

# Read it. Play it. Make it your own.

A free Story Studio for K-2 with adult support. Acting, scripts, filmmaking, book-making and kind improv. Choose a small adventure; there is no need to finish every page.

## Choose a route

**Act a scene:** pages 3-6, about 20 minutes.

**Plan a tiny film:** pages 7-10, about 25 minutes.

**Make a little book:** pages 11-15, two 20-minute sessions.

**Play kind improv:** pages 17-20, about 15 minutes.

Page 16 works as an optional reflection for every route.

## Set up in 3 minutes

Gather plain paper, pencils and your chosen pages. Read the adult notes and the scene first. No costumes, stage, camera or purchased book are needed. All scripts here are original practice scenes, separate from the book stories.

## 0-3 minutes: offer choices

Name today's small goal and give a choice of speaking, drawing, narrating, pointing or listening. Model how to pass or change roles.

## 3-7 minutes: show one example

Act one line, draw one shot or tell one beginning. Ask what the choice helps the audience understand.

## 7-15 minutes: make it together

Use pairs, an adult partner or a small group. Read lines aloud for children to echo or express in their own words. Rehearsal can be quiet and seated.

## 15-20 minutes: share and notice

Invite sharing without requiring it. Ask about the character's want, a useful story detail or a kind group choice. Give specific observations, not ratings.

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### Free 30-minute introductory workshop

Live on Zoom: the whole book + voices + a turn directing C. J.

**Adults: [cjmcguirebooks.com/visit](https://cjmcguirebooks.com/visit)**

Subject to availability. School/library groups; a teacher or librarian hosts.

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# Everyone has a way in.

The goal is shared storytelling and practice, not a polished performance.

## **Make participation flexible**

Offer a visual sequence and preview the activity. Describe images aloud. Read directions and lines to the group. Welcome drawing, dictation, signing and familiar AAC or other communication supports; give time for responses. Never require eye contact, standing, touch, a loud voice or a solo performance.

## **Keep reading support appropriate**

For children not reading independently, an adult reads and the child echoes, chooses a gesture or narrates in their own words. For ready readers, reread the short script with phrasing. These activities practice meaning and expression; they do not replace explicit decoding instruction.

## **Build kindness into rehearsal**

The joke belongs to a sock, a sandwich or an impossible problem. Do not imitate classmates, accents, bodies, disabilities, families or identities. Teach “Pass for now,” “Can we try another idea?” and “Let’s pause.” Honor them immediately.

## **Notice learning, without scoring confidence**

Can a child explain what their character wants? Put events in an understandable order? Choose a word, gesture or picture that conveys meaning? Offer or accept a role without pressure? Use a private conversation when a child does not want to share publicly.

## **Print and use**

Pages 1-2 are adult reference. Copy only the route you choose. US Letter: actual size; A4: Fit. Student pages use black lines and white backgrounds. Classroom, library, home and closed-class-platform copies are free; retain credit and link to the website for public sharing.

## **About this resource**

Developed for C. J. McGuire Books with AI assistance; educator review is welcome. The activities have not been independently evaluated or formally mapped to standards. Send general feedback to [hello@cjmguirebooks.com](mailto:hello@cjmguirebooks.com); do not send children’s names, photos or identifiable work.

# One line. Three ways.



Say it, sign it, point to a feeling or direct a partner. A grown-up can read the line first.

## Your line

**"There is a sock in my soup."**

### **PUZZLED**

You are trying to understand how it got there.

### **DELIGHTED**

You are a pretend sock collector. Best lunch ever.

### **VERY SERIOUS**

You are a detective announcing an important clue.

# Build a character



Choose a made-up character. Give them something they want. They do not need to sound like anyone you know.

**Draw your character, or have an adult describe your idea.**

**My character wants... But...**

**One word, gesture or expression I will try...**

Try a sleepy robot who wants quiet, a teacup who wants a bigger hat, or your own idea.

# The Sock Inspector



An original tiny scene. Two speakers; the narrator can be an adult. Swap roles only if you want to.

## **NARRATOR**

A cook peers into a container. Something is wrong.

## **COOK**

There is a sock in my soup.

## **INSPECTOR**

A serious case. Let me see.

## **COOK**

Please do not taste the evidence.

## **INSPECTOR**

Handles. No soup. This is a laundry basket.

## **COOK**

That explains the trousers.

## **NARRATOR**

The inspector bows. The basket says nothing.

## **Try it again**

What does the inspector believe at first? What changes? Show the change with a pause, a picture or an expression. The basket can remain extremely quiet.

# The pause has a job



A pause can give someone time to wonder. It can also give them time to understand.

**Try this original line**

**“I opened the cupboard and found a dancing potato.”**

**Put a / where you want a pause. Ask an adult to write the line here.**

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**Draw what you want your listener to imagine.**

**My pause helps because...**

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# Tell it in three pictures



Your camera can be imaginary. Draw, describe or direct a partner. Each frame gives the audience a different piece of the story.

**WIDE: show the place. Where are we?**

**MEDIUM: show the character doing something.**

**CLOSE-UP: show the tiny detail that matters.**

# Write a tiny script



Choose a problem: a hat that will not stay on, a book that sneezes, or your own idea.  
Dictating counts as writing.

**My scene is about...**

**Character 1 says...**

**Character 2 says...**

**Something changes when...**

**The last line is...**

# A film without a camera



Make a paper movie: one person reveals the pictures while someone tells the story. A group can share jobs, or one person can choose several.

## Choose useful jobs

**Story artist:** draws or chooses pictures.

**Narrator:** tells, signs or directs how the story is told.

**Director:** helps choose what comes next.

**Performer:** acts or points to the action.

**Sound designer:** chooses a comfortable sound or a written sound word.

## Our beginning, middle and ending are...

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## My job choice is... A different job I could try is...

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Grown-up note: recording is optional. Follow your setting's usual permission arrangements before filming anyone. Paper movies work on their own.

# Give your story a sound



Sound can tell a story quietly. Silence is a choice too. Agree on a comfortable volume before you begin.

## The moment we want people to notice...

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## A sound, sound word or silence that fits...

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## Why it helps the audience understand...

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# A little book with a big idea



Choose an ordinary thing with an unusual wish. A shoe wants to fly. A spoon wants a day off. Or invent your own.

## My character wants...

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## Something gets in the way...

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## They try... Then...

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Next: make four pages. Cover, beginning, middle, ending. Draw or dictate; an adult can write your exact words. Keep pages loose or ask an adult to attach them.

# My book begins here

Your pictures and words tell the story. Draw, dictate or write.



**The picture I want my reader to see...**

**My book's title is...**

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# Meet my character



Your pictures and words tell the story. Draw, dictate or write.

**The picture I want my reader to see...**

A large, empty rectangular box with rounded corners, intended for a drawing or illustration.

**First...**

Three horizontal lines within a rounded rectangular box, intended for writing the first part of the story.

# Something happens



Your pictures and words tell the story. Draw, dictate or write.

**The picture I want my reader to see...**

**Then...**

# One last surprise



Your pictures and words tell the story. Draw, dictate or write.

**The picture I want my reader to see...**

**At last...**

# What did we make together?



You can reflect quietly with a partner or a grown-up. Sharing with the whole room is a choice.

## A story choice I made...

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## Something a partner helped with...

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## Next time, I would like to try...

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Every role helped tell the story. A quiet idea counts. A changed mind counts. Making room for someone counts.

# Make room for one more.

A 15-minute community-building game. Practice inviting, offering choices and speaking up kindly. Adult-led; no special equipment.

## Set up in 2 minutes

Draw a moon bus and a new passenger. Offer driver, map reader, door-sound designer and quiet directing or observing. Jobs can be shared. Agree: we laugh at the situation, ask before changing another person's work, and may pass or change jobs. Nobody has to move seats.

## 0-3 min: model the invitation

Hold up your drawn passenger: "This character wants to help. How could our crew make room?" Never assign a child to be excluded or to act as a bully.

## 3-6 min: borrow a phrase

Model "Would you like to read the map with me?" and "You can watch first." Ask which gives a real choice. Children choose a card, point, sign, dictate or offer their own words.

## 6-10 min: play one tiny scene

Pairs direct the adult's passenger or play welcoming crew members. After an invitation, the adult says: "I'd like to help, but I don't want to make a sound." Try a quiet shared job. Twenty seconds of scene is plenty.

## 10-13 min: be an upstander

Narrate a fictional snag: "Our pretend map has only one name on it. Another character helped too." Try "Let's make room for both names" or "Let's ask a grown-up for help." Do not reenact name-calling or a real incident.

## 13-15 min: notice one helpful choice

Ask what gave the passenger a way to join. Children tell, draw or point to a phrase; passing is fine. Keep one useful crew choice, such as sharing a job. Do not name or rate classmates.

# Words that make room



Choose a phrase, point to it, say it, sign it or ask someone to read it with you.

**INVITE**

Want to join us?

**SHARE**

We can do this job together.

**OFFER A CHOICE**

You can watch first.

**ASK**

Let's ask before we change your idea.

**SET A BOUNDARY**

Please stop. I don't like that.

**GET SUPPORT**

Let's ask a grown-up for help.

# When play needs a reset

Kindness needs an adult response, not just a poster.

## **If someone laughs at another person**

Stop calmly: “We can laugh at our silly story. We do not make someone the joke.” Check in privately with the affected child, offer another way to join or a break, and reset the activity. Do not require an apology performance or immediate forgiveness.

## **If someone’s idea is rejected**

Try: “We have two ideas. Could they happen in different scenes?” Offer turn-taking or a smaller choice. Children can decline a role or touch; accepting a fictional idea never means giving up a real boundary.

## **If a child wants to pass**

Say “You can watch, draw, help me turn a page, or join later.” Do not make earning a turn depend on speaking. Avoid a compulsory circle where everyone must perform.

## **If the situation is real or keeps happening**

Stop the game and follow your school or setting’s support procedures. Listen to the child and involve the appropriate adult. Do not ask children to resolve repeated bullying through improv, confrontation or public disclosure.

## **A quick learning check**

Can the group offer a real choice of role? Can a child identify one kind invitation or a way to get adult help? Accept private responses and practice again later. This brief game rehearses helpful actions; it is not a complete bullying-prevention program.

## **Make it easier or richer**

Start with only the adult’s puppet and two phrase choices. For more challenge, ask what the group could change so the invitation is practical: another job, a turn, space to draw, or extra time.

# Our crew makes room



Draw a way to include a pretend new traveler. Nobody in your class has to play the person left out.

**Our moon bus has room for...**

**A kind thing we could say...**

**A choice we could offer...**