1 What makes a story a story?

A Revise your understanding of ‘story talk’ by matching each definition below to a word in the vocabulary box.

- The writer of a story, play or poem
- A person, animal or fictional being in a story
- The ending of a story
- A passage taken from a story
- A synonym for ‘story’
- Stories about events that have not really happened

- The beginning of a story
- The storyline, or sequence of events that makes up a story, play or novel
- The solving of a problem
- The place or places where a story takes place
- A real or imaginary account of an event or series of events, for others to see, hear, read or feel
- The type of story

B In a group, discuss some of the first stories you remember hearing. Stories have existed for thousands of years – ever since people could talk. Some stories are written down but others are remembered and told for generations, changing along the way as each teller adds a little to the tale.

Did you know?
Tale, yarn, legend, myth, fable, anecdote, account, narrative and chronicle are all synonyms for stories.

synonym n. a word or phrase that means the same, or almost the same, as another word or phrase
Any volunteers? Who’d like to retell their favourite story to the class?

Did you know?
Have you ever felt a braille storybook? Braille is a written language for the blind. Patterns of raised dots make words and are felt and read with the fingertips.

1. What sort of stories were they?
2. Were they fact, fiction, or a mix of both?
3. Who told you the stories?
4. Did you hear them once or more than once?
5. Which story did you enjoy most? Why?

Take turns with a talk partner to retell a favourite story. Describe the setting and main characters.

1. Explain what genre it is.
2. Summarise the main events. ‘Summarise’ means don’t give too much detail.
3. Explain why you enjoy your story.
4. Comment on whether you’ve heard each other’s story before, or a different version of it.

Session 1 What makes a story a story?
2 Extend your reading range

A Discuss with a talk partner what you like in a story.
1 Use the features below to help your discussion.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characters similar to me or my age</th>
<th>Unusual, quirky characters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Animals that talk or act like people</td>
<td>Imaginary or faraway places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>An adventure or exciting events</td>
<td>Humour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional or familiar characters</td>
<td>Real life issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unexpected or unlikely events</td>
<td>Happy endings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sad or unclear endings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 Look at your independent readers and discuss their features.
3 Write two or three sentences in your notebook explaining what you enjoy in a story. Begin like this: I enjoy … because …
4 Exchange sentences with your partner to check for:
   - sentences that start with capital letters and end with full stops
   - at least one verb in each sentence
   - correct spelling.

B Choose a book for each other from the school or class library.
Try to choose something you think your partner wouldn’t normally read.
1 Review any information on the cover of the book chosen for you.
2 Read the beginning of the book.
3 Tell your partner whether you think you’d enjoy it.
   Give reasons using the words genre, character and setting.

Tip
Knowing what you like in a story helps you choose books you’ll enjoy.

8 Unit 1 Storybook
**AZ** Start a reading log to record all your reading, including non-fiction.

1. Fill in details about your independent reader and comment on what you did or didn’t enjoy. Use appropriate presentation writing.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Comment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6th September</td>
<td>The Legend of Spud Murphy</td>
<td>Eoin Colfer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tip**

Keeping a record of everything you read helps you remember what you did and didn’t enjoy.

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**3 Read and present an extract**

**A** In groups of four, prepare to read aloud an extract from *The Legend of Spud Murphy*. Discuss these questions about the book’s title.

1. Do you think ‘Spud’ is a real name? Give reasons.
2. What does it mean if someone is described as a ‘legend’?
3. Make a list of people you think are modern day legends.
4. What and whom do you think the book will be about? Will it be humorous or serious?

**B** Stories are often told in narrative and dialogue. You can improve your expression while reading if you can tell the difference.

1. Skim the extract to find out who narrates the story. How can you tell?
2. Scan it to establish how many people speak in the extract.

**Language focus**

**Narrative** is when the narrator tells the story.

**Dialogue** is the words characters say to each other, enclosed by speech marks.

“Don’t make us join the library,” Marty begged. “It’s too dangerous.”

A new line is started whenever a different person speaks.
The Legend of Spud Murphy

Marty tried to save us.
“Remember the last educational hobby?
The art classes? I was sick for days.”
“That was your own fault,” said Mum.
“I only had a drink of water.”
“You are not supposed to drink the water that people use to wash their brushes.”
Dad was thinking. “What about the library?” he said finally.
“What about it?” I said, trying to sound casual, but my stomach was churning.
“You both could join. Reading. It’s perfect. How can you cause trouble reading a book?”
“And it’s educational,” added Mum.
“Yes, of course, it’s educational too,” Dad agreed.
“How is it educational?” I asked, terrified by the idea.
“I’d much rather be outside riding a horse than inside reading about one.”
My mother tousled my hair. “Because, Will, sometimes the only horse you can ride is the one in your head.”
I had no idea what that meant.
“Don’t make us join the library,” Marty begged. “It’s too dangerous.”
“Dangerous? How could a library be dangerous?” Dad asked.
“It’s not the library,” Marty whispered. “It’s the librarian.”
“Mrs Murphy?” said Mum. “She’s a lovely old lady.”
The problem with grown-ups is that they only see what’s on the outside. But kids know the real truth. People forget to be on their best behaviour around kids, because nobody believes a word we say. Every kid in our town knew about Mrs Murphy. She was one of those people that kids steer clear of.

“She’s not a lovely old lady,” I said. “She’s a total nut.”
“Will! That’s a terrible thing to say.”
“But she is, Mum. She hates kids and she used to be a tracker in the army. Tracking kids from enemy countries.”
“Now you’re being ridiculous.”
“She has a spud gun under her desk,” added Marty.
“A gas-powered one that takes an entire potato in the barrel. She shoots kids with it if they make a noise in the library.

That’s why we call her Spud Murphy.”

My mother thought this was all very funny. “A spud gun! You’ll say anything to avoid reading a book.”

Eoin Colfer
4 Check your understanding

A Use close reading to answer these questions in your notebook.
1. What does Mum want the boys to do?
2. What happened to the family’s last educational hobby?
3. Why is Will’s stomach churning?
4. Who is Spud Murphy?
5. Summarise Mum’s and Will’s descriptions of Spud Murphy.
   Which is more likely to be accurate?
6. How would you react if you were told to join your library?

How did I do?
- Did I answer all the questions?
- Did I use evidence from the text in my answers?
- Did I express my ideas clearly?
- Did I write my answers as full sentences?

B Complete your reading log for the extract from *The Legend of Spud Murphy*. Write a comment about whether you would enjoy reading the rest of the book.

5 Work with verb tenses

Language focus

Verbs tell you what someone or something does, is, or has.Verb tenses are different forms of the verb that show when it takes place: whether it has already happened, is happening now or will happen in the future.

He drank a glass of water earlier. (past tense)
She drinks a glass of water every morning. (present tense)
They will drink a glass of water later. (future tense)
A Stories are usually in the past tense because they describe events that have already taken place. It’s important to keep the tense consistent so the reader doesn’t get confused.

1 Say each sentence aloud using the correct tense of the verb to tell to help you.
   a Marty tries to save us and (tell) Mum about the last educational hobby.
   b Marty tried to save us and (tell) Mum about the last educational hobby.

2 Replace tell in each sentence with the correct tense of the verbs remind, inform and alert.

B Change regular verbs into the past tense by adding the suffix ed to the root word.


1 Write the paragraph below in the past tense in your notebook, choosing suitable verbs from the box.

visualise  glare  sigh  close  change  churn

Will’s stomach (verb) as he (verb) Mrs Murphy in his mind. Her image (verb) at him, spud gun at the ready. He (verb) his eyes and (verb) deeply. Mum never (verb) her mind.

2 Some verbs change the root word when the suffix is added to form the past tense. Select the correct past tense form of each verb in the sentences below and write the completed sentences in your notebook.

   a Will (love) reading so when he (arrive) at the library, he (hope) Spud Murphy had (decide) to take the day off.
   b Will (try) to explain that all the children were (worry) about Spud Murphy. Once she (spy) you, you were in trouble!

Tip If the verb ends in e, just add d.
If the verb ends in y, the y changes to i before adding ed.
Verbs that don’t follow a rule for forming the past tense are called irregular verbs.
3 Match each present tense verb to its irregular past tense partner.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Present tense</th>
<th>Past tense</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>read</td>
<td>thought</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>say</td>
<td>read</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>think</td>
<td>was</td>
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<td>find</td>
<td>found</td>
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<tr>
<td>is</td>
<td>had</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>have</td>
<td>said</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4 Use three of these verbs in sentences of your own, as if you were adding to the extract.

C With a talk partner, explore the verb tenses in the Spud Murphy extract.
1 Read some of the dialogue to each other. Is it in the present or past tense? How can you tell?
2 What tense is the narrative text?
3 What does this tell you about using verb tenses in stories?

D Some verbs such as said, asked and replied are used so often they become boring. Use descriptive or expressive verbs to make a story more engaging to read.
1 Investigate the effect of different verbs.
   In a small group read the sentence in the box below aloud and try out different verbs in place of begged.
2 Discuss how different verbs change the effect of what Marty says.
3 Which of the verbs fit Marty’s and Will’s mood in the extract?

said gasped cried whispered sobbed pleaded laughed wailed implored muttered chuckled

“Don’t make us join the library,” Marty begged.

Did you know?
Verbs that tell us how the person is feeling when they speak create an effect called mood.
The beginning of a story should grab your attention. It should provide enough information about the plot, characters or setting to get you hooked and make you want to read on.

Discuss in a small group.
1. Re-read the first sentence of the *Spud Murphy* extract and discuss how it grabs attention.
2. Predict the main characters and the main setting.
3. Decide if Spud Murphy will be more like the description given by Marty or his mother.
4. Explain whether the extract makes you want to read the rest of the story.
5. Summarise your group’s ideas in a few sentences to share with the class.

**Tip**
Your key words can be nouns, adjectives, verbs or adverbs. Choose interesting key words that really remind you of the story details.

Create a story map similar to the one below. Write key words to describe what you discovered about the main characters, setting and plot.