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Lesson Plan



### Story Starters Teacher's Guide

Story Starters inspire students to write by serving up hundreds of writing prompts in creative combinations.

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## Animated Help Guide

For a step-by-step view of how [Scholastic Story Starters](#) works, click the help button on the [activity home page](#).

Ready to get students excited about writing? [Scholastic's Story Starters](#) serves up hundreds of creative combinations that take the writer's block out of creative writing for students. Plus, it is now available for iPad!

Set young writers loose with prompts that explore the themes of Adventure, Fantasy, or Sci-Fi. Or choose Scrambler, for random word combinations. Story Starters gives ideas for character, plot, and setting. If you want to change your writing prompt, pull the lever and it will serve up a new prompt, either piece-by-piece or all at once.

## Objectives

Students will:

1. Discuss and identify what makes a story compelling. They may reflect on their favorite stories and what elements work together to create powerful tales. These may include:
  - types of stories they prefer, such as adventure or science fiction
  - strong characters
  - exciting action
  - a surprising plot
  - details about a place you've never been
2. Generate story starters that inspire. Students can choose a theme and then produce prompts using the Spin lever. They can adjust one piece of the prompt at a time with the Spin This Wheel buttons.
3. Write a short creative writing piece. Students may choose to use the notebook, letter, newspaper, or postcard templates for their writing and may choose to include a drawing with their story. When students print their work, they are rewarded with a brief animation.

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## Ideas for Using This Activity

**Scholastic Story Starters** is a flexible teaching tool that can be used in a variety of ways to fit your classroom schedule and teaching style. It is an ideal computer lab activity (also available for iPad), that is highly engaging and sharpens essential student writing skills. You may wish to adopt one of the following suggestions for using Story Starters, or develop your own approach depending on your classroom needs.

**Morning Activity** Have Story Starters ready to go when students arrive in your classroom in the morning. They can begin work right away – a great way to get your students settled down and ready for the day!

**Computer Lab** Story Starters is an ideal computer lab activity because it can be easily modified to fit a short amount of time or a longer period, is highly engaging for students, and sharpens essential student writing skills. It can also be accessed on iPad.

**Writing Time** Story Starters is a great way to get your students motivated and enthusiastic about writing. You may want to have students choose topics using Story Starters, and then have them incorporate skills they have been working on in their writing.

**Interactive Whiteboard** Using Story Starters with a whiteboard and projector is an excellent way to model a good writer's thinking process. Pick a topic, and then think aloud as you write, explaining how you decide what to include, what changes or revisions you make as you write, what words you choose, and how you start, develop, and end your piece. You can also use a whiteboard as a way to engage students in a collaborative writing project while teaching or practicing certain writing skills.

Here are some additional ideas for using this activity with your class:

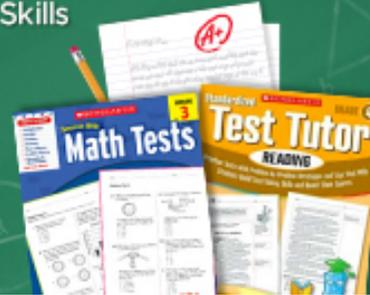
1. In younger grades, work on the story collaboratively as a class. Ask students to supply such details as:
  - How does the main character look and act?
  - What happens in the beginning, middle, and end of this story?
  - What words or phrases describe where the story takes place?
2. Generate a new story starter each day, make copies and distribute or ask students to record the starter in their notebooks. Have students free write for 10 minutes using the prompt as a starting point. Students may volunteer to share their writing with the class.
3. Print several story starter templates. Break students up into small groups and distribute one starter to each student. Each student writes the first two lines of their story. Encourage students to write in an open-ended way that invites the addition of new plot points and story details. After writing two sentences, each student passes their sheet to the student on the left. Then, students add two sentences to their new story, and so on. Once small groups have completed several short stories, ask each group to share their favorite



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one by reading it aloud to the class.

4. For more advanced writers, have each student create a Story Starters anthology. Ask students to generate and print several (3-5) story starter prompt pages. Then, challenge them to consider their starters as chapters in a book that need to be strung together to make up a larger plot. Students may arrange their starters in any order and should feel free to introduce new characters and details to establish a world where their story starters coexist.

5. Once students have explored the Story Starter machine and have completed their own stories online, create your own class set of story starters. First, dissect and discuss the structure of the [Scholastic Story Starters](#):

- Action directive (Describe a favorite meal for, Write a funny story about)
- Adjective (a stubborn, a rubbery)
- Noun (moose, baseball player)
- Dependent clause (who opens a smoothie stand, who lives in a museum.)

Then, distribute strips of paper and have students write their own story starter elements and deposit them into one of four bags, hats, or bowls. Ask volunteers to pull one paper slip from each vessel and read the starter out loud. Discuss what elements of the prompts do and do not work and what might be modified to make the story starters even better.

6. Encourage students to use Story Starters on their iPads. When students have finished writing a story on the iPad, they can save it to the iBooks application as a PDF by tapping on the "Open in" menu option. The saved story on the iPad is a convenient way for students to share their work with family and friends. (Teachers can also save the Story Starters Teacher's Guide to their iPads using the same procedure.)

## Reproducibles

Use these reproducibles to enhance your students Story Starters experience.

[Story Map \(PDF\)](#)

To facilitate outlining a longer story, students can fill out this printable with plot details including statement of the story problem and resolution and summary of the beginning, middle, and end of the story.

[Setting Comparison \(PDF\)](#)

Students use this PDF to compare and contrast setting elements from their own lives and that of their story.

## Related Resources



## Story Starters

This interactive tool creates quick writing prompts to help young students delve into creative writing.

[Read more >](#)

### Story Starters: Eight Great Ways to Kick Off A Story

By Steve Metzger

Start a fantastic story with these writing prompts from famous authors and leaders.

[Read more >](#)

Subjects: [Literary Devices](#), [Writing Prompts](#), [Early Writing](#)

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