the reading level and/or other needs and wishes of your participants, and your library’s capacity.

## Book: The Moth Presents All These Wonders

- Book link: [https://themoth.org/all\\_these\\_wonders](https://themoth.org/all_these_wonders)
- What is the Moth? <https://themoth.org/>
- Find live Moth events in Colorado: <https://themoth.org/events>
- *The Moth Presents All These Wonders* is also available in audiobook on CD and in e-collections in many library systems. Check your Hoopla and Overdrive/Libby collections for e-audiobooks.

### Links for audio/performance of each story:

#### The eternal music of the spheres

- The moon and stars talks /Tara Clancy
  - <https://themoth.org/stories/the-moon-and-stars-talks>
- Unusual normality /Ishmael Beah
  - <https://themoth.org/stories/unusual-normality>
- The quest for Chad /Arthur Bradford
  - <https://themoth.org/stories/the-quest-for-chad>
- The house of mourning /Kate Braestrup
  - <https://themoth.org/stories/the-house-of-mourning>
- The girl from Beckenham /Suzi Ronson
  - <https://themoth.org/stories/the-girl-from-beckenham>
- God, death, and Francis Crick /Christof Koch
  - <https://themoth.org/stories/god-death-and-francis-crick>

#### Things I've seen

- Fog of disbelief /Carl Pillitteri
  - <https://themoth.org/stories/fog-of-disbelief>

- The two times I met Laurence Fishburne /Chenjerai Kumanyika
  - <https://themoth.org/stories/the-two-times-i-met-laurence-fishburne>
- It matters a great deal /Kevin McGeehan
  - <https://themoth.org/stories/it-matters-a-great-deal>
- A tale of two dinners /Bliss Broyard
  - <https://themoth.org/stories/a-tale-of-two-dinners>
- Walking with RJ /Stephanie Peirolo
  - <https://themoth.org/stories/walking-with-rj>

#### Keeping the lid on

- Go the %&# to sleep /Adam Mansbach
  - <https://themoth.org/stories/go-the-f-ck-to-sleep>
- Panic on the road to Jericho /Nadia Bolz-Weber
  - <https://themoth.org/stories/panic-on-the-road-to-jericho>
- Jenny /Samuel James
  - <https://themoth.org/stories/jenny>
- Déjà vu (again) /Cole Kazdin
  - <https://themoth.org/stories/deja-vu-again>
- Call me Charlie /Josh Bond
  - <https://themoth.org/stories/call-me-charlie>
- Modern family /Sara Barron
  - <https://themoth.org/stories/modern-family>
- R2, where are you? /Tig Notaro
  - <https://themoth.org/stories/r2-where-are-you>

#### Grace rushes in

- The shower /Tomi Reichental
  - <https://themoth.org/stories/the-shower>
- Cut /Josh Broder
  - <https://themoth.org/stories/cut>
- A phone call /Auburn Sandstrom
  - <https://themoth.org/stories/a-phone-call>
- Who can you trust? /Mary-Claire King
  - <https://themoth.org/stories/who-can-you-trust>
- A new home /Dori Samadzai Bonner
  - <https://themoth.org/stories/a-new-home>
- Greener grass /Jane Green
  - <https://themoth.org/stories/greener-grass>
- As if I was not there /Peter Pringle
  - <https://themoth.org/stories/as-if-i-was-not-there>

### Like a man does

- Stumbling in the dark /John Turturro
  - <https://themoth.org/stories/stumbling-in-the-dark>
- Coming of age in a mausoleum /George Dawes Green
  - <https://themoth.org/stories/coming-of-age-in-a-mausoleum>
- Downstairs neighbors /Shannon Cason
  - <https://themoth.org/stories/downstairs-neighbors>
- Undercover in North Korea with its future leaders /Suki Kim
  - <https://themoth.org/stories/undercover-in-north-korea-with-its-future-leaders>
- My grandfather's shoes /Christian Garland
  - <https://themoth.org/stories/my-grandfathers-shoes>
- Leaping forward /Cybele Abbett
  - <https://themoth.org/stories/leaping-forward>

### To face the fear

- Prom /Hasan Minhaj
  - <https://themoth.org/stories/prom>
- But also bring cheese /Kate Tellers
  - <https://themoth.org/stories/but-also-bring-cheese>
- Tired, from New York /Jessi Klein
  - <https://themoth.org/stories/tired-from-new-york>
- An impossible choice /Sasha Chanoff
  - <https://themoth.org/stories/an-impossible-choice>
- Then you will know! /Moshe Schulman
  - <https://themoth.org/stories/then-you-will-know>
- The price of freedom /Noreen Riols (the title matches the text of The Spy Who Loved Me)
  - <https://themoth.org/storytellers/noreen-riols>

### By every claim of love

- Summer camp /Meg Wolitzer
  - <https://themoth.org/stories/summer-camp>
- The weight of a ring /Amy Biancolli
  - <https://themoth.org/stories/the-weight-of-a-ring>
- Light and hope /Bethany van Delft
  - <https://themoth.org/stories/light-and-hope>
- Kidneys and commitments /Gil Reyes
  - <https://themoth.org/stories/kidneys-and-commitments>
- On approach to Pluto /Cathy Olkin
  - <https://themoth.org/stories/on-approach-to-pluto>

- Forgiveness /Hector Black
  - <https://themoth.org/stories/forgiveness>
- California gothic /Taylor Negrón
  - <https://themoth.org/stories/california-gothic>

## Book: This I Believe II

- Book link: <https://thisibelieve.org/store/this-i-believe-ii-paperback/>
- What is "This I Believe"? <https://thisibelieve.org/>
- *This I Believe II* is also available in audiobook on CD and in e-collections in many library systems. Check your Hoopla and Overdrive/Libby collections for e-audiobooks.

## Links for audio/ performances of the stories:

- Robin Baudier: The Strange Blessing That Brought Me Home
  - <http://thisibelieve.org/essay/26077/>
- Terry Ahwal: Finding the Strength to Fight Our Fears
  - <http://thisibelieve.org/essay/4609/>
- Quique Aviles: I Will Take My Voice Back
  - <http://thisibelieve.org/essay/22871/>
- Steve Banko: A 'Silent Night' That Brought Healing
  - <http://thisibelieve.org/essay/9025/>
- Bob Barret: Living With Integrity
  - <http://thisibelieve.org/essay/25667/>
- Amelia Baxter-Stoltzfus: Returning to What's Natural
  - <http://thisibelieve.org/essay/13023/>
- Alice Brock: Making It Up As I Go Along
  - <http://thisibelieve.org/essay/35505/>
- Brigid Daull Brockway: A Busybody's Guide to Improving the World
  - <http://thisibelieve.org/essay/24636/>
- Davie Buetow: Teaching a Bad Dog New Tricks
  - <http://thisibelieve.org/essay/19213/>
- Mary Chapin Carpenter: The Learning Curve of Gratitude
  - <http://thisibelieve.org/essay/30433/>
- Jon Carroll: Failure Is a Good Thing
  - <http://thisibelieve.org/essay/23043/>

- Betsy Chalmers: The Faith That Brings Me Peace
  - <http://thisibelieve.org/essay/13296/>
- Christine Cleary: The Deeper Well of Memory
  - <http://thisibelieve.org/essay/10417/>
- Corinne Colbert: A Marriage That's Good Enough
  - <http://thisibelieve.org/essay/26796/>
- Wayne Coyne: Creating Our Own Happiness
  - <http://thisibelieve.org/essay/24791/>
- Cortney Davis: A Way to Honor Life
  - <http://thisibelieve.org/essay/18108/>
- Dennis Downey: We Never Go Away
  - <http://thisibelieve.org/essay/23039/>
- Tamar Duke-Cohan: The Questions We Must Ask
  - <http://thisibelieve.org/essay/2070/>
- Joel Engardio: Learning True Tolerance
  - <http://thisibelieve.org/essay/27932/>
- Bela Fleck: Doing Things My Own Way
  - <http://thisibelieve.org/essay/23041/>
- Robert Fulhum: Dancing All the Dances As Long As I Can
  - <http://thisibelieve.org/essay/34413/>
- Michelle Gardner-Quinn: A Reverence For All Life
  - <http://thisibelieve.org/essay/31461/>
- David Gessner: A Feeling of Wildness
  - <http://thisibelieve.org/essay/31307/>
- Jimmie Dale Gilmore: All the Joy the World Contains
  - <http://thisibelieve.org/essay/22084/>
- David Greenberger: As I Grow Old
  - <http://thisibelieve.org/essay/27462/>
- Ernesto Haibi: Untold Stories of Kindness
  - <http://thisibelieve.org/essay/138/>
- Ivory Harlow: Peace Begins With One Person
  - <http://thisibelieve.org/essay/9527/>
- Tony Hawk: Do What You Love
  - <http://thisibelieve.org/essay/22870/>
- Barbara Held: Combating the Tyranny of the Positive Attitude
  - <http://thisibelieve.org/essay/34187/>

- Becky Herz: My Husband Will Call Me Tomorrow
  - <http://thisibelieve.org/essay/18027/>
- Roald Hoffmann: The Tense Middle
  - <http://thisibelieve.org/essay/22869/>
- Jeffrey Hollender: Living in the Here and Now
  - <http://thisibelieve.org/essay/31109/>
- Jake Hovenden: Inner Strength from Desperate Times
  - <http://thisibelieve.org/essay/26941/>
- Chris Huntington: Becoming a Parent Is a Gift
  - <http://thisibelieve.org/essay/27541/>
- Alex Anderson: Finding Redemption Through Acceptance
  - <http://thisibelieve.org/essay/36740/>
- Annaliese Jakimides: Paying Attention to the Silver Lining
  - <http://thisibelieve.org/essay/3583/>
- Ann Karasinski: There Is No Blame, Only Love
  - <http://thisibelieve.org/essay/20253/>
- Kevin Kelly: The Universe Is Conspiring to Help Us
  - <http://thisibelieve.org/essay/39783/>
- Susan Cooke Kettredge: We All Need Mending
  - <http://thisibelieve.org/essay/31064/>

## Materials Needed

- Book club copies of *This I Believe II* and/ *The Moth Presents: All These Wonders*
  - Copies will be retained by members of the group for the duration of your program which will depend on how often you set up meetings and how long you intend to work with stories from the books. **One copy of these books may be good for six months!** It is recommended that you do not select all the stories from one of the books but, instead, select according to your membership. You may also decide to ask your attendees to select which one or two stories they'd like to "assign" the group to read for the following session.
- **First, The Words; Then, The Ideas** book marks with guided prompts and questions
  - Printable PDF of four versions of the bookmark are available in the USB and some are provided in this resource kit (take them and use them!!!)

- **Optional, but recommended:** Meeting room where you can play the audio and/or project the video of performances/ recordings of the stories that are linked above

## Promotion

Make a plan for promoting this activity or program. Your plan doesn't have to be extensive, but it should address:

- The people involved and their roles;
- Budget;
- The overall message;
- Any existing library marketing or branding guidelines;
- How you will promote the activity, which could include:
  - Social media
  - Website
  - Email newsletter
  - Printed materials like posters or bookmarks
  - Cross-promoting with partner organizations
  - Local news media
- Creating promotional materials, such as graphics, press releases, or printed materials;
- Timeline

## Extending the Activity

The “Telling Stories Like Ours” program included in this resource kit is a potential expansion of this activity. Likewise, programs for the following lend themselves to overall themes of the books recommended for this activity: the value of personal stories and sharing stories in building community.

- Scrapbooking
- Creative writing
- Storytelling
- Art journaling
- Dream journaling

# Telling Stories Like Ours Activity, Part 1: Storytelling with Pictures

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## Introduction to “Telling Stories Like Ours” Series

“Telling Stories Like Ours” is a **two-part storytelling program**.

- **Part 1: “Storytelling with Pictures”** exposes participants to storyboarding and graphic narratives.
- **Part 2: “Building Our Own Story”** guides participants in identifying “stories” that can be drawn from real-life events that have occurred in their lives.

**The individual programs (Part 1, Part 2) can be standalone events or can be held as a series.** If it is held in a series, it is recommended that Part 1 be held first as Part 2 builds on the work of Part 1.

The “Telling Stories Like Ours” programs and/or series can be facilitated in isolation or in conjunction with the “Reading Stories Like Ours” book discussion program. If it is held in conjunction with the “Reading Stories Like Ours” program, it is recommended as a **capstone to the “Reading Stories” program**.

The goal of the “Stories Like Ours” program duo – “Reading Stories Like Ours” and “Telling Stories Like Ours” – is to create community through shared experiences. The “Telling Stories” series encourages **participants to see the value of their own life experiences** so that they may share those experiences – *their* stories with others. The stories of our lives are interesting and valuable. Our lives are collections of stories just like the books from the “Reading Stories Like Ours” program and book list. In the “Telling Stories Like Ours” program, we are encouraged to create a community of stories that, like those books, becomes a greater narrative of our community.

## Storytelling with Pictures (Part 1/2 of Series)

“Storytelling with Pictures” is a 90–120-minute (1.5-2-hour) program. In the first twenty minutes of the program, a facilitator presents the concept of storyboarding in familiar

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ways: movie scenes and comics panels. **Presentation slides are included in this kit with facilitation guide/ script.** After the presentation, the facilitator will guide participants through their own illustration of flash fiction.

## Intended Audience

Older adults, adults, young adults, teens

## Activity Goals

Participants will:

- Define “storyboarding,” “panels,” “speech bubbles,” and related terms
- Examine graphic narratives and/or representations of key story elements including character, plot, and sequence
- Match text to illustration for example story excerpts
- Create illustrated sequences from provided micro-writing (e.g., dribbles, drabbles)

## Description

“Storytelling with Pictures” is a 90–120-minute (1.5-2-hour) program. In the first twenty minutes of the program, a facilitator presents the concept of storyboarding in familiar ways: movie scenes and comics panels. **Presentation slides are included in this kit with facilitation guide/ script as well as a video of the presentation facilitated (without participants).** After the presentation, the facilitator will guide participants through their own illustration of flash fiction.

The ideal **space** for this program will include **tables** where participants can sit in **either small groups or alongside one another**. They will need table on which they can draw. The space should welcome collaboration, sharing of resources like color pencils and blank paper, and opportunity for participants to encourage one another as they are working on their own illustrations. **Facilitators should be able to walk around** and examine participants’ work, open to question/ answer, and offering encouragement.

Because a presentation will be projected, this **space should also include a projection screen and laptop/ computer set-up** through which a PowerPoint presentation and YouTube video can be viewed by all participants.

## 20 minutes: Examining Pictures for Story

- Presentation begins with a video link to the storyboarded sequence of the room spinning scene in *Inception*. Through lecture and questioning, participants learn how visual storytelling media uses drawings and illustration to map plot and key points in action sequence.
- Participants are shown a page of the graphic novel adaptation of that story (*Kindred* by Octavia Butler). They are asked to identify elements of the page. Key terms are discussed and identified – panel, character, speech bubble, narration, setting, background, foreground, etc. They are asked to discuss what is happening based on the single page they're shown.
- Participants are then given an excerpt of a story in print. They are asked to read the selection (on their own or aloud as facilitator sees fit and as time permits), and identify (highlight, underline) on the paper what elements are illustrated on the graphic novel page shown.
- Facilitator guides participants through discussion to compare/ contrast and identify key details necessary in relating story through pictures. Questions can include:
  - Do you think this page successfully captures the story selection? Why/ why not?
  - What elements from the printed story can you see on the graphic depiction?
  - What is missing?
  - There are fewer words on the screen than on the page. How does the artist convey meaning without words?

## 30-60 minutes: Illustrating Key Elements

- Facilitator ensures that each participant has at least 2 drabble/ dribble examples from which they can select a story to illustrate. Define the terms:
  - Flash fiction: very short story that didn't really happen. This program uses these flash fictions because they are short – so they don't require a lot of time or pages to illustrate – and because they leave a lot of room for imagination on the part of the illustrator.  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flash\\_fiction](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Flash_fiction)
  - Drabble: A story exactly 100 words in length.  
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drabble>

- Dribble: A story that is 50-55 words in length.  
<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Minisaga> (aka “dribble”)
- Facilitator guides participants through identification of key elements of the story examples and asks participants to note on scrap paper answers to the following:
  - Who are the characters in your story?
  - What details are given about the way the character(s) appear? If none that’s OK! That means you can create them for yourself.
  - Where does this story take place?
  - What key elements – other characters, objects, etc. – are necessary for your story?
  - What small events occur in your story? List them. Example “Chris drops a coin. The coin falls beneath the sofa.” Or “Maria falls. Maria’s skins her knee.” Find the simple, small events that occur in the story.
- Remind participants that each box or panel on their blank drawing page will contain a picture of a small, simple event that happens in their dribble/ drabble.
- **Now, we draw!** Be encouraging throughout this time. Don’t rush participants, but encourage them to commit their ideas to paper and, further, encourage them to add color. Allow for and model erasing, embracing mistakes, starting over, or changing stories. But, most importantly, encourage people who don’t see themselves as artists to illustrate. Pictures can be as simple or as complex as individuals feel is appropriate. No work is judged or criticized in this program.
- **Keep time** and remind participants as time nears the final “Sharing & Reflection” portion of the program.

## 10-40 minutes: Sharing & Reflection

During this time, participants are asked to **share their experience of storyboarding** or adapting their flash fiction to illustration. They are asked to read the dribble/ drabble they selected and can present their panels. They can speak to the choices they made in adapting their work.

Ask if anyone else chose the same flash fiction to adapt. Encourage – but do not require – those who adapted the same stories to speak to their choices in illustration.

Throughout the sharing and reflection section of this program, use the key terms discussed earlier: storyboarding, panel, character, plot, events, etc.

## Materials Needed

Materials below are provided in the USB included in this resource kit. They are also available for download from [kit webpage]

- Dribbles and drabbles (provided, but can also be found online via simple Google search)
- Blank comic book panel pages (master copies provided)
- Print copies of *Kindred* excerpts (master copy provided)
- “Storytelling with Pictures” PowerPoint Presentation (provided in USB, printed out in PDF w/ speaker notes in binder)

Materials below should be provided by the library.

- Color pencils
- Pens
- Erasers
- Scrap paper (for note-taking)
- Highlighters

## Promotion

Make a plan for promoting this activity or program. Your plan doesn't have to be extensive, but it should address:

- The people involved and their roles;
- Budget;
- The overall message;
- Any existing library marketing or branding guidelines;
- How you will promote the activity, which could include:
  - Social media
  - Website
  - Email newsletter
  - Printed materials like posters or bookmarks
  - Cross-promoting with partner organizations
  - Local news media
- Creating promotional materials, such as graphics, press releases, or printed materials;
- Timeline

## Extending the Activity

**The recommended extension activity is Part 2 in the Stories Like Ours Program: Building Our Own Stories.** Below extending the activity ideas are suggested for the “Stories Like Ours Program” as a whole.

Storytelling programs can be a launchpad for community storytelling and sharing in a variety of ways.

Libraries may:

- Hold a storytelling event where participants may invite family, friends, and others to attend.
- Invite participants to share their graphic narrative work (e.g., comic book-like pages) on library social media, in library displays, etc.
- Publish a community literary magazine featuring transcribed stories from program participants.
- Facilitate other storytelling, creative writing, and/or journaling programming.

The “Storytelling with Pictures” series may also act as a launchpad for:

- Our Story Bridge <https://www.ourstorybridge.org/>
- StoryCorps Mobile Tour <https://storycorps.org/mobile-tour/>
- We Are Colorado from History Colorado <https://www.historycolorado.org/we-are-colorado>

# Telling Stories Like Ours Activity, Part 2: Building Our Own Story

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## Introduction to “Telling Stories Like Ours” Series

“Telling Stories Like Ours” is a **two-part storytelling program**.

- **Part 1: “Storytelling with Pictures”** exposes participants to storyboarding and graphic narratives.
- **Part 2: “Building Our Own Story”** guides participants in identifying “stories” that can be drawn from real-life events that have occurred in their lives.

**The individual programs (Part 1, Part 2) can be standalone events or can be held as a series.** If it is held in a series, it is recommended that Part 1 be held first as Part 2 builds on the work of Part 1.

The “Telling Stories Like Ours” programs and/or series can be facilitated in isolation or in conjunction with the “Reading Stories Like Ours” book discussion program. If it is held in conjunction with the “Reading Stories Like Ours” program, it is recommended as a **capstone to the “Reading Stories” program**.

The goal of the “Stories Like Ours” program duo – “Reading Stories Like Ours” and “Telling Stories Like Ours” – is to create community through shared experiences. The “Telling Stories” series encourages **participants to see the value of their own life experiences** so that they may share those experiences – *their* stories with others. The stories of our lives are interesting and valuable. Our lives are collections of stories just like the books from the “Reading Stories Like Ours” program and book list. In the “Telling Stories Like Ours” program, we are encouraged to create a community of stories that, like those books, becomes a greater narrative of our community.

## Building Our Own Story (Part 2/2 of Series)

In “Building Our Own Story,” participants storyboard a story from *their own life* using the blank comic pages and panels used for the “Storytelling with Pictures” activity (Part 1 of 2 of

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the series). **If this program is done independently – not in combination with or following the “Storytelling with Pictures” program that’s OK!**

In this program, participants are asked to jot down interesting “stories” from their own life.

Tip: This program will be most effective if participants come to the program with ideas of what stories they want to tell/ share. If this is being done in tandem with the “Storytelling with Pictures” activity, make sure you prompt your participants to think of events that have occurred in their lives that they can develop into stories for the “Building Our Own Story” workshop.

The facilitator prompts them to think of different times in their life that they can jot down as potential stories they will storyboard and then share. Participants select a story and then get to sketching it. Elements of story are discussed, prompting participants to come up with something they can share. Then, participants share their stories with the group.

**Although this is a visual activity where participants illustrate stories, this is not a comic book creation activity nor is it an art class. The *story* is what’s important. Drawings will be bad! Coloring will be wonky and weird! Stick figures will be involved!**

Storytelling – much like the things that inspire our stories – can be fun and messy and challenging and humbling. It is all those things *and* is also amazing.

What is important is that stories are shared.

## Intended Audience

Older adults, adults, young adults, teens

## Activity Goals

Participants will:

- Reflect on their lives to identify meaningful moments they can craft into stories
- Identify key story elements including character, plot, and sequence from their real life
- Create illustrated sequences based on their story outlines
- Share their stories with the group
- Listen to stories from other participants

## Description

“Building Our Story” is a 90-120 (1.5-2 hour) **story crafting and storytelling program**. Roughly plan on half of the time spent on participants creating their comic book page of the stories and the second half spent on sharing the stories. There are primarily four parts to this program:

1. Participants are prompted to identify moments in their lives that can be crafted into short stories that will be shared with the group.
2. Participants select one of their moments to outline, considering elements of story including character, sequence, and plot. They
3. Participants create a bullet point list of key “scenes” – the amount of bullet points will be determined by the blank comic book page they opt to use but typically no more than 5.
4. Participants share their comic book page and tell the story that they’ve illustrated.

Challenges to anticipate:

- The inevitable “Nothing worth telling has ever happened to me” to get them to identify moments in their lives. **One of the goals of this program is to help people see value in the stories of their own lives which, first, means identifying stories in their own lives.** Everyone has a story. Most of us have too many to count.
- The also inevitable **too many bullet points**. Yes, lots of little things happen to add up to the big story that we want to tell. Editing is a part of the process. Asking probing questions and assuring participants that it’s OK to let go of some of the little things to focus on the big things is key to this program.
- Too many storytellers and too little time. The dream “problem”! If it is clear that it will take too much time to dedicate “the stage” to each storyteller, then break up the room into smaller groups – maybe even pairs – to have them share with one another their stories. **You should not sacrifice time on either the story crafting or storytelling parts of this program. Both are keys to this program.**

### 5-10 minutes: Overview & Introductions

Introduce yourself and the program.

If this is a new group of participants, they likely already know one another and introductions can be very quick (everyone states their name, perhaps one word to describe an emotion they feel about the upcoming program).



**Optional but recommended:** Use *The Moth Presents A Game of Storytelling* card deck to either select or distribute and have participants select a prompt they may use to build their stories

## 10 minutes: The Story Prompt & Laying the Foundation

The biggest challenge for most storytellers – especially for most people who are new to storytelling – is to get over the barrier of “nothing interesting has ever happened to me” or “nothing in my life is interesting enough to share.”

For that reason, 10 minutes will be dedicated to the process of **helping participants identify a moment in their lives that has a narrative arc that can be shared as a personal story in this space.**

The facilitator’s job will be to guide participants to select a personal story. **First start by telling them what a story must feature:**

- A memorable setting
- An event that occurred – What happened?
- A lesson learned or a takeaway that is relatable to others

From *How to Tell a Story*:

Consider one vivid memory... Look for a place, an object, a friendship that meant a lot to you. Or the opposite: a place, object, a friendship that almost destroyed you. Try to focus on just one moment... Focus on a time frame...

In the Moth storytelling workshops, we begin by identifying a scene. **“In the movie of your life, what’s one scene you’ll never forget?”**... Now tell us again, but for *three minutes*. Really zoom in and stay on that day.

Some prompts from *How to Tell a Story*:

- I’ll never forget the time when...
- A moment I surprised myself was when...
- If my life were a movie, one unforgettable scene would be...
- A decision I made that changed everything was...

[Repeated from previous section] **Optional but recommended:** Use *The Moth Presents A Game of Storytelling* card deck to either select or distribute and have participants select a prompt they may use to build their stories

## 30 minutes: Crafting the Story

The three key elements of this section are:

1. Participants bullet point a sequence of events in their story
2. Participants narrow down their bullet points to major events they will draw on comic pages
3. Participants draw and color!!!!

### First... Sequence of Events, Bullet List

Once participants choose which event will become their personal story, have them begin a bullet point list of a **sequence of events**. The events should be *very simple* and participants should be reminded that these bullet points are intended to **serve as reminders for what they will draw and then share aloud**. They can be “mom and I showed up to the park” followed by “it started raining” and “everyone ran to the shelter” and “everyone began arguing and complaining” and “a lightning bolt hit the swing set” and “everyone laughed and hugged.” They will fill in the rest of the details *as* they tell their story.

### Second... Choose a Comic Page, Narrow the Events

Each of the stories should be drawn or sketched on the blank comic pages provided. Ensure that each table has a variety of types of blank comic pages so that participants can choose between 4, 5, and 7 panel options. The limited number of panels can help participants choose which of the key events within their story are the **most essential elements to their story**. Remind them that as they present they will share the missing details. Just like movies don't spell every single thing out for the viewers... just like movies may take place over the course of years but the runtime of the movie itself is two hours... *That's* how our participants will craft their stories.

### Third... Sketch and Color

**This is not an art contest.** This is one of the hardest parts of this entire program. Participants may tell you that they're “terrible” at art and they “don't know how to draw.” They will dig into details and feel frustration when they cannot capture every moment of their memories in perfect record. Remind them: *Everyone else is on the same boat. We're all just doing our best. A part of the fun is not doing a great job.*

The shared experience of not being great at something is valuable and wonderful. Encourage your participants to delight in the mistakes.

### 30 minutes: Telling the Story

Telling the story is only *half* of this activity. Listening and engaging with the stories of other participants is the other essential part of this activity.

How you do this part of the activity will be up to you and your participant group. A best practice – regardless of how you arrange your storytellers – is to set ground rules before anyone shares their stories.

- Time each story. Set a duration that will allow most of or all of the participants to tell their stories. Make sure to **keep time** to allow each person to share. Let everyone know the time limit they'll have and should expect to listen.

For the audience:

- Pay attention. Silence your phones. Sit facing the storyteller. Listen carefully.
- Don't interrupt.
- Celebrate each story. Clap for everyone. It takes guts to share anything – especially real, personal stories. Even if they don't finish, even if it's not a polished story, it was an accomplishment!
- No judging! No criticizing!

### 10 minutes: Regrouping and Reflecting

This is an ideal time to evaluate the success of your program. Ask the participants to talk about the experience of creating a story, drawing their pictures, and sharing their stories. Ask them what they felt, what they got out of it, and if they would do it again.

## Materials Needed

Materials below are provided in the USB included in this resource kit. They are also available for download from [kit webpage]

- Lined/ unlined paper (each person should have at least two or three sheets of paper available to them)
- Blank comic book panel pages (master copies provided)
- *The Moth Presents A Game of Storytelling* card deck (Optional but recommended)

Materials below should be provided by the library.

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- Pens
- Erasers
- Scrap paper (for note-taking)
- Highlighters

## Promotion

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## Extending the Activity

Below extending the activity ideas are suggested for the “Stories Like Ours Program” as a whole.

Storytelling programs can be a launchpad for community storytelling and sharing in a variety of ways.

Libraries may:

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## Lost in Time

My footsteps ring out hollowly amidst the emptiness. The world around me is ravaged, deserted. They haven't been here for so long, but the evidence is still clear. This was once someone's home.

The detritus of their past existence still lingers, a broken doll amongst the rubble, a shattered photo frame, its picture yellowing now with age.

There is still life here. Bugs crawl around on the floor, ignoring my passage. Creepers and vines entangle on the walls, fed by the dripping water from the broken roof.

It wasn't death that stalked here, and left this devastation. It was merely time.

## The Dark Woods

A walk in the woods helps me relax and release tension. The fact that I am dragging a body should be irrelevant. She always pestered me with stupid questions. Is my butt too big in these? Do you think I could do with losing a few pounds?

Standing here, sweating after dragging her fat arse up the hill, I wish I'd bought her that gym membership she was always harping on about. My lumber was starting to feel the effects of all this heavy lifting. Nearly there, I think. I wish she hadn't passed out so far from the car.

### **Trick or Treat.**

Death stalks amongst us each night, slipping from house to house, seeking the weak of heart. Upon his shoulder sits a raven of evil disposition.

Death has discarded his usually dark apparel Dressed in motley garb, with painted face to match, he creeps from house to house.

At one point a cat decides to follow, before curiosity gets the better of it, and its last life slips away.

Selecting a suitable victim, he taps on the bedroom window. Moments later, a scream is heard from within, followed by the gurgle of a dying breath.

Death always was a practical joker.



## The Devil's Playthings

Mobile phones are electronic leashes. They watch our every movement. They go off when you sit down on the loo or when you are engrossed in a good football match. The Devil laughs each time they play their sweet music. It is an evil chuckle of delight.

They are not really powered by electricity. Within each battery lurks a tiny imp, who controls the machine – controls your life! He takes great delight in having the power suddenly fade out or lose reception during an important call.

Just when you finally get the high score on that addictive game ... Gone!

## Object Lesson

*Jennifer Wardell*

She was the type fools wrote poems about. Waverly, no fool, offered a handkerchief for her tears. "Of course I'll help you."

"Oh, thank you, kind sir." She batted her lashes. "However can I repay you?"

"Monetarily, I'm afraid."

"Fine." She reached for her purse. "I have gold."

"I know." He flicked back her ringlet, revealing a pointed ear. "Faerie gold is legendary."

"It's the only coin I have."

"I prefer knowledge." Waverly smiled. "Give me a way to make my own faerie gold."

Her delighted laugh was inhuman.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** Jennifer Wardell is a journalist and fantasy novelist. Her first book, "Fairy Godmothers, Inc.," is out now. Her second book, "Beast Charming," will be released by Jolly Fish Press in Fall 2014.

# Gingerbread

*Lindsey McLeod*

She peeks shyly at him over her control panel. He fumbles innocent, pudgy envelopes, dropped onto her tray, delivered from his squeaking trolley. The ragged sleeves of his sweater dangle over his hands, red hood pushed up to hide his face. After a couple of weeks, she begins to lay a trail of crumbed compliments. He trips awkwardly past her desk, cherub-cheeked, striped and candied. Wholesome. Late at night, she practices her fangless smile in the mirror. Patience. The saccharine smell of success drips from every syllable he stutters. She can't wait to taste it. Coiled. Before. The. Final.

*Strike.*

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Lindsey has been published on several websites including Postcard Shorts and One Forty Fiction. She won the Cazart Short Story prize in February 2012 and was a Runner Up for the Flashbang Crime Fiction 2012 competition. One of her flash fiction stories was featured in Raging Aardvarks ebook anthology for National Flash Fiction Day 2012, and this piece as well as two others are available as a download on the Ether Books mobile app. Recently she was longlisted in the Fish Publishing 2013 Short Story competition. She also has a story on Linguistic Erosion's website, which was published mid-July.

# Harmonia Axyridis

*K.W. Taylor*

Ladybugs swarmed the flagstone. "They're good luck." Violet looked at Ben, who stared at another patch of bugs.

Ben shook his head. "There's no luck here." He chuckled. "Running from rogue time travelers sucks."

"I'm here to protect you. Don't worry." Violet patted Ben on the arm.

"What are we supposed to do, then, if I'm so protected?" Ben nodded at the ladybugs. "Call the exterminator?"

Before Violet could answer, Ben's frown deepened.

The ladybugs converged into one pile, slowly turning into a slender man with dark spectacles.

A grin spread across his face as he raised a gun. "Gotcha."

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: K.W. Taylor just released a short story collection entitled *Grinning Cracks*. Taylor's short fiction has also been featured in the anthologies *Touched by Darkness* (Etopia Press), *Sidekicks!* (Alliteration Ink), and *Once Bitten, Never Die* (Wicked East Press). Taylor's first novel, *The Red Eye*, will be released by Alliteration Ink later this year. Taylor teaches college English in Ohio and is a student in the Writing Popular Fiction M.F.A. program at Seton Hill University. Website: <http://www.kwtaylorwriter.com>. Twitter: @kwtaylorwriter.

# Deal

*Brenda Anderson*

Zoe pointed at the small word in the display case. "How much?"

The Jailer laughed outright. "Sorry. It's not for sale."

Zoe emptied her purse. "I'll give you everything I've got."

The Jailer shrugged, took the money, reached forward and touched her heart. She fell lifeless to the ground. He clicked his fingers. An Angel materialised, knelt beside her and took her soul.

"Busy day?" said the Angel, conversationally.

The Jailer shrugged. "They all want Freedom. I tell them it's not for sale but they never listen. I make a profit. I have no complaints."

The Angel smiled. "Me, neither."

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Brenda's fiction has appeared in various places including *Andromeda Spaceways*, *Acappella Zoo*, *Punchnel's* and *Penumbra*. She lives in Adelaide, South Australia.

# Cat Food

## *Stephanie L. Weippert*

Hunger woke him. With languid stretches, he left his sunbeam, but found two crunchies inside his dish.

Grooming helped his thoughts. Round things sealed delectable food from teeth and claws, but a pantry door protected the crunchies; he could open that.

Across carpet, then cold tile, quick paws opened the door. It closed behind him, but let in enough light.

He popped the lid, and dropped inside. When satisfied, he leaped, but the lid fell and held him halfway over the edge, claws useless on plastic.

He yowled, stuck until humans returned, and vowed that any laughter, would be avenged.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** Stephanie started writing because of a slug. Years ago, a local Sci-fi convention announced that it wanted stories for an anthology, but every story had to include a slug, either as a major plot point or character. This tickled her funny bone, so she wrote something horrible, and sent it off. They rejected it, of course, but the writing bug bit, and she has enjoyed writing stories ever since.

# Missing Persons

## by Wondra Vanian

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“Honey?” Alfred’s wife called from the kitchen. “Can you give me a hand, please?”

He went to see what culinary disaster Sue had gotten herself into this time. Expecting her to be covered in flour and pastry, he was surprised to find her with a cop.

A dead cop.

There was blood everywhere.

“Dear Lord! What happened?”

“Well,” she said, “Officer Hussein had a few questions about the Lampton kid’s disappearance.”

Alfred frowned. “Why would— Oh. Is that why we had to buy a chest freezer last week?”

Sue looked sheepish. “Good thing we went for the larger one, huh?”

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*WONDRA VANIAN is an American living in the United Kingdom with her Welsh husband and their army of fur babies. A writer first, Wondra is also an avid gamer, photographer, cinephile, and blogger. She has music in her blood, sleeps with the lights on, and has been known to dance naked in the moonlight. Wondra was a multiple Top-Ten finisher in the 2017 and 2018 Predators and Editors Reader’s Poll, including in the Best Author category. Her story, “Halloween Night,” was named a Notable Contender for the Bristol Short Story Prize in 2015.*

Website : [www.wondravanian.com](http://www.wondravanian.com)



# Find Me

## by Susanne Thomas

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The police had failed Tim once again.

He'd left three fingerprints this time, and they hadn't found even one of them.

He'd left a hair two fires ago, and they'd missed it in all the soot.

At this next fire, he was going to leave a piece from a shirt identical to the one he always wore.

If that didn't work, he had no idea what else he could do. He needed to light the matches. These buildings would burn bright, and it was going to be beautiful.

But if they didn't stop him soon, someone was going to get hurt.

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*SUSANNE THOMAS reads, writes, parents, and teaches from the windy west in Wyoming, and she loves fantasy, science fiction, speculative fiction, poetry, children's books, science, coffee, and puns.*

Website: [www.themightierpenn.com](http://www.themightierpenn.com)

Facebook: [SusanneThomasAuthor](https://www.facebook.com/SusanneThomasAuthor)



# The Walk

## by A.L. King

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Their fortune afforded them retirement on vast acreage. It was through their woodland they took walks, even after Eleanor's diagnosis. Herman led her.

"Seeing the grandkids was great," she said, unaware of just how far they'd walked since bidding their kin goodbye.

"Great until you mentioned the robbery," he countered. "I played it like you were confusing TV with memory, but you kept talking about the teller we shot dead in sixty-eight."

Suddenly, her eyes sparkled sharply—and sadly.

"Was it an accident?"

"It was," he answered. "But this isn't."

Herman sprinted toward home. Eleanor never found her way back.

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*A.L. KING is an author of horror, fantasy, science fiction, and poetry. As an avid fan of dark subjects from an early age, his first influences included R.L. Stine, Edgar Allan Poe, and Stephen King. Later stylistic inspirations came from foreign horror films and media, particularly Japanese. He is a graduate of West Liberty University, has dabbled in journalism, and is actively involved in his community. Although his creativity leans toward darker genres, he has even written a children's book titled "Leif's First Fall." He was raised in the town of Sistersville, West Virginia, which he still proudly calls home.*

# The River

The trouble began long before June 9, 1976, when I became aware of it, but June 9 is the day I remember. It was my twenty-sixth birthday. It was also the day I met Rufus—the day he called me to him for the first time.

Kevin and I had not planned to do anything to celebrate my birthday. We were both too tired for that. On the day before, we had moved from our apartment in Los Angeles to a house of our own a few miles away in Altadena. The moving was celebration enough for me. We were still unpacking—or rather, I was still unpacking. Kevin had stopped when he got his office in order. Now he was closeted there either loafing or thinking because I didn't hear his typewriter. Finally, he came out to the living room where I was sorting books into one of the big bookcases. Fiction only. We had so many books, we had to try to keep them in some kind of order.

"What's the matter?" I asked him.

"Nothing." He sat down on the floor near where I was working. "Just struggling with my own perversity. You know, I had half-a-dozen ideas for that Christmas story yesterday during the moving."

"And none now when there's time to write them down."

"Not a one." He picked up a book, opened it, and turned a few pages. I picked up another book and tapped him on the shoulder with it. When he looked up, surprised, I put a stack of nonfiction down in front of him. He stared at it unhappily.

"Hell, why'd I come out here?"

"To get more ideas. After all, they come to you when you're busy."

He gave me a look that I knew wasn't as malevolent as it seemed. He had the kind of pale, almost colorless eyes that made him seem distant and angry whether he was or not. He used them to intimidate people. Strangers. I grimed at him and went back to work. After a moment, he took the nonfiction to another bookcase and began shelving it.

I bent to push him another box full, then straightened quickly as I began to feel dizzy, nauseated. The room seemed to blur and darken around me. I stayed on my feet for a moment holding on to a bookcase and wondering what was wrong, then finally, I collapsed to my knees. I heard Kevin make a wordless sound of surprise, heard him ask, "What happened?"

I raised my head and discovered that I could not focus on him. "Something is wrong with me," I gasped.

I heard him move toward me, saw a blur of gray pants and blue shirt. Then, just before he would have touched me, he vanished.

The house, the books, everything vanished. Suddenly, I was outdoors kneeling on the ground beneath trees. I was in a green place. I was at the edge of a woods. Before me was a wide tranquil river, and near the middle of that river was a child splashing, screaming ...

Drowning!

I reacted to the child in trouble. Later I could ask questions, try to find out where I was, what had happened. Now I went to help the child.

I ran down to the river, waded into the water fully clothed, and swam quickly to the child. He was unconscious by the time I reached him—a small red-haired boy floating, face down. I turned him over, got a good hold on him so that his head was above water, and towed him in. There was a red-haired woman waiting for us on the shore now. Or rather, she was running back and forth crying on the shore. The moment she saw that I was wading, she ran out, took the boy from me and carried him the rest of the way, feeling and examining him as she did.

"He's not breathing!" she screamed.

Artificial respiration. I had seen it done, been told about it, but I had never done it. Now was the time to try. The woman was in no condition to do anything useful, and there was no one else in sight. As we reached shore, I snatched the child from her. He was no more than four or five years old, and not very big.

I put him down on his back, tilted his head back, and began mouth-to-

mouth resuscitation. I saw his chest move as I breathed into him. Then, suddenly, the woman began beating me.

"You killed my baby!" she screamed. "You killed him!"

I turned and managed to catch her pounding fists. "Stop it!" I shouted, putting all the authority I could into my voice. "He's alive!" Was he? I couldn't tell. Please God, let him be alive. "The boy's alive. Now let me help him." I pushed her away, glad she was a little smaller than I was, and turned my attention back to her son. Between breaths, I saw her staring at me blankly. Then she dropped to her knees beside me, crying.

Moments later, the boy began breathing on his own—breathing and coughing and choking and throwing up and crying for his mother. If he could do all that, he was all right. I sat back from him, feeling light-headed, relieved. I had done it!

"He's alive!" cried the woman. She grabbed him and nearly smothered him. "Oh, Rufus, baby ..."

Rufus. Ugly name to inflict on a reasonably nice-looking little kid.

When Rufus saw that it was his mother who held him, he clung to her, screaming as loudly as he could. There was nothing wrong with his voice, anyway. Then, suddenly, there was another voice.

"What the devil's going on here?" A man's voice, angry and demanding.

I turned, startled, and found myself looking down the barrel of the longest rifle I had ever seen. I heard a metallic click, and I froze, thinking I was going to be shot for saving the boy's life. I was going to die.

I tried to speak, but my voice was suddenly gone. I felt sick and dizzy. My vision blurred so badly I could not distinguish the gun or the face of the man behind it. I heard the woman speak sharply, but I was too far gone into sickness and panic to understand what she said.

Then the man, the woman, the boy, the gun all vanished.

I was kneeling in the living room of my own house again several feet from where I had fallen minutes before. I was back at home—wet and muddy, but intact. Across the room, Kevin stood frozen, staring at the spot where I had been. How long had he been there?

"Kevin?"

He spun around to face me. "What the hell ... how did you get over there?" he whispered.

"I don't know."

"Dana, you ... " He came over to me, touched me tentatively as though

he wasn't sure I was real. Then he grabbed me by the shoulders and held me tightly. "What happened?"

I reached up to loosen his grip, but he wouldn't let go. He dropped to his knees beside me.

"Tell me!" he demanded.

"I would if I knew what to tell you. Stop hurting me."

He let me go, finally, stared at me as though he'd just recognized me.

"Are you all right?"

"No." I lowered my head and closed my eyes for a moment. I was shaking with fear, with residual terror that took all the strength out of me. I folded forward, hugging myself, trying to be still. The threat was gone, but it was all I could do to keep my teeth from chattering.

Kevin got up and went away for a moment. He came back with a large towel and wrapped it around my shoulders. It comforted me somehow, and I pulled it tighter. There was an ache in my back and shoulders where Rufus's mother had pounded with her fists. She had hit harder than I'd realized, and Kevin hadn't helped.

We sat there together on the floor, me wrapped in the towel and Kevin with his arm around me calming me just by being there. After a while, I stopped shaking.

"Tell me now," said Kevin.

"What?"

"Everything. What happened to you? How did you ... how did you move like that?"

I sat mute, trying to gather my thoughts, seeing the rifle again leveled at my head. I had never in my life panicked that way—never felt so close to death.

"Dana." He spoke softly. The sound of his voice seemed to put distance between me and the memory. But still ...

"I don't know what to tell you," I said. "It's all crazy."

"Tell me how you got wet," he said. "Start with that."

I nodded. "There was a river," I said. "Woods with a river running through. And there was a boy drowning. I saved him. That's how I got wet." I hesitated, trying to think, to make sense. Not that what had happened to me made sense, but at least I could tell it coherently.

I looked at Kevin, saw that he held his expression carefully neutral. He waited. More composed, I went back to the beginning, to the first dizziness, and remembered it all for him—relived it all in detail. I even

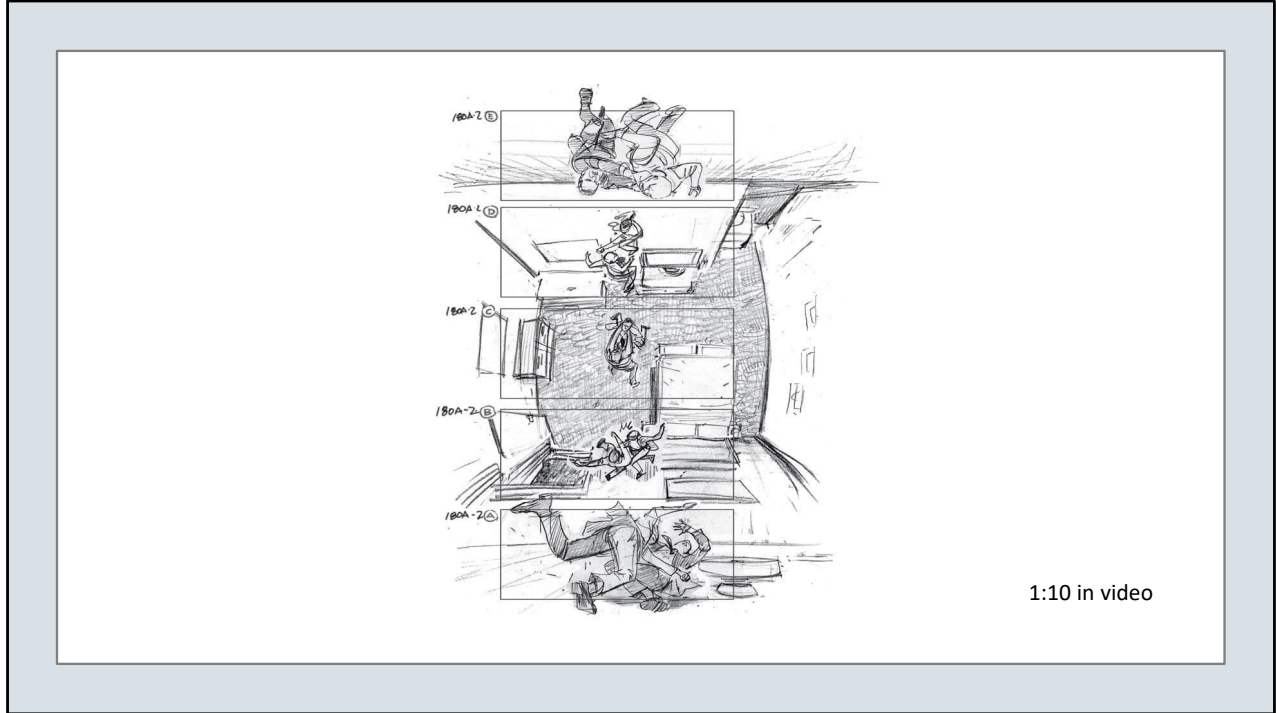
# Storytelling with Pictures

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## What we're going to do

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- View some storyboards
- Read comic panels
- Compare text-based stories with graphic adaptations
- DIY: Storyboard a short fiction

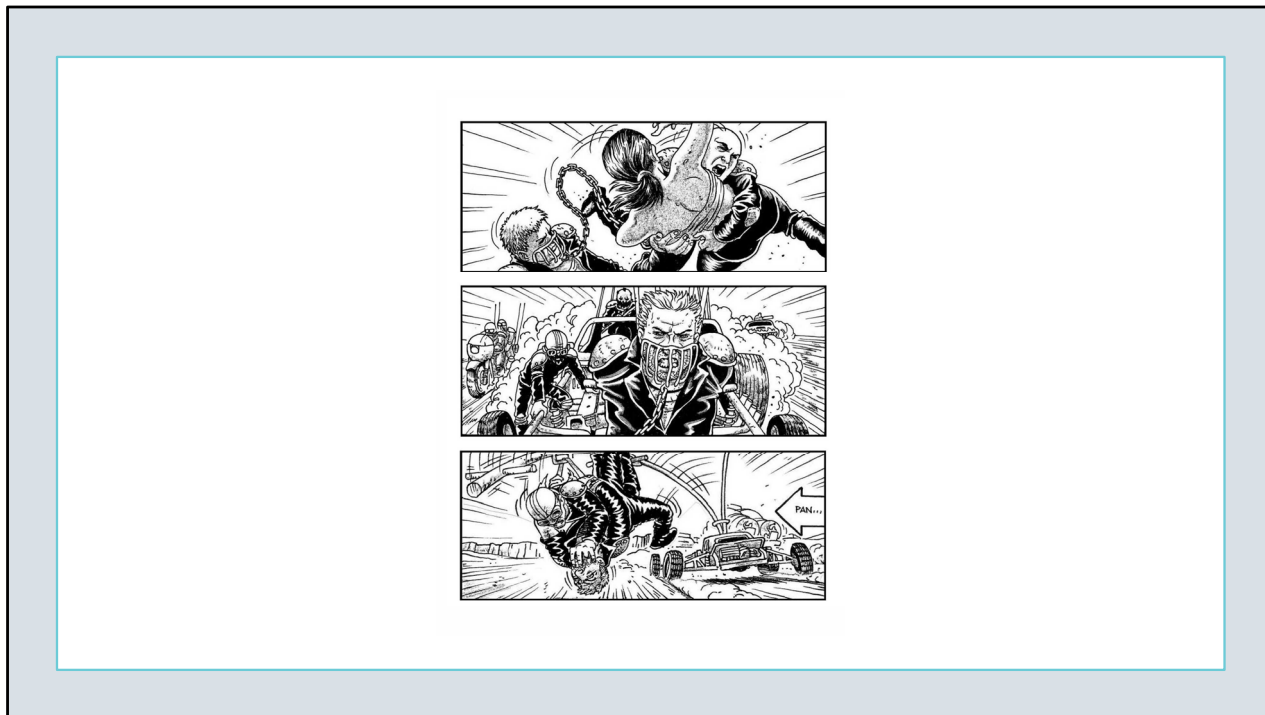


Does anyone recognize this? Hint: It's a key scene in a very popular Hollywood blockbuster movie from a few years ago. You will still see this scene shown to demonstrate cool movie effects. You also see the influence of this scene and this movie in movies that have come out since then...

[Presenter should click on the image to view the YouTube clip of this movie. Start the video at 1:10 to see the scene. <https://youtu.be/94goG-pLtaQ>]

This is a scene from the movie Inception where the room is spinning. The writers and directors of the

movie used storyboarding, or illustrations of moments through a scene they plan to visualize the effects that they will need to create - whether it's the set they need to design or to position actors or choreograph fight sequences or create digital effects later in post-production.



Now let's look at another movie. This is yet another very famous, major Hollywood movie from a few years back. It's a movie that is well known for its action sequences and production design. The director designed shots very carefully using these storyboards and many like them. Anyone recognize the movie?

[Presenter can click on the image to view the YouTube video. Only show a short portion since the video is much longer than the above sequence though it does show a lot of storyboard-to-film <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wFmHPsGZqj0>]

This is the film Mad Max Fury Road. The video shows how the story is adapted from the written words of the script, then into illustrations or drawings, and then filmed so it becomes a sequence of action shots.



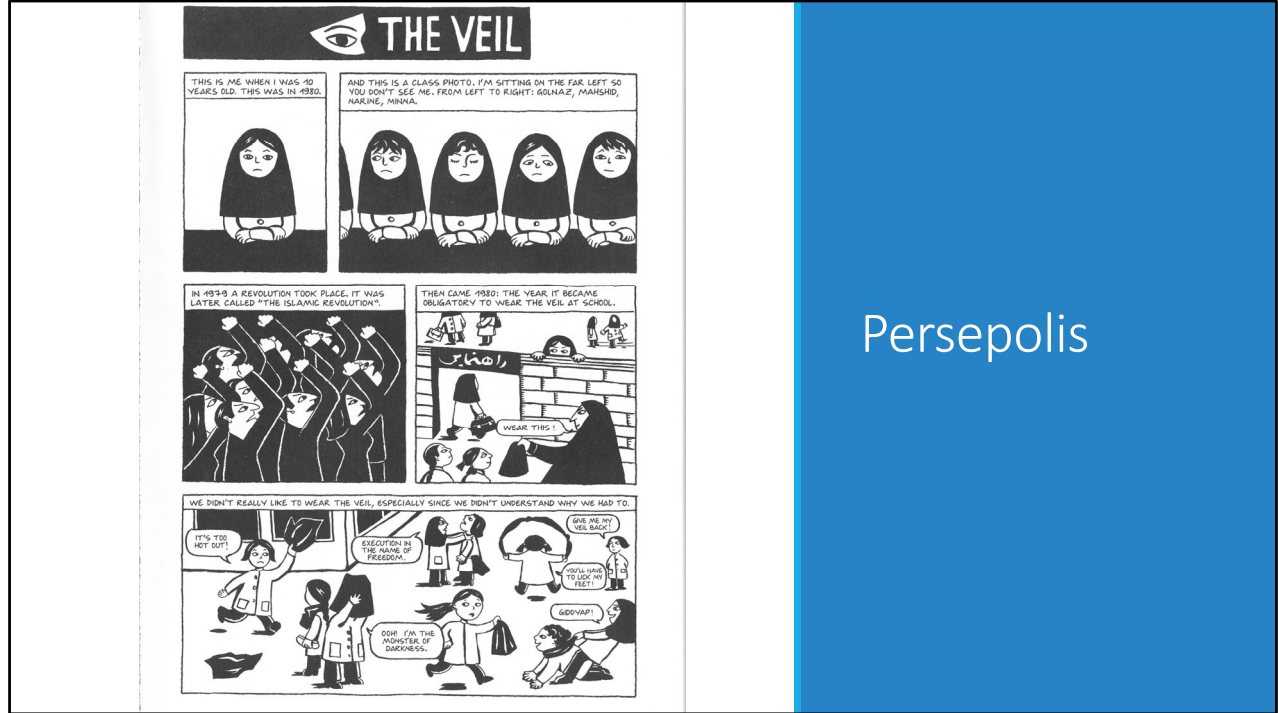
# Reading Pictures

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What we've seen in the last two slides is called "storyboarding."

When we think of stories, we usually think of one way of telling that story. It can be someone TELLING you a story – so oral storytelling. "My parents came to the US when they were kids. When my dad was fourteen, his parents put him on a plane to the United States with nothing but the clothes he was wearing and the address of where a family member lived..." I don't show you any pictures. I don't write down any words or have you read it. I just tell you and you listen to it. That's oral storytelling. People also think of WRITTEN stories. Whether they're real events that happened to someone OR they're fully fictional or made up stories, they are written into text and put onto pages and we read them in books or online. That is written storytelling. There's also VISUAL storytelling, like those pictures that we just saw. Altogether they can tell a story, but sometimes you just see one drawing or maybe a photograph and from that one image you can create an entire story of what happened, whether it's what the artist intended or not.

What we're going to do now is talk about the stories that illustrations tell. We're going to READ PICTURES.



## Persepolis

Persepolis is the real life story of a girl - now a woman - named Marjane Satrapi who grew up in Iran during the Iranian Revolution of 1979. She published her story in a graphic novel called "Persepolis." This is a page from that book.

Comic pages - and a graphic novel is like a book-sized comic book that uses comic illustrations or drawings to tell a story - are broken into panels. A panel is a box that contains a drawing and usually but not always some words or text that tell us either the dialogue or conversation between characters or thoughts that a character in the panel is having.

Let's look at the drawings in these panels.

[Presenter should ask probing questions about the drawings themselves:

- What colors are being used in this page?
- Look at the top row - the two panels. Describe what the pictures illustrate. What is the artist trying to tell us about the girls in this scene?
- Let's read the text in some of these panels. How does the art help you to understand what is happening in this scene?
- Do these drawings look really detailed or realistic? Do you think the artist needs to have very detailed or realistic drawings on this page? Why or why not?

This should be a relatively short discussion.]



## American Born Chinese

This is another graphic novel about the real life experience of the writer's childhood. The book is called "American Born Chinese" and the author Gene Luen Yang illustrates his first day at a new school.

This page has fewer panels and the drawings are colorful, which are different from "Persepolis."

Let's look at these panels.

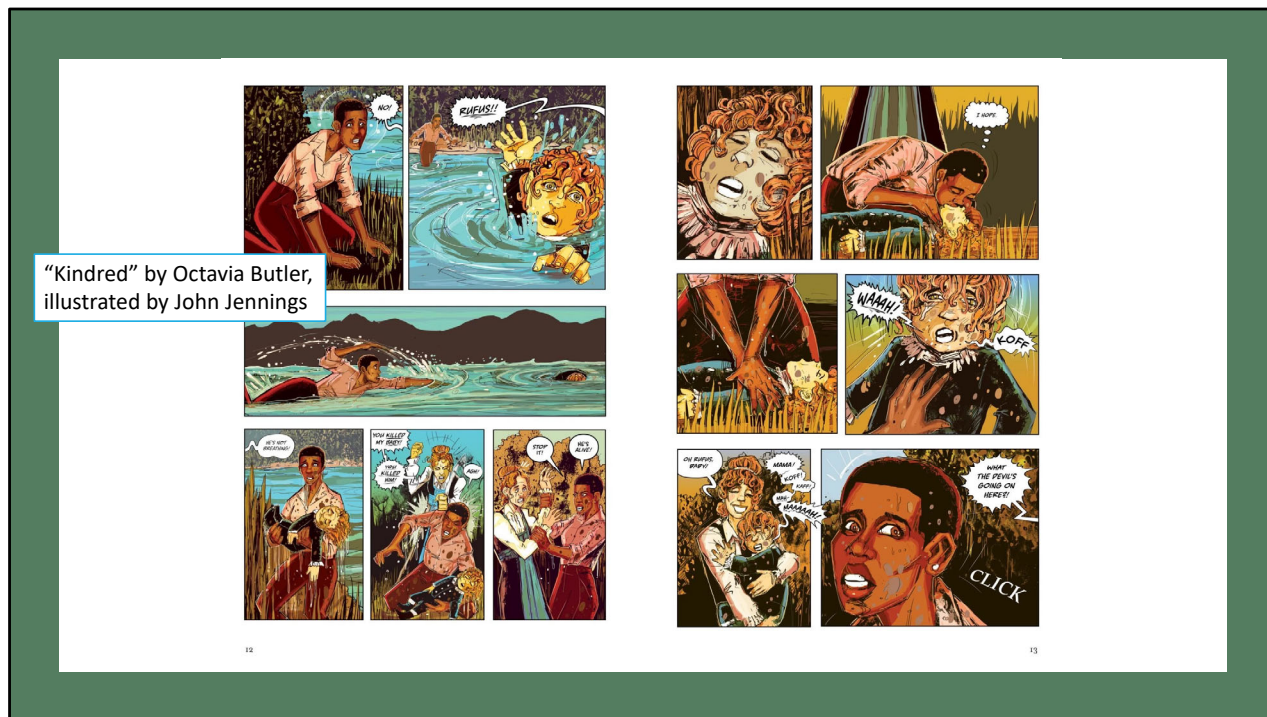
[Presenter should ask probing questions about the drawings themselves:

- Describe the way the characters are drawn, the way they look. How does the writer use the drawing to tell us about the situation?
- On this page we have several word bubbles. Those are used for dialogue or conversation. What is the order of the lines spoken? How can you tell?
- How does Jin feel? How can you tell?
- How does the teacher feel? How can you tell?

This should be a relatively short discussion.]

# From Words to Pictures

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The last two examples of illustrated stories were written and drawn as graphic novels. The writers created them AS graphic novels with both pictures and words to tell the story. Just like movies, though, sometimes graphic novels are adapted from books or short stories that appear only in text first. The book that is being illustrated here is called “Kindred” by Octavia Butler. In this story, a Black woman in the current day is transported back in time to a time when Black people were enslaved by white plantation owners. It is a kind of science fiction story that explores race and history and how that relates to our lives today, specifically how it relates to the experience of being a Black woman in the modern era.

First let’s look at the story that the panels are showing us on the screen. **What is happening in this scene?**

[Distribute copies of the excerpt of “Kindred.”]

The scenes on this slide are adapted from the section of the book I’ve passed around. There are A LOT of words on those pages! But on the slide you see that the same part of the story is told with FAR FEWER words and, instead, illustrations or drawings.

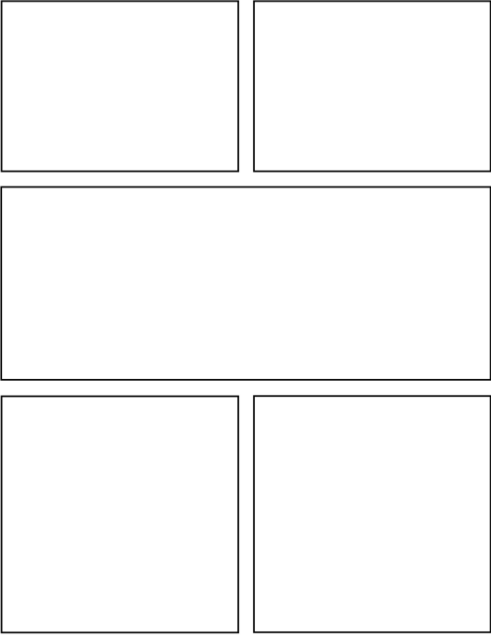
Take a few minutes to underline or highlight or mark the parts of the text on your copies that you can see illustrated on the slide I’m showing. **What WORDS or LINES on those**

**pages are ILLUSTRATED on the comics pages I'm showing here?**

[Presenter should prompt discussion using the following questions:

- What do we SEE in the pictures that we can't see from just the words on the page?
- What do the drawings tell you about the characters that you wouldn't know just from reading the pages?
- Compare the pages you read with the panels on the screen. Do they tell the same story or different stories?
- If you had only read the words FIRST how would you have PICTURED the characters or what happened in the scene?]





## Do It Yourself (in Pairs)

- Each pair gets a **drabble**
  - *Drabble*: a short fictional story of 100 words (a type of *micro-fiction*)
- Outline up to 10 major points of your story
- Edit your list down to the 4 or 5 most important points
- GET TO DRAWING

We learned all that and explored all those existing storyboards and comic pages and adaptations so that we could do it ourselves!

Each of you has received a very short work of fiction. They're so short they have their own name: drabbles. What you are going to do is read through the drabble you selected and find the key parts of the story you can illustrate or draw to make a comic version of your drabble.

**THIS IS NOT AN ART CONTEST!**

We will see lots of stick figures and funny looking creatures that are supposed to be animals. We're going to laugh about our own work and laugh together at one another's work. This is about having fun, not about creating beautiful works of art. Think of the examples we saw and the way that the artists use some words to convey what's happening in the scene but don't ONLY use words!

Share your Storyboard

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# Telling Stories Like Ours Activity, Part 2: Building Our Own Story

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## Introduction to “Telling Stories Like Ours” Series

“Telling Stories Like Ours” is a **two-part storytelling program**.

- **Part 1: “Storytelling with Pictures”** exposes participants to storyboarding and graphic narratives.
- **Part 2: “Building Our Own Story”** guides participants in identifying “stories” that can be drawn from real-life events that have occurred in their lives.

**The individual programs (Part 1, Part 2) can be standalone events or can be held as a series.** If it is held in a series, it is recommended that Part 1 be held first as Part 2 builds on the work of Part 1.

The “Telling Stories Like Ours” programs and/or series can be facilitated in isolation or in conjunction with the “Reading Stories Like Ours” book discussion program. If it is held in conjunction with the “Reading Stories Like Ours” program, it is recommended as a **capstone to the “Reading Stories” program**.

The goal of the “Stories Like Ours” program duo – “Reading Stories Like Ours” and “Telling Stories Like Ours” – is to create community through shared experiences. The “Telling Stories” series encourages **participants to see the value of their own life experiences** so that they may share those experiences – *their* stories with others. The stories of our lives are interesting and valuable. Our lives are collections of stories just like the books from the “Reading Stories Like Ours” program and book list. In the “Telling Stories Like Ours” program, we are encouraged to create a community of stories that, like those books, becomes a greater narrative of our community.

## Building Our Own Story (Part 2/2 of Series)

In “Building Our Own Story,” participants storyboard a story from *their own life* using the blank comic pages and panels used for the “Storytelling with Pictures” activity (Part 1 of 2 of

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the series). **If this program is done independently – not in combination with or following the “Storytelling with Pictures” program that’s OK!**

In this program, participants are asked to jot down interesting “stories” from their own life.

Tip: This program will be most effective if participants come to the program with ideas of what stories they want to tell/ share. If this is being done in tandem with the “Storytelling with Pictures” activity, make sure you prompt your participants to think of events that have occurred in their lives that they can develop into stories for the “Building Our Own Story” workshop.

The facilitator prompts them to think of different times in their life that they can jot down as potential stories they will storyboard and then share. Participants select a story and then get to sketching it. Elements of story are discussed, prompting participants to come up with something they can share. Then, participants share their stories with the group.

**Although this is a visual activity where participants illustrate stories, this is not a comic book creation activity nor is it an art class. The *story* is what’s important. Drawings will be bad! Coloring will be wonky and weird! Stick figures will be involved!**

Storytelling – much like the things that inspire our stories – can be fun and messy and challenging and humbling. It is all those things *and* is also amazing.

What is important is that stories are shared.

## Intended Audience

Older adults, adults, young adults, teens

## Activity Goals

Participants will:

- Reflect on their lives to identify meaningful moments they can craft into stories
- Identify key story elements including character, plot, and sequence from their real life
- Create illustrated sequences based on their story outlines
- Share their stories with the group
- Listen to stories from other participants

## Description

“Building Our Story” is a 90-120 (1.5-2 hour) **story crafting and storytelling program**.

Roughly plan on half of the time spent on participants creating their comic book page of the stories and the second half spent on sharing the stories. There are primarily four parts to this program:

1. Participants are prompted to identify moments in their lives that can be crafted into short stories that will be shared with the group.
2. Participants select one of their moments to outline, considering elements of story including character, sequence, and plot. They
3. Participants create a bullet point list of key “scenes” – the amount of bullet points will be determined by the blank comic book page they opt to use but typically no more than 5.
4. Participants share their comic book page and tell the story that they’ve illustrated.

Challenges to anticipate:

- The inevitable “Nothing worth telling has ever happened to me” to get them to identify moments in their lives. **One of the goals of this program is to help people see value in the stories of their own lives which, first, means identifying stories in their own lives.** Everyone has a story. Most of us have too many to count.
- The also inevitable **too many bullet points**. Yes, lots of little things happen to add up to the big story that we want to tell. Editing is a part of the process. Asking probing questions and assuring participants that it’s OK to let go of some of the little things to focus on the big things is key to this program.
- Too many storytellers and too little time. The dream “problem”! If it is clear that it will take too much time to dedicate “the stage” to each storyteller, then break up the room into smaller groups – maybe even pairs – to have them share with one another their stories. **You should not sacrifice time on either the story crafting or storytelling parts of this program. Both are keys to this program.**

### 5-10 minutes: Overview & Introductions

Introduce yourself and the program.

If this is a new group of participants, they likely already know one another and introductions can be very quick (everyone states their name, perhaps one word to describe an emotion they feel about the upcoming program).

**Optional but recommended:** Use *The Moth Presents A Game of Storytelling* card deck to either select or distribute and have participants select a prompt they may use to build their stories

## 10 minutes: The Story Prompt & Laying the Foundation

The biggest challenge for most storytellers – especially for most people who are new to storytelling – is to get over the barrier of “nothing interesting has ever happened to me” or “nothing in my life is interesting enough to share.”

For that reason, 10 minutes will be dedicated to the process of **helping participants identify a moment in their lives that has a narrative arc that can be shared as a personal story in this space.**

The facilitator’s job will be to guide participants to select a personal story. **First start by telling them what a story must feature:**

- A memorable setting
- An event that occurred – What happened?
- A lesson learned or a takeaway that is relatable to others

From *How to Tell a Story*:

Consider one vivid memory... Look for a place, an object, a friendship that meant a lot to you. Or the opposite: a place, object, a friendship that almost destroyed you. Try to focus on just one moment... Focus on a time frame...

In the Moth storytelling workshops, we begin by identifying a scene. **“In the movie of your life, what’s one scene you’ll never forget?”**... Now tell us again, but for *three minutes*. Really zoom in and stay on that day.

Some prompts from *How to Tell a Story*:

- I’ll never forget the time when...
- A moment I surprised myself was when...
- If my life were a movie, one unforgettable scene would be...
- A decision I made that changed everything was...

[Repeated from previous section] **Optional but recommended:** Use *The Moth Presents A Game of Storytelling* card deck to either select or distribute and have participants select a prompt they may use to build their stories

## 30 minutes: Crafting the Story

The three key elements of this section are:

1. Participants bullet point a sequence of events in their story
2. Participants narrow down their bullet points to major events they will draw on comic pages
3. Participants draw and color!!!!

### First... Sequence of Events, Bullet List

Once participants choose which event will become their personal story, have them begin a bullet point list of a **sequence of events**. The events should be *very simple* and participants should be reminded that these bullet points are intended to **serve as reminders for what they will draw and then share aloud**. They can be “mom and I showed up to the park” followed by “it started raining” and “everyone ran to the shelter” and “everyone began arguing and complaining” and “a lightning bolt hit the swing set” and “everyone laughed and hugged.” They will fill in the rest of the details *as* they tell their story.

### Second... Choose a Comic Page, Narrow the Events

Each of the stories should be drawn or sketched on the blank comic pages provided. Ensure that each table has a variety of types of blank comic pages so that participants can choose between 4, 5, and 7 panel options. The limited number of panels can help participants choose which of the key events within their story are the **most essential elements to their story**. Remind them that as they present they will share the missing details. Just like movies don't spell every single thing out for the viewers... just like movies may take place over the course of years but the runtime of the movie itself is two hours... *That's* how our participants will craft their stories.

### Third... Sketch and Color

**This is not an art contest.** This is one of the hardest parts of this entire program. Participants may tell you that they're “terrible” at art and they “don't know how to draw.” They will dig into details and feel frustration when they cannot capture every moment of their memories in perfect record. Remind them: *Everyone else is on the same boat. We're all just doing our best. A part of the fun is not doing a great job.*

The shared experience of not being great at something is valuable and wonderful. Encourage your participants to delight in the mistakes.

### 30 minutes: Telling the Story

Telling the story is only *half* of this activity. Listening and engaging with the stories of other participants is the other essential part of this activity.

How you do this part of the activity will be up to you and your participant group. A best practice – regardless of how you arrange your storytellers – is to set ground rules before anyone shares their stories.

- Time each story. Set a duration that will allow most of or all of the participants to tell their stories. Make sure to **keep time** to allow each person to share. Let everyone know the time limit they'll have and should expect to listen.

For the audience:

- Pay attention. Silence your phones. Sit facing the storyteller. Listen carefully.
- Don't interrupt.
- Celebrate each story. Clap for everyone. It takes guts to share anything – especially real, personal stories. Even if they don't finish, even if it's not a polished story, it was an accomplishment!
- No judging! No criticizing!

### 10 minutes: Regrouping and Reflecting

This is an ideal time to evaluate the success of your program. Ask the participants to talk about the experience of creating a story, drawing their pictures, and sharing their stories. Ask them what they felt, what they got out of it, and if they would do it again.

## Materials Needed

Materials below are provided in the USB included in this resource kit. They are also available for download from [kit webpage]

- Lined/ unlined paper (each person should have at least two or three sheets of paper available to them)
- Blank comic book panel pages (master copies provided)
- *The Moth Presents A Game of Storytelling* card deck (Optional but recommended)

Materials below should be provided by the library.



- Color pencils
- Pens
- Erasers
- Scrap paper (for note-taking)
- Highlighters

## Promotion

Make a plan for promoting this activity or program. Your plan doesn't have to be extensive, but it should address:

- The people involved and their roles;
- Budget;
- The overall message;
- Any existing library marketing or branding guidelines;
- How you will promote the activity, which could include:
  - Social media
  - Website
  - Email newsletter
  - Printed materials like posters or bookmarks
  - Cross-promoting with partner organizations
  - Local news media
- Creating promotional materials, such as graphics, press releases, or printed materials;
- Timeline

## Extending the Activity

Below extending the activity ideas are suggested for the “Stories Like Ours Program” as a whole.

Storytelling programs can be a launchpad for community storytelling and sharing in a variety of ways.

Libraries may:

- Hold a storytelling event where participants may invite family, friends, and others to attend.

- Invite participants to share their graphic narrative work (e.g., comic book-like pages) on library social media, in library displays, etc.
- Publish a community literary magazine featuring transcribed stories from program participants.
- Facilitate other storytelling, creative writing, and/or journaling programming.

The “Build Our Stories” program may also act as a launchpad for:

- Our Story Bridge <https://www.ourstorybridge.org/>
- StoryCorps Mobile Tour <https://storycorps.org/mobile-tour/>
- We Are Colorado from History Colorado  
<https://www.historycolorado.org/we-are-colorado>

# Resources: Storytelling

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## Online Passive Programs for Adults Resource Kit

We have included a red key in this kit. It is a USB 'flash' drive containing these pages from the binder and other resources. You can also find updated resources regarding this kit on

## National Storytelling Organizations & Projects Resources

The Moth

<https://themoth.org/>

The Moth is a storytelling program, venue, and format that is broadcast on public radio as well as other media including podcasts. The Moth features performances from storytellers of all kinds – that is, professional storytellers like Neil Gaiman and comedians like Hasan Minaj *and* amateur storytellers like... *anyone* you've ever met. All of the stories featured on The Moth are true, personal stories. Some are funny. Some are heartbreaking.

The Moth's website has several resources relevant to libraries and storytelling programs. The website is a portal to: The Moth story repositories (relevant performances linked throughout the program "Reading Stories Like Ours" in the resource kit that includes *The Moth Presents All These Wonders*), a list of live storytelling events <https://themoth.org/events> (Colorado has four locations listed: Breckenridge, Denver, Fort Collins, and Boulder at the time of writing this), educator resources (e.g., K12/ school-centered programming and resources), and community partners page <https://themoth.org/community>. The Moth has published collections of stories and a book *How to Tell A Story: The Essential Guide to Memorable Storytelling*.

This I Believe

<https://thisibelieve.org/>

This I Believe is a project that features essays written by (and performed by, in the case of audiobooks and other recordings) people of all ages and "all walks of life... about the core values that guide their daily lives" ([This I Believe](#)). Essays include personal stories and defining moments that exemplify those values or how those values hold relevance to the writer. This I Believe essays have been featured on public radio and in book collections

including the *This I Believe II* book that is included in the “Reading Stories Like Ours” program in the resource kit that includes that title.

This I Believe’s website includes resources that support library programming and include educator tools for teaching essay writing and writing personal statements. The Lifelong Learners Curriculum PDF found on the Educators page can be useful for libraries engaging in community programming like the programs included in this kit

<https://thisibelieve.org/educators/> . The website also includes a repository of essays <https://thisibelieve.org/search/> .

## StoryCorps

<https://storycorps.org/>

StoryCorps is a well-known storytelling program that is featured regularly on public radio and is available on various audio platforms including podcasts and in video across a variety of platforms including YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, and other social media where videos are posted. Videos are sometimes animated with the original storyteller’s voice playing over the animation. The stories featured by StoryCorps are told in conversation, from the storyteller to the listener, often a friend or family member of the storyteller. All stories are real-life stories. Some are heartbreaking. Some are funny. From their website: “StoryCorps is committed to the idea that everyone has an important story to tell and that everyone’s story matters. **Our mission: to help us believe in each other by illuminating the humanity and possibility in us all — one story at a time.**”

The StoryCorps website includes a repository of stories <https://storycorps.org/stories/> and can be filtered for medium: audio only (“podcast”) or animation. Stories are recorded and archived in the Library of Congress. StoryCorps can be engaged in many ways by communities, including by inviting the StoryCorps mobile to come to communities to record stories on-site. Tools for doing recording stories can be found on the Participate webpage <https://storycorps.org/participate/> . Colorado State Library resource kits include a podcast recording technology kits that can support in this effort

<https://cslkits.cvlites.org/digitization-kits/#storytelling>

# Feedback Form

## Instructions

Please help us improve the **Stories and Storytelling for Adult Emerging Readers** resource kit by completing this paper feedback form. Please return the completed paper form with the kit at the end of your loan period.

## Part 1: Evaluation

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Observed participants' confidence in reading improved (generally) and/or increased as a result of this kit.					
Staff awareness about supporting adult emerging readers increased as a result of this kit.					
I am satisfied that the resources in this kit met the library's needs.					
This resource will help improve library services to the public.					
The loan period was adequate.					
I would recommend this Stories and Storytelling for Adult Emerging Readers kit to another library.					

**Which parts of the kit did you find useful, and why?**

**Were there any parts of the kit that your library didn't use ? Why not?**

**How can we improve this kit?**

**Can you suggest additional topics?**

## **Part 2: How Your Library Used the Kit**

Please describe any of the activities or programs you used from this kit. Be as specific as possible. Include links, comments, and/or evaluation data when available.

\*\* Want another way to keep the conversation going and share your experiences with others? Visit our [online forum](#) and share what you are doing there. The forum is part of our online CSL Resource Kit web site: <http://cslkits.cvlites.org/discuss/> \*\*