



A Creative Toolkit for Libraries

Imaginative Spaces



Story Bag

Things you need

- Colourful bag
- Fill it with shredded paper (preferably from a paper shredder)
- Write some words or phrases on some colourful lollipop sticks (you can buy these in most Pound shops). You need a mix of characters '*hairy dog*,' '*scary giant*,' '*a small child*,' with some locations, '*tall trees*,' '*an empty house*,' '*a grassy park*' and add in some seasons or weather to suggest, '*a windy day*,' '*warm summer*,' '*winter*'. You can add in whatever you like.
- Mix the lollipop sticks in with the paper shredding in the bag
- Music - instrumental is best. Film soundtracks are good because they are composed to promote a particular atmosphere or evoke a certain emotion. Music will inspire creativity and is best played from a wireless blue-tooth speaker which can sit in the centre of a circle. A CD player will be fine too.

How to play

Sitting in a circle (whole class/group, with teachers too), introduce the Story Bag as a bag full of shredded stories, show the circle. Invite the children/young people to re-create the stories by playing the Story Bag Game (which is essentially 'pass the parcel').

Play the music. When the music stops, the story bag holder pops their hand in, to find a lollipop stick. They read it aloud. (It is good for the facilitator to repeat the word/phrase).

Music begins again and the bag continues its journey around the circle. There may not be time for everyone in the circle to search for a lollipop stick but it is best to have at least 20 inside, so that there are plenty.

When you are satisfied with the amount of lolly sticks the circle has retrieved, close the parcel part of the Story Bag Game and ask the lollipop holders to read the words again out loud, repeating each one.

Place them in the centre of the circle with words facing up. Invite the children/yp's, in pairs, to create an on the spot story using all, most or some of the lollipop stick words, locations, characters. Give them one minute. Gather their attention again (music can help with this). Ask for pairs to share their story. Before they share, ask them to consider how they might use their voices to keep their audience's attention and gather intrigue and interest.

If there is time, ask the other children/yp's what they liked about the stories; it's great to encourage positive peer to peer feedback. You can highlight that this is the starting point for stories and the library contains billions of others that they may be interested in exploring – maybe one day, they'll have their own story on your shelves.

Story Bag was developed by Jayne Williams, Artist in Residence at The BRITE Centre, Braunstone's Library.

See more fun, free and simple toolkit sessions that anyone can deliver within their library at www.thesparkarts.co.uk