



Education Pack

a resource for teachers and other educators
working with primary-aged children



Introduction to “Sinbad”

The Sinbad project aims at promoting storytelling and the use of storytelling techniques in pre-school and primary school education, in order to enhance the key competences acquired by children.

Led by wisamar Bildungsgesellschaft (Germany), partners from Holland, Lithuania, Greece, England and Turkey have been raising awareness of the potential of storytelling in education and supporting educators and teachers in applying storytelling in the classroom.

This will be achieved by developing this education pack for educators and teachers and implementing it in the form of blended learning. An e-learning course has been developed, which contains training about methodologies and techniques as well as materials and different resources about storytelling in education. In order to provide a platform for practicing the acquired knowledge and skills, storytelling practice sessions were organized in all implementing partner countries. Guidelines are available for how to organise storytelling practice, and tools for further self-sustainable practice, allowing pre-school and primary teachers to establish local storytelling groups for continuous education.

Sinbad started in the autumn of 2014, continuing throughout 2015 and 2016, culminating in this book you hold in your hands now.

We hope you enjoy reading this book and find the information inside useful; but please also visit our various websites to learn more and see what other opportunities and resources are available for you:

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Click on the boat
to return to the
contents page



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Contents

Introduction to “Sinbad”	2	Sinbad the Sailor <i>Fifth voyage</i>	43
How To Use This Book	5	Acquiring Storytelling Competence	45
Competence	7	Sinbad the Sailor <i>Sixth Voyage</i>	47
Sinbad the Sailor & <i>Sinbad the Porter</i>	10	Storyteller’s Summary	49
Choice of Story	12	Sinbad the Sailor <i>Seventh Voyage</i>	51
Sinbad the Sailor <i>First Voyage</i>	15	Glossary	53
Presenting The Story	17	Bibliography	55
Sinbad the Sailor <i>Second Voyage</i>	30	Acknowledgements	57
Storytelling Space	32		
Sinbad the Sailor <i>Third Voyage</i>	34		
Involving Children	36		
Sinbad the Sailor <i>Fourth Voyage</i>	39		
Supporting Further Competence De- velopment	41		



How to Use this Book

This handbook is the result of research and development undertaken by all partners, with the express aim of creating a resource for teachers and other educators working with primary-aged children. We set out to create a useful collection of information, guides, techniques, methodologies and suggestions to help teachers bring storytelling into the classroom, as an educational tool. The result is this Education Pack, or toolbox, which we hope will assist you.

PLATO (University of Leiden, Netherlands) were responsible for writing the pedagogical framework on which this handbook is based; the framework explained the background of the concept of competence and competence development and the role of storytelling in competence acquisition. This culminated in a scheme including steps to be set by pre-school teachers who wish to tell good stories that contribute to the process of competence development of young children.

The framework of this book offers literature to elaborate further. The gathered literature consists of various kinds of sources. Some are to be considered background articles or books, some are practice oriented and a third category are the sources that in themselves are already reviews of other literature. As a fourth category notes, text contributions or slides created by the partners themselves were gathered. Based on all these sources guidelines for competence oriented teachers/storytellers targeting young children in the age range of **3-7 years old** were created.



This handbook follows the steps as presented in the framework:

Competence

Selecting stories

Presenting stories

Storytelling space

Involving children

Supporting competence development

Acquiring storytelling competences

It is our intention that this handbook acts as a statement to be considered by a storyteller as they prepare a storytelling session, and to facilitate the further development of competences amongst children.

Throughout the handbook, we explore the 8 Key Competences established by the European Commission and demonstrate how **any** story can be used to enhance **any** competence; in fact, any story can enhance **every** competence. We will use the story of “Sinbad the Sailor” to provide an example of how to develop each competence amongst your children. The story weaves its way throughout this handbook, and at each stage a different key competence and suggested exercise will be explored. The reader may skip through chapters and follow the links to the 8 fragments of the “Sinbad” story.



Competence

In this project we seek to promote competence development through storytelling, among young children in the pre-school and early school years age of 3-7 years old.

In 2007 the *European Framework for Key Competences for Lifelong Learning* was released (European Commission, 2007), which identifies and defines key skills that everyone needs in order to achieve personal fulfilment, social inclusion, employment and active citizenship. When selecting the competences that may be acquired through stories a first consideration may be to which of the following key competences the story may be related (between brackets one may find themes or issues that may be linked to the key competences and to stories):

Communication in the mother tongue (vocabulary, proverbs, grammar, phrases, concepts, etc.)

Communication in foreign languages (for the age group of 3- 7 year olds, this is limited to the awareness of foreign languages and maybe some elementary vocabulary (hello, bon jour, good bye, adieu, etc.)

Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology (numeracy, quantitative and qualitative concepts, laws of nature, matter, dynamics etc.)

Digital competence (search, identify, imaging, visualization, etc.)

Learning to learn (examples of learning strategies, reflection, etc.)

Social and civic competences (solidarity, empathy, sympathy, morality, integrity, fairness, togetherness, rights, duties, etc.)



Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship (examples of initiatives, risks, actions, rewards, perseverance, mobilising, making things happen)

Cultural awareness and expression (telling, inventing, relating, revealing, shaping, designing, telling, playing and visualising stories)

The following components are supposed to be included in each of the eight key competences, as distinguished by the European Commission:

Creativity (invents new actions or things)

Initiative (sees opportunities, takes them)

Problem solving (acts strategically, finds new solutions)

Risk assessment (estimates risks before taking actions)

Decision making (identifies what decisions and makes them)

Constructive management of feelings (Keeps up the good spirit)

Adequate use of resources (knows when to make use of expertise)

Effectiveness (accomplishes what needs to be done)

Impact (makes things happen)

If we look at these features of competences we see a list of attitudes, actions and results/effects that show quite a remarkable resemblance to the process the key person in a story goes through. Full of creativity, the protagonist takes an initiative; on the way problems arise, requiring risk calculation, decisions and solutions. Through a process of adequate use of resources and management of feelings (fear, courage, disappointment etc.) the protagonist finds solutions, proves to be effective and makes a difference/has an impact. With this in mind it is easy to imagine this list of features of competences was composed with stories and story-



telling in mind.

Note: The list of features makes it possible to specify and enrich the competences and sub-competences chosen from the key competences list. Although this step is mentioned as the first one, it is important to realize that the link between competences and stories can only be made specific once a story is chosen. The steps in the scheme are necessarily iterative.

Note: Another aspect to keep in mind is that competence acquisition is one of the purposes of storytelling, but not the only one. In choosing stories and in deciding on other choices in the story telling procedure one needs to be aware of other purposes such as well-being, entertainment, intimacy and so on.

Guidelines:

- Choose key competences
- Specify key competences in themes, issues, sub competences
- Consider additional purposes the storytelling activity may serve aside from key competence acquisition
- Try to link the chosen competences to possible settings/ characters/elements/episodes/events in stories.



Sinbad the Sailor and Sinbad the Porter

The story of Sinbad the Sailor is given here to demonstrate that each of the 8 Key Competences can be found in any given story. As one follows the story of Sinbad, one finds each section has an accompanying suggested competence as well as a suggested exercise; no matter which story you tell, however, it is possible to develop any competence.

Sinbad was a poor porter, and one day he rested by the gates of a wealthy merchant. Wondering aloud why he had to work so hard when others were idle and rich, the merchant heard Sinbad complaining and invited him inside the house. He explained to Sinbad the Porter that he too was called Sinbad, Sinbad the Sailor, and that although he was now rich, he only became so through fortune and fate, during the course of seven wondrous voyages. If Sinbad the Porter was willing to listen, Sinbad the Sailor would recount these tales so that he may better understand the pain and suffering the merchant endured in his younger days...

Sinbad 's First Voyage»»»»



Key Competence 8: Cultural awareness and expression

The **creative expression** of ideas is readily demonstrated in the beginning of the story, as the wealthy merchant wishes to relay his story to the younger Sinbad. The *Sinbad the Sailor* story literally features a story being told within, so children naturally understand the relationship between the teller and the audience; the teller is recounting something fantastical and second-hand which allows for the suspension of disbelief.

Suggested Exercise:

One exercise in relation to Key Competence 3 (Mathematical Competence) deals with the wealth of Sinbad the Sailor and the value of money: Use the theme of money and counting coins to encourage your class to think about the value of different things. Perhaps a guessing game (i.e. 'how much does xxx cost') and then reveal the correct value. Ask the children what they understand about money and why it is necessary in modern society.



Choice of Story

The choice of a story is closely related to the competence acquisition it is supposed to support. Keep in mind though that the story may need to serve other purposes as well. Another consideration has to do with the level of development and maturation the children have. Will they be able to understand the story; is it easily linked to the experience of the children; will they be able to cope with the content emotionally? Of course a story is not fixed: it may be adapted to the needs of the target group in its wording and its phrasing. The question that remains is whether the adaptation keeps the core of the story intact.

The age group you are facing also determines what stories may be selected. The older the child gets, or the more they develop, the better they will be able to deal with matters of concentration, understanding, relating, etc. In particular, the possibility to relate the story to be told to the experience of the children is important. Children are very open minded, so there is no need to only choose stories in familiar setting or with known content, but it is important to analyse stories as to the way in which you as a storyteller will be able to make the link between the possibly exotic content of the story and the experience of the children. The experience of children is not just what they actually have seen or experienced, it also includes their so called inner world. Through songs, stories, hear say, imagination etc. their world extends far beyond what they actually saw or did.

Think back to your own childhood and the stories you remember hearing or



reading. What was it that you enjoyed? Are there stories that you still remember years later? It is always worth considering that if you were fascinated by a particular story, or if a certain emotion is conjured up when you think back, then these are powerful indicators for your own storytelling experience. The children you tell a story to may also be forming their own emotional attachment to the story you choose, which puts you in an influential yet exciting position. Choose wisely!

Together with the identification of competences, the storyteller considers the kinds of stories he or she may tell. When deciding, it is helpful to keep in mind the categories of stories and issues included in the stories. Every story affects us in different ways; it may make us think about something (*the head*), it may change our feelings or emotions (*the heart*) or it might cause a physical reaction (*the hands*). The following scheme may be helpful when considering your own choice of story:

Ingredients → Kinds of Stories ↓	Heart	Head	Hands
Comedy Stories	Laughter	Humour, jokes	Funny gestures, mimics
Puzzling Stories	Curiosity	Strategy	Visualisation, graphics
Horror Stories	Fear, anxiety, concern, loss, grief, despair	Fairness. Safety, security	Emotional expression, physical responses
Feel-good Stories	Love, friendship, empathy, happiness	Relations, solidarity, responsibility	Smile, touch, express
Moralizing Stories	Values, norms, commitment	Rules	Expressions/ gestures related to morals
Historical Stories	Identity	Facts and figures	Re-enacting



Apart from the categories mentioned in the scheme, it is important to be aware of the content you wish to include in terms of subject matter, life events, etc. For those who tell stories in a school situation it is recommended to link the story chosen to the curriculum you follow.

Guidelines:

- If possible, identify and use an occasion for telling a story. Real life events from the home, family, neighbourhood, experiences from daily lives of children, celebrations, birthdays
- Choose stories suitable for a certain age group: fairy tales, fables, myths, legends, folk tales / folklore
- Select a story that may be related to the chosen competence (s)
- Select a story that allows the listener to identify with the action process the main character goes through
- See to it that it matches with the developmental stage of the children (duration of the story, concepts included, complexity)
- Consider the emotional impact. Be aware of the vibe of the story (funny, exciting,..)
- Think on how the story may be told in adequate wording and phrasing for the children
- Prepare how to link the story to the experience (including the inner world) of the children
- If applicable relate the story to the school curriculum



Sinbad the Sailor

First voyage

Once he had spent the wealth left to him by his father, Sinbad set out to sea in the hope of restoring his fortune. The sailors thought they were landing on an island but it was, in fact, a giant sleeping whale with trees growing on his back. Woken by a fire the sailors had built, the whale dived down into the depths and Sinbad was washed away. The other sailors departed and Sinbad was only saved by chance when he saw a floating tree; clinging to the tree he washed up on a strange shore many days later. Whilst exploring, he sees a horse stuck in the mud, and rescues it. It turns out this was the King's horse, and the King is pleased with Sinbad, eventually making Sinbad one of his trusted courtiers.

One day the same ship which Sinbad first sailed docks on the island, and Sinbad is reunited with his goods stored in the hull. He gives these to the King as a thank-you and the King returns the favour with much gold and precious jewels. Sinbad returns to his home a wealthy man, living in luxury.

Sinbad the Sailor then gives the porter 100 gold pieces and asks him to return the next day, to hear the tale of the next journey...

Sinbad 's Second Voyage »»»»



Key Competence 7: Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship

The ability to turn **ideas** into **action**, involving **risk-taking**, **creativity** and **planning** is amply demonstrated in the second part of the *Sinbad* story. As the merchant sets sail into the unknown, his goal is to achieve riches; this is achieved through luck (*fortune and fate*) but also through being in the right place at the right time (risk-taking).

Suggested Exercise:

The following exercise combines basic competences in science, sense of entrepreneurship and cultural expression: Discuss amongst the group about whales, and encourage drawings or modelling of whales. Learn about their biology and where they can be found, and why they were hunted (19th century hunting = entrepreneurship amongst whaling companies but also the consequences).



Presenting the Story

Part One: The Story

It is important to be aware of the structure and to stick to a structure in telling the story. As indicated before, these structures relate very strongly to the common features of the key competences and thus they provide opportunities to stress the things that stress relationship (mention the initiative, point out the creative solution, stress the potential risks, applaud the effects and the impact once solutions are found):

Ingredients of Stories:	Structure of Stories:
<p>Setting: the location; where the action takes place. Also past/present/future</p> <p>Theme: the topic which the storyteller speaks about</p> <p>Plot: the main events and how they interact with each other</p> <p>Episode: a single event (like a chapter) which makes up part of the whole story</p> <p>Attempt: where a character tries to complete a task or overcome an obstacle</p> <p>Outcomes: After attempts are made (successful or not), the direction of the story has changed. The outcomes show these changes</p> <p>Resolution: The end of the story showing what the characters have achieved or how events are different from the start</p>	<p>Setting: where the action takes place; also gives an insight into the state of mind of the characters</p> <p>Initiating Event: this is where the chain of events that make up the plot are initially set in motion</p> <p>Internal Response: how the main character / characters feel about the event that has just occurred</p> <p>Attempt: What is their reaction to this event?</p> <p>Consequence: What happens next as a result of the characters actions</p> <p>Reaction: The way in which the plot changes because of the interactions between characters and events</p> <p>Resolution: The end of the story showing what the characters have achieved or how events are different from the start.</p>



The elements mentioned as ingredients also represent a way of distinguishing between the levels of the structure of a story. You may use these levels to position yourself and switch between contextual (background, situation, setting etc.), thematic (the theme, the issue, the moral, the message), episodic (the story, the plot, the actions, the events) and experiential level (the perceptions, experiences, feelings, inner thoughts, beliefs, convictions). From the levels mentioned the episodic level is in the lead, the others follow.

From the structure and the ingredients mentioned above it also becomes clear that within a story we may distinguish between different perspectives:

The story as a course of events

The story as an experience of the main characters

The story as an experience of the storyteller

The story as an experience of the listener

As an exercise, try to tell the same story in different ways, from the perspective of different characters. Let's take "Little Red Riding Hood" as an example. The typical version of the story features the girl travelling through the woods on the way to her Grandma; the wolf tries to eat her (and also the Grandma) but Little Red Riding Hood is saved by a woodcutter. Now, tell the story from the Wolf's perspective. Or from the woodcutter's perspective. What changes?

The storyteller follows the structure of the story but may switch between the ingredients and thus these four perspectives. He/She can switch between different character's perspectives, involve the listeners through questions ("what do you think what happens next") or intervene through body language / voices / props. For the listener this changes their experience even if they hear the story several times or know the story already. In general,

In general, interest for the listener may be generated through:

- Uncertainty: what happens next; will the character resolve any problems?
- Unexpected events: sudden threats may appear, or a twist occurs which



changes the 'arc' of the character's journey

- Clear goals/aims for the protagonist
- Turning point: is the goal achievable or unattainable?
- Discontinuity through tangent story arcs
- Creativity: use of metaphor, surprise, body language, caricature etc.

It is helpful for the teller to demonstrate alternative options within the structure of the story, such as interventions, uncertainty or problem-solving elements; it is often beneficial (and enjoyable) for audience interaction and participation, especially if there are two alternative 'paths' for the protagonist to take. This is a great opportunity to involve your audience: ask the children to suggest alternative endings or to pose a new problem which must be resolved by a particular character. Don't be afraid to play with the structure of the story or involve children in suggesting the structure to follow.

Story Skeletons

For the majority of people, when first learning to tell stories, it is too difficult to remember an entire story. Breaking the story down into easily-remembered chunks will help you remember the important elements of the story, allowing for further details to be added later on. Story skeletons is an exercise which allows one to create simple story structures, to aid memory and help the teller remember the sequences of the story. 'Flesh' can then be added later, as much or as little, depending on the audience, time constraints and purpose of the storytelling exercise. A clear thread needs to run through your story, so to begin with utilise a three-part skeleton:

3 part skeleton

Break down any story into an **opening**, a **problem** and a **solution**. So if we use the example of *Sinbad the Sailor*, the opening could be "There was a sailor called Sinbad who had many adventures". The problem may be "he lost all his money on the journey"; the solution could be "but the king gave him gold in



return for his stories”.

Now, it is easy to remember the basic thread of the story. Further elaborations can be made with a five-part skeleton:

5 part skeleton

In addition to the opening, problem and solution, we can include an escalation and a final image of the story. The sequence now becomes:

Opening > Problem > Escalation > Solution > Final Image

So, with the Sinbad story, the opening and problem remain the same, but the escalation could be “and he was captured by cannibals”. Next, more detail is needed for the solution, which may be “Sinbad tricked the cannibals by spitting out the drug they tried to feed him, and made his escape in the commotion”. The final image can still be the king rewarding Sinbad with gold, who then sits at home surrounded by luxury.

Fleshing out your skeletons

Once you are familiar with the 5 parts to your story skeleton, you will need to flesh out the story– add the details that you remember, and try to picture different scenes from the story to help remind you. By the time this exercise is complete, you should be familiar enough with the ‘thread’ of your story to tell it aloud. Practice makes perfect!

Fragments

In addition to story skeletons, using story fragments as an exercise will help you become familiar with the structure of stories, and how to modify or play with the structure for your own needs.

Using Little Red Riding Hood again, we can break the story down into short fragments (similar to the skeletons). This may look like:





A wolf speaks to her and finds out where she is going

A woodcutter passing by hears the commotion, kills the wolf and saves Little Red Riding Hood

The wolf eats the grandmother and disguises himself, waiting for the little girl to arrive

Little Red Riding Hood was sent through the forest with a basket of food, to visit her Grandmother

The little girl notices something strange about her 'grandmother' but is gobbled up by the wolf

With the same information as the 'normal' story, we now have a different structure and therefore a different story.

The storyteller must anticipate how the audience will reconstruct and predict the story line, and must surprise them at least some of the time with unexpected events. The audience can take as frames of orientation story characters whose plans and goals are either plainly stated or readily inferable. Each story should center on a turning point where the protagonist's main goal becomes decisively attainable or unattainable. In a good story, the contrast is drastic: a highly negative track (e.g., death and destruction) versus a highly positive one (e.g., bountiful rewards). Identifying with the protagonist's problem, the audience will experience great tension and suspense. Plainly, such research must explore cultural knowledge about what is desirable and undesirable.



Part Two: Storytelling repertoire of interventions

Now that we have broken down stories and described what is needed for telling the story, we can work on the presentation. Naturally, many people are nervous when telling a story, especially if we are not reading directly from a book, but there are things that can be done to alleviate this. Clare Muireann Murphy (www.claremurphy.org), an Irish storyteller, suggests writing down a 'love' and 'fear' list, containing all of the positive and negative emotions you experience (or think you might) when embarking on a storytelling journey. Some of the partners from this project performed this exercise under Clare's tutelage, and the words that appeared on the lists included:

Love

"Happy, safe, impressed, relaxed, snug, excited, nothing else matters, childlike, involves all your senses, curious, impressed"

Fear

"Not knowing what to say, being rubbish, memory loss, no words come out, looking like a fool, negative vocal ticks ('ummm', 'errrr' etc), missing out important parts, audience won't like me, stuttering, fidgeting, losing attention of audience"

Once the group wrote these words down, they were put aside for the rest of the course and something quite beautiful happened. As you can see, our group were worried about a variety of negative situations and had a larger 'fear' than 'love' list. On the last day, we revisited the 'love' and 'fear' list and agreed that, although all or most of the positive words were felt, almost none of the negative emotions or experiences that we expected to feel actually emerged.



This exercise visibly demonstrates that a) everyone feels nervous and worried, and b) those fears are ungrounded. The experiences of our group of storytellers was vastly more positive than initially feared, and collectively we realised that audiences love to hear stories and want to enjoy the experience.

Another useful exercise is to device you own 'toolkit' to supplement the repertoire of interventions. This may include the following:

Humour	Facial gestures
Sound effects	Play with voices
Pauses	Eye contact
Know your story (when to tell it)	Change rhythm / timings
Exaggerated movements	Repetition
Believe in yourself / the story	Emotions through physicality/ voice

The 4 pillars of storytelling

Another useful concept demonstrated by Clare Murphy is what she calls the 4 pillars of storytelling. Once these are learnt and understood, it will make your storytelling experience much more enjoyable for both you and your audience.

- ◆ Love your story
- ◆ Believe in your story
- ◆ Know your story
- ◆ Make it your own– find your own voice



Timing and Guiding

During the storytelling process the story will unfold or be revealed. The structure determines the sequence of the story; however, the storyteller adds to this structure with their storytelling repertoire of interventions:

He/she slows down, or speeds up, introduces a pause, or a question

The storyteller can make side steps, make links with previously mentioned things, focus again on the red thread and point that out.

The storyteller serves as a tourist guide through the story land, presenting, pointing at things, explaining things, predicting, reflecting, commenting, challenging, provoking. The story teller may choose position on a time line switching between the past tense, present tense and the future tense, of course taking into account the ability of children to make such switches given their age.

Play acting

The storyteller enriches the story with his or her voice (loudness, tone of voice), and he or she may use variations in voices to impersonate the characters included in the story. Besides that the storyteller has a rich repertoire of facial expressions, gestures and movements at his/her disposal. Moreover they may influence the children by means of repetition, variation, exaggeration, visualization. When a story is told in parts also things as cliff-hangers may be used to trigger the interest of the children.



Part Three: Practical Suggestions

Whilst we all know at least one story, and are probably familiar with far more through books, films and theatre, actually telling a story out loud to an audience can be a nerve-wracking experience. Reading from a storybook to a group of children is one thing; standing up and telling a story, without notes, is something else.

Here we will provide some hints and suggestions for how to deliver what has become less common in the modern world: **verbal storytelling**. However, the following should be remembered:

Everyone is different: this isn't about 'right' and 'wrong', rather about making you, the storyteller, feel more comfortable and engaged with your audience

Some people prefer to have notes or a booklet to hand; that is fine!

Different audiences react in different ways, so flexibility on your part is important. The more you practice, the more you add to your repertoire, the more flexible you can get. A happy storyteller is a good storyteller!

Spend some time considering the following and how they affect your storytelling:

- **Your voice** - it may sound obvious, but your voice is often the most important tool as a storyteller. How does volume, tone, clarity affect your telling?
- **The choice of story** - who is your audience? Is the story relevant to them or appropriate?
- **Body language** – along with your voice, body language is a crucial aspect of storytelling. Should you sit or stand? Can everyone see you? Do you want to stand still or move around– or is this distracting?
- **Confidence** - everyone feels nervous when telling a story, but how can we hide this?
- **Pause** – add pauses during the telling, to give yourself time to relax but also for



the audience to take a moment to register what you are saying. Avoid the temptation to rush through the story in order to finish quickly.

- **Memory** - if you know the story well, you will tell it better, which breeds confidence. Practice.
- **Breathe!** – take your time, especially at the start- give your audience time to get comfortable
- **Connect** with everyone in the audience- make eye contact, and avoid talking to just one person



Part Four: Suggested techniques to help you improve as a storyteller

1 Choose key words

Words are crucial; not just because they literally transmit the story to your audience, but as importantly the use of a word can trigger different connections in the listener. If you were to use a different word, a completely different picture may be built up.

To understand the power of words, choose a well-known story– in this example, Cinderella. Write down all the key words to the story– this may include: girl, chores, step-sisters, fairy Godmother, wish, Prince, slipper, carriage, midnight, pumpkin... Perhaps a limit of 10 words will suffice.

Next, write down three alternative words per key word: for example, 'slipper' may have 'shoe, trainer, boot' instead. Continue until you have three alternatives for each original word.

Finally, try and tell the story without using any of the original words.

This is challenging because it forces you to think differently, and work out how to adapt in order to tell the new version without the use of the 'taboo' words.

#2 Reduce your Vocabulary

Many stories can benefit from being reduced to their bare essentials, in particular when telling stories to young children.

Pick another well-known story, then try to reduce it down to just seven words. Naturally, this can be daunting but focus on the most important words. Once you have your list, can you tell your story and still convey the meaning in only 7 words?



#3 Warm up your Voice

You would warm up your body before exercise, and your voice is no different. To avoid straining your voice, warm up your vocal cords; take a deep breath before starting and yawn, to open up your throat.

Breathe out fully

Once your lungs are empty, relax your stomach, open your mouth and let the air rush back in. Do this several times

Now breathe in again, adding an 'sss' sound, holding as long as you can

Try again making different sounds, such as 'shh' or 'fff' sounds. This helps to gently stretch different vocal muscles

Finally, repeat making different vowel sounds ('aaa', 'eee', 'iii' etc.)

#4 Take your Time

Not only before you start, to help you relax, but also during the actual telling of the story. To begin with, many people take a deep breath and then launch into the story, seemingly to get it over with as soon as possible. Take your time, perhaps introduce the story (or yourself, if necessary) and why you are telling it.

Your audience will also appreciate the time to get used to your voice, tone, even accent; let them adjust to you as well.

Throughout your telling, remember to pause and take a breath, which allows you to relax without breaking the rhythm of the story

#5 Never Apologise

Time and again, in front of an audience, people say sorry. And not just with their voice, but with their body language. Confidence breeds confidence; if you nervously pace around, mumble or look down to the floor, or throw words away



carelessly, this is apologising to the audience- “I’m sorry for being here” is what your body is saying. And if you make a mistake, don’t worry; every audience *wants* to enjoy the experience, nobody will mind if you stumble, but they may grow tired of hearing ‘sorry’ every few minutes.

#6 The Three Key Tips (from Martin Ellrodt, a German storyteller)

- ◆ Get a position where everybody can see you
- ◆ Speak so that everybody can hear you
- ◆ Stop telling when people still like you

Guidelines:

- Break down the story into a skeleton to help you remember the key elements
- Then ‘flesh out’ up the story using a clear structure and including all ingredients a story needs to have.
- Tell the story in such a way that the listener may optimally identify with the main character (s) and the initiatives, obstacles & risks met, and the choices/decisions to be made
- Distinguish between the experience of the main character, the story teller and the listener.
- Use timing and guiding to catch the attention of the listener
- Enliven the story by means of your play acting repertoire
- Include rhyme, songs, games whenever you can
- Include sounds, colours, etc.
- Encourage your audience to play with the structure of the story; change outcomes or add problems to overcome
- Remember the 4 pillars of storytelling



Sinbad the Sailor

Second journey

Sinbad the Porter returned the next day, and is told how Sinbad the Sailor grew tired of a life of leisure, yearning for more adventure. Setting sail once again, he is accidentally abandoned by his ship-mates on an island containing eggs from the giant eagle Rukh. Sinbad grabs onto the bird and is flown to a valley of giant snakes large enough to swallow whole elephants, which are the prey of Rukh. The valley floor is covered in large, sparkling diamonds which are gathered by men who scatter meat on top of the diamonds. Once Rukh take the meat back to the nest, the men drive the bird away and retrieve the diamonds stuck to the meat (thus avoiding the snakes). Sinbad watches this, and ties himself to a large chunk of meat: when carried back to the nest, he makes his escape clutching a large bag of diamonds. His shipmates return for him, allowing him to return home with a fortune in diamonds...

Sinbad 's Third Voyage»»»



Key Competence 3: Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology

Basic competences in science and technology refer to the mastery, use and application of **knowledge** and **methodologies** that explain the natural world. This may include an understanding of the changes caused by human activity. Sinbad observes the behaviour of the giant eagles and understands how he may use this to his advantage to escape the dangerous valley

Suggested Exercise:

Allow the children to boil an egg and use this as a lesson in temperature, science, safety when cooking, states of matter etc. Eat a meal with the group using eggs prepared in different ways– how many dishes can they think of to prepare?



Storytelling Space

Establishing a suitable space for the telling of a story is crucial. The setting may range from a single listener up to a large audience, and the size of the group impacts directly on the way the story needs to be told. Often, the larger the audience, the more the storyteller's repertoire is challenged: movements, mimics and gesture will need to be exaggerated, voices raised and arrangements more elaborate.

Storytelling settings may vary from bedsides, armchairs or cushions towards a tent, a specific part of the room, deliberately chosen and arranged. In selecting settings for story telling it is important to consider how it supports the purposes of storytelling (entertainment, bonding, sharing, informing, cultural purposes etc.) including of course competence development. The setting may be arranged in such a way that the children feel comfortable and distraction is minimized. Particular purposes may of course influence the setting requirements. Suspense, excitement, fun and joy all require slightly different settings.

The choice of location, objects, tools, toys, pets, materials, pictures and other features need to be carefully chosen to support the story, the atmosphere and the intended (or unintended) competence development.

To the storyteller it is a challenge to seek to include elements in the storytelling setting that may serve a role supporting the story through symbols, sounds, cues... Such elements may be important tools in visualizing the story, including sounds/sound effects, smells and tactile elements to support competence development.

Don't forget that there are different types of learners (tactile, auditory, visual). Consider them when preparing the space for the later competence development



activities in relation to the story. Consider what additional tools or elements you will need for any exercises resulting from the storytelling session (pencils, paper, fabrics, costume etc.). You find many example exercises in this handbook but also in the example stories at the website.

Guidelines:

- Determine the number of listeners/ the size of the setting
- Consider the range of purposes of the specific story telling situation
- Carefully choose the location
- Consider the ways in which you may optimally make use of the setting, or how to arrange the setting in a way that allows you to make optimal use of it.
- Try to find ways to include multiple senses.
- Choose or arrange the setting accordingly.



Sinbad the Sailor

Third Voyage

Many years later, again restless for travel, Sinbad sailed away but was soon caught up on an island inhabited by a huge “man-like creature”. This monster begins eating the crew, starting with the captain (who is the fattest). Sinbad hatches a plan to blind this giant with two red-hot iron spits used for roasting the poor shipmates. Sinbad and the surviving crew escape on a raft they hastily assembled; however, the giant’s mate hurls rocks at them as they escape, killing most of the men. Sinbad returns home once again...

Sinbad 's Fourth Voyage»»»



Key Competence 5: Learning to learn

Sinbad has a keen awareness for **opportunities** and organises his own learning accordingly; in this instance he notices the spit used for roasting humans can be utilised instead as a weapon. The ability to **pursue one's own** learning individually or in groups is demonstrated by this story segment

Suggested Exercise:

Role play this scene, dividing your group up into 2's and 3's. Each group takes on a different role/character and acts out the story in their own way. Afterwards experiment with making changes to the story; what would happen if the giant didn't get blinded, or if Sinbad was eaten first?



Involving Children

Throughout the storytelling session children may be involved in the process by various means. Firstly, the way in which the story is presented may trigger active thought among the children. Questions, dilemma's or challenges may add to this involvement. This kind of involvement is important for the story, but at the same time it may interfere with the structure of the story. Therefore, it is crucial that the storyteller allows involvement without losing touch with the thread of the story.

Since competences include knowledge, skills and attitudes/values, it is crucial to reflect on each of these aspects. The same applies to the other three components of competences (actions, context and quality– see *Pedagogical Framework* for details). Taken together this implies that storytellers do not only give the course of events but also pay attention to feelings, values, and quality issues (good and bad, kind/unkind, right and wrong, benefits, allies or enemies, rich or poor, brave or weak, etc.). The storyteller may address such issue him/herself, or– even better– talk about them with the children.

Involving the children may be done in

explicit (questions, time outs) or

more **implicit** ways (inviting looks, curious looks, nodding, etc.).

In addition to involving children in the story as told, it is also possible to seek ways to make the telling of the story a shared activity by embedding the story in processes of play or games. Children learn naturally by playing, so including role-playing as part of the storytelling activity, or playing a game based on the story (ask the children to act out the story they've just heard, or adapt a game such as





'rock/paper/scissors' to include the names of three characters instead). Invite questions from the children or ask them questions throughout the story: for example, if your story features a river, you could 'pause' and ask the children about rivers, can they name any, have they visited any, ever swam in one...

The competence development of the children will be promoted when the story allows for identification, active thought, exploration of options, involvement in choices, feelings and emotions, use of all senses, and reflection.

Warm Up

Especially with young children, games are a fantastic way to ease into storytelling, and also get everyone comfortable- particularly at the start of a session. Warming up will also help your voice, help you to relax and if you are nervous, burn off some excess energy. Children (and adults for that matter) may fidget when sat down, so a simple warm-up game can remedy this.

Play also introduces certain techniques such as using your voice, making eye contact, or captivating your audience, which directly benefit the storytelling experience.



Guidelines:

- Try to involve children during the story telling process, but respect the structure
- Involve children at various aspects of competences what is the situation, what is done, what does it take, where does it lead to, how good or bad is that and for whom?
- Involving children may be done explicitly and in a more implicit way. For the story telling process it is good to avoid too many time outs.
- Select ways of involving children that activate them, that make them reflect and that make them evaluate the content of the story
- Dialogues may contribute effectively to the active involvement of children and therefor to their competence development.
- Consider embedding the story in a process of play and/or games.
- Allow the children to take part in any games or role-playing based around the story
- Stimulate the children to think actively, explore options, estimate risks, express emotions, use senses and reflect on the course of events
- Set time aside for the children to reflect on the effects and impacts of the actions, and the choices made in the story



Sinbad the Sailor

Fourth Voyage

Once again sailing away, Sinbad is shipwrecked on an island of cannibals, who feed his crew a madness-inducing plant before they are fattened up for dinner. Sinbad spits out the plant and makes his escape before he is eaten, ending up in a nearby land. Meeting the king, he is eventually befriended by the royals and given a beautiful wife. Sadly she dies, but local custom dictates the spouse must be buried alive at the same time, in their finest clothes and jewels. Sinbad is shut up in the tomb, but notices a butterfly fly up into the roof of the cavern. Gathering all the jewels of those previously buried, he climbs up after the butterfly and spies a tiny crack through which he can escape. A passing ship carries him home, wealthier than ever..

Sinbad 's Fifth Voyage»»»»



Key Competence 2: Communication in foreign languages

In this section of the story, Sinbad is faced with both cannibals and the king of a strange land; where he must either **communicate** in a foreign language or demonstrate **intercultural understanding** and the ability to mediate with others. He understands the **customs** (burial of the surviving partner) and turns this to his advantage.

Suggested Exercise:

Talk to your group about languages– how many different languages can they think of? Do any of them speak another language or know any words. Write out a list of simple words (hello, thank you, my name is... etc.) in as many languages as they know, highlight the variety of the spoken word around the world.



Supporting Further Competence Development

Once the story will be presented children may be stimulated to digest it, to further elaborate on it, or to reflect on it. During the storytelling process it is important to allow the children to experience the story fully. Once the story is told, the process may turn into a more focused process of competence development: at this point it becomes more educational.

The story may be reconstructed, assignments may be given to make choices, find picture or point at objects/images. Children may be asked to mention similar situations (*'were you ever lost?' 'have you ever been in a dangerous situation?'*). They may be challenged to think how they might act in certain situations, or what they could have done differently in the past. Furthermore it is important to connect the story with various senses, which may be achieved by choosing a mix of tasks/assignments accordingly (*'how would it feel to be alone in a forest?' 'what would you hear?' 'what would you see?'*).

In relation to the story's content it is possible to set assignments in appropriate domains such as numeracy, literacy, semantics, rules, emotions, relations, social competences or expressive competences; bearing in mind the age of the children and their likelihood of understanding the tasks set before them.

Think again about the 8 key competences explained at the beginning and about appropriate exercises to promote the competence development. In the story collection (available as download resource at the project website) you may find many examples, such as how the story of Sweet Porridge can be used to:

- ◆ work on visual differentiation or deal with proportions- both important



basic mathematical skills

- ◆ explore how sensory bins can be integrated to train basic competences in science
- ◆ learn how role play can be used to develop social competences

Peer learning has proven to contribute greatly to the language development of children; by engaging in peer learning and discussing the story with classmates, children engage in modelling, assisting, directing, tutoring, negotiating, affirming and contradicting each other in literacy activities. Use these examples as a resource, but also to stimulate your own creativity.

Guidelines:

- Let children reconstruct the story
- Give assignments to help children digest the story
- Consider tasks to visualize the story
- Compare the story with other real life and fictitious stories
- Include all senses in the assignments
- Help children consider other situations and actions
- Evoke specific competences within the key competence domains and sub-competence areas
- Re- telling stories contributes to literacy and wider competence development
- Stimulate children to re-enact the story (perhaps using puppets)
- Include peer learning to evoke interaction and as a consequence language development.



Sinbad the Sailor

Fifth Voyage

Years pass and Sinbad the Sailor forgets the danger he faced in his youth. Eager for adventure, he finds a ship and sails away. His crew find a large egg of Rukh on an island and breaks it; although Sinbad warns them of their folly, they ignore him until the bird parents attack the ship. They sink the boat by dropping huge boulders onto the deck; Sinbad survives but is captured by the Old Man of the Sea who sits up on Sinbad's shoulders day and night. Eventually, Sinbad tricks the Old man into drinking wine; as he falls asleep, Sinbad sneaks away and gets to a boat, which is carried by the currents to the City of Apes.

In this city, the inhabitants hide in the day from man-eating apes who roam the city but sleep in coconut trees at night. Sinbad throws stones at them, and they reply by throwing coconuts back at Sinbad. After some time he has so many that he sells them to the town-folk who revere coconuts as treasure. His fortune restored once more, Sinbad returns home...

Sinbad 's Sixth Voyage»»»»



Key Competence 4: Digital competence

A traditional, historical story such as Sinbad may not seem to assist the development of digital competences, but it is the critical use of information technology, and thus basic skills in information and communication technology, that Sinbad demonstrates when he tricks the Old Man of the Sea (through amassing information about the old man and spying an opportunity to trick him). Likewise, his plan to throw rocks in exchange for valuable coconuts can be seen as the critical use of information.

Suggested Exercise

Use computers to learn about *roc's* and other mythical (or include extinct) animals. How many different stories can they find that feature *roc's* or other mythical animals? Why do they suppose mythological animals were included in stories (for example, could they be based on real animals mistakenly identified, or were they always intended as fantastical elements to excite the listener?). Encourage discussion about these themes with your group.



Acquiring Storytelling Competences

Listening to stories adds to the competence of storytelling among the children. This is important because it allows children to develop narrative skills and the ability to look at their lives as a story with themselves as the protagonist. This competence includes the ability to reflect and to analyse events, to deal with emotions and to turn experience into a story, or to compare experiences with stories. In terms of competences this all adds to a sense of initiative and direction, of self-regulation, creativity, reflexivity, and of learning to learn.

In order to help children acquire these competences you may ask for their own real stories / personal experiences, similar stories, different stories, fictitious similar and different stories etc. Children may be challenged to invent new stories (e.g. using 'story skeletons'), or invited to explain the features of a good story, giving brief examples of stories. In order to actually practice story telling it is necessary to let the children tell stories to others, perhaps to their peers. Afterwards it is important to discuss the stories and the way they are told. For the older children it is recommended to work on a class or school culture in which creativity is supported, encouraged and protected from criticism and competition.

Ask one child to tell a story to their classmates, it needs to be reasonably long (you may need to assist and prompt them). Then, ask the other children to say / write down what they can remember. Were any important elements missed out? Do the class remember the correct order of structure of the story?

When you ask children to tell stories, use themes that are relevant for the age group. Provide a narrative structure for working on stories but be prepared to



introduce and play with variations. If possible you may use character-setting-problem-cards (deal the cards yourself randomly or let children choose themselves). Use personal anecdotes from the pupils' lives (local settings and characters): place, activities, times, objects, photographs. It may be helpful to work with metaphors. Start a story with a problem. For the actual story telling by the children it is important to agree on a few rules such as: Everyone listens during someone else's story; Only give positive feedback (What did you like about the story? What did he/she do well? What worked?).

To stimulate storytelling among children a storyteller may consider many options. Fundamentally it is beneficial to let the children choose a story they would like to tell. To help them in the preparing the story and telling it, be expressive towards the children even on the verge of overdoing it. String-along stories may be fun and may help the children get used to taking their role as a story teller, or wordless books could also support children in their acquisition of storytelling competence. Use of props also assist children to remember the important elements of their story, and may relax them if they are nervous.

Guidelines:

- Ask children to for stories they know
- Ask them about personal stories
- Preferably allow them to choose stories they wish to tell
- Help them analyze these stories
- Help them to use story skeletons (variations)
- Invite them to tell stories
- Agree on a few rules
- Reflect : Ask for Feedback / Give Feedback

Sinbad the Sailor

Sixth Voyage

Sinbad the Sailor is once again shipwrecked, this time at the base of towering cliffs. With no food to be found, his companions starve until only he is left alive. Fashioning a raft out of the ship's remains, he discovers a cavern underneath the cliffs with a swiftly flowing river running through it. Sinbad travels through the darkness and notices, by the light of his torch, the bottom of the river is covered in precious jewels. He falls asleep, waking in the city of the King of Ceylon, who marvels at the stories Sinbad tells him. Asking Sinbad to return to his homeland with a gift for the king there, he is given many presents including a cup carved from a single ruby and a bed made from the skin of an enormous serpent. Once home, the king is impressed with stories of Ceylon and rewards Sinbad with gold...

Sinbad 's Seventh Voyage »»»»



Key Competence 1: Communication in the mother tongue

The ability to **express** and **interpret** concepts, thoughts, feelings and opinions, and to interact in a **creative** way in a range of societal and cultural contexts, is crucial to Sinbad. By impressing the king of Ceylon with his stories, Sinbad is well-rewarded and asked to return to his own king, bearing gifts which only further enhances his reputation in his homeland.

Suggested Exercise

Discussing about the story and its content supports besides the Communication in the Mother Tongue also other competences, e.g. cultural awareness: Where is Ceylon? Has the name changed? Encourage your group to learn about different countries in the world, and what former names they may have had. What languages were spoken there? Why were the names changed? Does their home country have a history of different names?



Storyteller's Summary

This template should help you plan what you want from a storytelling session, which story to choose and how to best enhance the experience for your group / class.

[1] Setting Your Space

Establishing a specific place for the storytelling activity is crucial, as it **welcomes** the group and settles down your audience. Every time you embark on a storytelling journey, try and use the same **space**; for example the same corner of your classroom, or build a storytelling area (a tent, an area with cushions, in the garden etc.). You could always enter through a gate, or begin with a song, or allow the children to bring their own chair; anything which **establishes** the desired tone for your activity

[2] Ritual

Create an **atmosphere**, one that can be replicated time and again, to establish in your group's minds that a story is about to start without the need for explicit directions. Take on a different **persona** to your usual one so the children recognise the difference between *you the teacher* and *you the storyteller*, or use a **prop** such as a musical instrument, your 'special hat', sit in the same chair etc.

[3] Criteria

Consider what you should be asking yourself when **choosing** which story to use. For example, use the **matrix** we include (page 13) to focus on the competences you want to explore within the story, or which **activity** you want the group to perform afterwards.



[4] Practical Skills

Decide beforehand which **practical aspects** of the storytelling experience you intend to include, such as eye contact, facial expressions, movement, rhythm, pace, body language etc.

[5] Keep It simple

Be explicit about starting off **simple**; the experience doesn't need to be 'all or nothing' and you don't need to develop every single competence every time. Choose a simple story you know well, and remember **repetition** is perfectly fine; children love hearing the same story, and you could always develop the story as you grow in confidence.

[6] Interaction

Some storytellers prefer to be the focus of **attention** throughout the story, but it is usually beneficial to encourage some interaction amongst your children. This can be **vocal**, or **physical** (standing on their feet etc.), or through **questions**. For example, if your story starts off with *"Once, in a forest..."* you might ask the group *"Who's been to a forest?"* or *"What does it sound like in a forest?"*. Encouraging interaction enhances competence development and **engages** the children fully.

[7] Closing The Story

At the end of your story, **link** directly with competence development– if your story features different numbers of objects then you may wish to develop mathematical **competences** (in *"Goldilocks"* for example, use the number of bowls of porridge or beds to instigate mathematical investigations amongst your group).

[8] Sharing

Finally, ask the children to **share** their achievements: if they have created artwork or solved a maths puzzle directly linked to the story, share that with the group so everyone can **appreciate** what has been created.



Sinbad the Sailor

Seventh Voyage

In the final Sinbad the Sailor story, we find him once again shipwrecked on a desolate shore. Captured by slave-traders, he is spared his life by agreeing to submit all of his wealth to them, rather than fight. Sold to a wealthy merchant, Sinbad tells his new master that he too was once wealthy and knew much of the world. The merchant tests Sinbad by asking him to capture some ivory from a herd of elephants, which were feared amongst the land for the ferocity and ability to kill any man who approached. Sinbad follows the herd for several days, hiding from them; until he noticed the largest bull elephant walked with a limp. One night, Sinbad approached the sleeping elephant and pulled a huge thorn from his foot. The elephant awoke and, instead of crushing Sinbad, allowed him to ride on his back.

After some time, Sinbad discovered where the elephants kept their store of ivory, and took two huge tusks back with him to the merchant. The merchant was so impressed that he freed Sinbad in exchange for the tusks, agreeing to share the profit between them once he revealed the location of the ivory store.



So once again, Sinbad returned home a wealthy man, only this time he really did see out his days in leisure and luxury. Upon recounting this last story to Sinbad the Porter, Sinbad gave him 1000 gold coins and wished him a long and happy life.

Key Competence 6: Social and civic competences

Even after falling to the level of slave, Sinbad participates effectively in social and working life, and eventually manages to rise up again to his former social standing. His understanding of codes of conduct and customs, in different environments, is essential to his own well-being; his personal, interpersonal and intercultural competence has equipped him to deal with negative situations and negotiate a positive outcome.

Suggested Exercise

Use the final section of “Sinbad” to explore slavery and the implications the historical trade has upon the modern world. Encourage the children to research about the countries involved, the importance of shipping (transporting the slaves), plantations (providing sugar and other commodities for western countries) and the abolition movement.



Glossary

Competence: In the context of this handbook, a competence is a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes [appropriate to primary-aged children]. Key competences are those which all individuals need for personal fulfilment and development, active citizenship, social inclusion and employment.

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex:32006H0962>

Pedagogy: The practice (or the art, the science or the craft) of teaching. Pedagogy is the interactive process that takes place between the educator and the child to enable learning to take place.

Pedagogical interactions: Face to face interactions educators engage in with children; they may take the form of cognitive or social interactions.

Pedagogical framing: Is the 'behind-the-scenes' work that educators do with regards to provision of materials, arrangement of space, and the establishment of daily routines to support learning through play, exploration, cooperation and the equitable use of resources.

Pedagogical techniques and strategies: practices which support learning, for instance, social interactions, assessment, scaffolding learning.

Children: The reader should assume that when the term 'children' is used, this is meant to include children with a range of abilities, personalities, strengths, needs, backgrounds and interests. The terms 'His/'Her' or 'He/She' are used intermittingly throughout the document to represent both boys and girls equally.

Parents: The term 'Parent' or 'Parents' is used to represent the people who care for the child, that is mothers, fathers, foster carers, step-parents, grandparents, single parents, heterosexual or same sex couples.

Early Childhood Educator: This generally used term describes all those who



work in early childhood care and education services including Practitioners, Childminders, Teachers, Special Needs Teachers/Assistants, Playworkers and Volunteers.



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