

HANDOUTS

The Secret Language of Stories: Using Story Schema and Executive Functioning Strategies to Organize Writing and Enhance Comprehension

by Carolee Dean, M.S., CCC-SLP & Paula Moraine, M. Ed.

About the presenters:

Carolee Dean, M.S. CCC-SLP is an author of young adult fiction as well as a speech-language pathologist and Certified Academic Language Practitioner. She created *The Secret Language of Stories* because she wanted to find a way to teach students to think about stories the way professional writers do. She is the current President of the Southwest Branch of the International Dyslexia Association. Her novels include *Comfort* (Houghton Mifflin), *Take Me There* (Simon Pulse), and *Forget Me Not* (Simon Pulse).

Paula Moraine, M.Ed., is an educator in private practice in Maryland. She is a tutor, coach, adult educator, speaker, and author. Paula is also on the Branch Council of the International Dyslexia Association, serving as the Eastern Region Representative. Her books include *Helping Students Take Control of Everyday Executive Function - The Attention Fix*, and *Autism and Everyday Executive Function*.

HANDOUTS INLCUDE:

An analysis of the picture book *Gingerbread for Liberty* by Mara Rockliff.

A blank story board for *Gingerbread for Liberty*.

Directions on how to use this picture book in the classroom and adapt it for all ages.

Pictures and diagrams

A list of books suitable for story analysis

PICTURE BOOK ANALYSIS:

Gingerbread for Liberty: How a German Baker Helped Win the American Revolution by Mara Rockliff. ISBN-10: 0544130014, ISBN-13: 978-0544130012. 32 pages.

SUMMARY: This true story is about Christopher Ludwick, a baker who helped General George Washington feed his troops. He also helped to bring German mercenaries (Hessians) hired by the King of England, over to the American side of the war.

THE ORDINARY WORLD: *Ludwick is a German baker living in Philadelphia. He is kind to the children who come to his shop and he gives him the broken cookies that he cannot sell. He is very proud to be an American and his key slogan has to do with the fact that no one will go hungry in America if he can help it.*

CALL AND RESPONSE: *The newspapers announce that the Revolutionary War breaks out. Ludwick wants to help the American Rebels.*

MENTORS, GUIDES, AND GIFTS: *His wife warns him that he is too old and fat to be a soldier. He knows she is right but he decides that he will find some other way to help.*

CROSSING: *Ludwick packs his bags and goes off to be part of the war.*

NEW WORLD: *Ludwick joins up with George Washington and his troops.*

PROBLEM, PRIZE, PLAN: *The Prize is for the American Rebels to win the Revolutionary War and gain their freedom from England. The Problem is that the troops are hungry and many of the men are threatening to leave. The Plan is to make gingerbread to feed the troops.*

MIDPOINT CHALLENGE: *Ludwick builds ovens and bakes gingerbread for the troops.*

DOWNTIME: *Now that the troops have plenty to eat, they stay and help Washington fight the British.* Ludwick starts baking gingerbread for all of the troops. But then there is a twist. The King of England hires soldiers from other countries to fight the rebels.

CHASE AND ESCAPE: *Hired soldiers from Germany travel across the ocean to help the British fight the American Rebels.*

DEATH & TRANSFORMATION: *Ludwick wants to travel to the British camp and convince the German soldiers to join the American side. Washington warns Ludwick that if the British find out what he is doing, they will kill him.* Most of the new soldiers are German. Ludwick speaks their language. They are Hessians (from Hesse) the same part of Germany that Ludwick is from. He travels across the bay to the English camp. Note how travelling across water is symbolic of rebirth. Ludwick has gone through a complete transformation from being a fat, old baker to becoming a spy sneaking across enemy lines.

CLIMAX: *Ludwick convinces the German soldiers to change sides by offering them gingerbread.* Ludwick had planned to talk to the German soldiers about revolution, independence, and liberty, but when Ludwick sees the huge German soldiers, he fears for his life. He resorts to what he knows best – feeding the hungry, and he convinces them to leave the British.

REWARD: *The American rebels win the war.* George Washington asks Ludwick to bake gingerbread to feed the British soldiers before they go back to England.

Note: This text provides excellent opportunities for inferencing, prediction, and problem solving. It is only implied that the Hessians have joined Washington when the king's advisors tell him that his hired soldiers have disappeared. This is a good opportunity to discuss inferencing and

how we use clues from the text to draw conclusions that are not clearly stated. There are many opportunities to ask students what Ludwick will do next and how he would solve various problems. The great thing about picture books is that predictions can be confirmed within a couple of pages.

Non-fiction Connections: You may want to share additional resources with the class about the American Revolution such as class history texts or related picture books. Have students find the Hesse Region of Germany on a map. Compare the proximity of Germany to England and America. Track the path the Hessian soldiers might have taken to get to American.

Building Vocabulary: The word **revolution** starts with the prefix **re-** which means “back, again, or restore.” The word **independence** starts with the prefix **in-** which means not. The words **army, liberty, buttry, majesty** end in the suffix **-y** which means “characterized by.”

Gingerbread for Liberty- Story Board
 From *The Secret Language of Stories* by Carolee Dean, M.S., CCC-SLP

Ordinary World	Call & Response	Mentors, Guides & Gifts	Crossing
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Ludwick, Gingerbread, baker, Philadelphia	newspapers, revolution, announce	wants, fight, wife, says, fat, old	packs, bags, runs off, help
New World	Problem, Prize & Plan	Midpoint: Going for the Prize	Downtime
joins, Washington, troops	men, want, leave, food, terrible	Bakes, gingerbread, soldiers	No one, hungry

Chase & Escape	Death & Transformation	Climax: The Show down	Final Reward
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<p>King, hires, soldiers, Germany, travel, ocean</p>	<p>If caught, killed, baker, now, spy</p>	<p>cross, bay, persuade, Germans, switch, sides</p>	<p>Win, war, gingerbread, bake, British</p>
<p><u>Vocabulary:</u> Gingerbread Colonies Revolution Independence Liberty Soldiers Redcoats Hessians Surrender</p>	<p><u>People:</u> Christopher Ludwick George Washington King Hessians British</p> <p><u>Places:</u> America Philadelphia England Germany</p>	<p><u>Coordinating Conjunctions:</u> for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so</p> <p><u>Subordinating Conjunctions:</u> after before because so that while even though until</p>	<p><u>Transitions:</u> initially in due time next then consequently as a result meanwhile eventually finally ultimately</p>

DIRECTIONS:

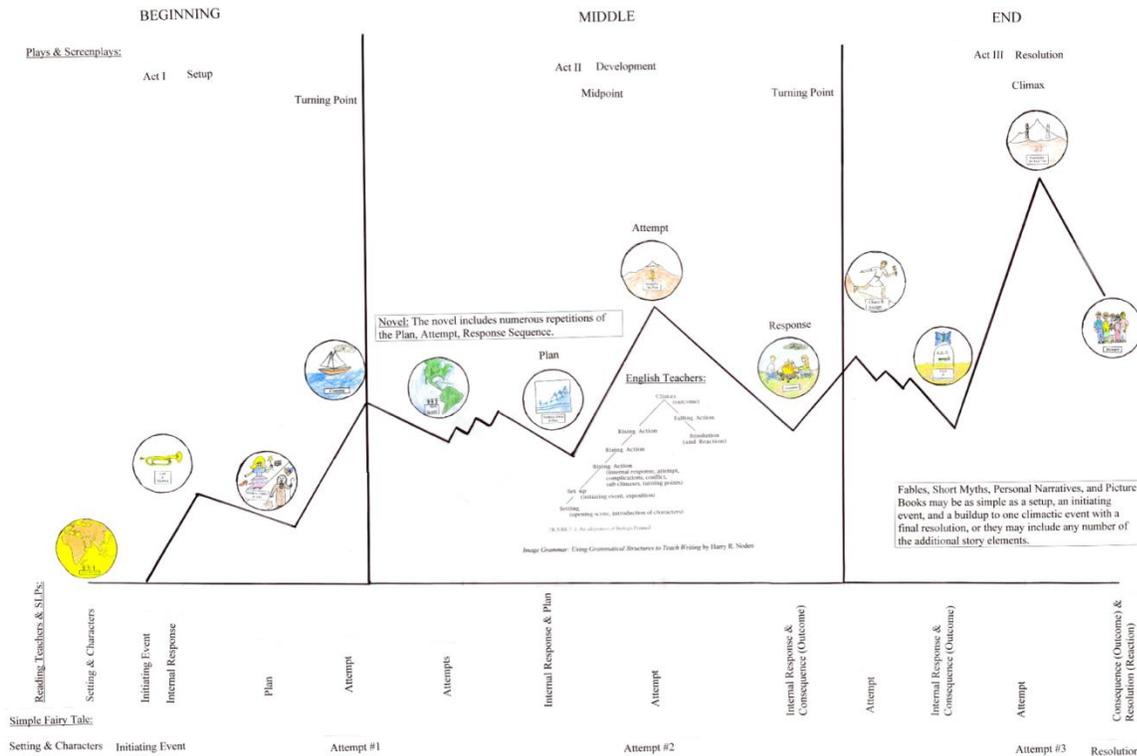
- 1) Put the Twelve Story Elements on the board.
- 2) Pass out the Story Board Graphic Organizer.
- 3) Read the picture book selection to the class.
- 4) Go back over the story and help students fill out the Story Board Graphic Organizer.

They may use drawings, sentences, or simply key words to fill in the blank organizer. An organizer with key words as well as conjunctions and transition words has also been provided for younger children and struggling readers/writers. It is helpful if the teacher models simple pictures (stick figures for people) for each section. This should go quickly. It's a visualization tool, not an art assignment. It's important to remember that there is no right or wrong answer if a student can give a reason for why they have included information under one story stage or another. The emphasis is on creating a schema, learning a language, and stimulating a discussion. With that said, it is possible that after discussion, the group may decide to put the information into a different stage of the story.

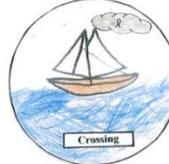
- 5) To work on sequencing and organization, cut apart the graphic organizer into 12 squares. Ask students to reassemble the storyboard in correct sequence. Start out working with 4 squares at a time. If they can easily do this, then attempt all 12. If drawing is poor, you may want to copy the teacher version of the drawings for this activity. Have students glue the pictures onto construction paper after making sure the sequence is correct.
- 6) For younger children and those who benefit from verbalizing before they write, use the reassembled Story Board to verbally retell the story. Do this one student at a time at the teacher's desk or have students break up into pairs to do this with each other.
- 7) Use the Story Board Graphic Organizer to write a summary based on grade level writing expectations. Each frame will be 1-2 sentences. For students working at the paragraph

level, each row becomes one paragraph. An introduction and conclusion may be added to create a 5 paragraph essay or summary. After exploring several non-fiction narratives, encourage students to create their own narrative non-fiction.

The Secret Language of Stories takes these basic story elements and expands them, making them more concrete and visual for students. It goes beyond story grammar to make stories come alive. See the diagram below.



THE SECRET LANGUAGE OF STORIES – STORY STAGES
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BEGINNING				
MIDDLE				
END				

Children’s Books for Analysis:

Coburn, Jewell Reinhart (2005). *Domitila: A Cinderella Tale from the Mexican Tradition*.

National Geographic School Publishing:

Coville, Bruce (2004). *Hamlet*. Dial Books: New York.

DiTerlizzi, Tony (2002). *The Spider and the Fly*. Simon & Schuster: New York

Nelson, Vaunda Micheaux (2009). *Bad News for Outlaws: The Remarkable Life of Bass*

Reeves, Deputy U.S. Marshal. Carolrhoda Books: Minneapolis.

Riordan, Rick (2010). *The Lightning Thief: The Graphic Novel (Percy Jackson and the Olympians, Book 1)*. Disney-Hyperion: Glendale.

Rockliff, Mara (2015). *Gingerbread for Liberty!: How a German Baker Helped Win the American Revolution*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt: Boston.

Rockliff, Mara (2015). *Mesmerized: How Ben Franklin Solved a Mystery that Baffled All of France*. Candlewick: Somerville.

Rosen, Michael (2003). *Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet*. Candlewick: Somerville

Ruby, Lois (1999). *Steal Away Home*. Aladdin: New York.

Scieszka, Jon (1994). *The Frog Prince, Continued*. Puffin Books: New York.

Sendak, Maurice (1963) *Where the Wild Things Are*. Harper & Row: New York.