

Teaching the Story — Activity Plan

Design one story-telling activity for your child's age band, grounded in the Story Map — Hook, Character, Conflict, Turn, Resolution.

The skill you're growing

A story says what happened to a real person, in order, until the listener feels it. An argument just says what to believe. You're teaching the first one — true, specific, and built on a real turn — years before your child will need it.

Early (~5–9) — your plan

The activity

Usually "tell me about a time it wasn't fair" or a close variant. What will you ask, and when will you ask it (a regular slot, or catch a moment)?

The prompt you'll give

Write the actual words. Keep it simple: who was there, what happened, what it felt like, what happened after.

Middle (~10–13) — your plan

The local issue

Something they actually care about — a closed park, a co-op rule, a friend treated unfairly. Borrowed outrage won't build the skill.

The prompt you'll give

Walk the five fields out loud: Hook, Character, Conflict, Turn, Resolution. Ask for 4–6 sentences, then have them read it aloud to you.

Older (~14–18) — your plan

The piece

An op-ed or a piece of testimony (real or hypothetical hearing). What's the issue, and who is it written for?

The prompt you'll give

Hand them the Story Map directly. One sentence per field first, then expand to 300–500 words. Time the read-aloud if it's testimony — three minutes is the real-world limit.

Facilitation reminders

Model your own true story first — a small, honest one — before asking for theirs

Ask questions that pull the story out; don't write it for them

If a dispute surfaces mid-story (a sibling, a rule), separate that conversation out loud — this session isn't family court

Keep the floor: every story here is something that actually happened, not invented or exaggerated

Check yourself for steering toward a conclusion instead of the craft — skill, not side