

# 1 Storybook

Stories come in all shapes and sizes – long, short, funny and sad. In this unit, you'll discuss the stories you enjoy and decide for yourself what makes a good story. You'll develop your skills at choosing books to read, and write an exciting story introduction!

## Vocabulary to learn and use:

story, author, fiction, genre, character, plot, setting, introduction, conclusion, resolution, extract, tale

## 1 What makes a story a story?

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

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The writer of a story, play or poem<br/><i>author</i></li> <li>● A person, animal or fictional being in a story</li> <li>● The ending of a story</li> <li>● A passage taken from a story</li> <li>● A synonym for 'story'</li> <li>● Stories about events that have not really happened</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● The beginning of a story</li> <li>● The storyline, or sequence of events that makes up a story, play or novel</li> <li>● The solving of a problem</li> <li>● The place or places where a story takes place</li> <li>● A real or imaginary account of an event or series of events, for others to see, hear, read or feel</li> <li>● The type of story</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

**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



### 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.

### Any volunteers?

Who'd like to retell their favourite story to the class?



## 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.

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

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.

### Tip

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

**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**.

**Why not read the rest of the book?**

I challenge you to try something new!



**C**  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.

**Tip**

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

Date	Title	Author	Genre	Comment
6th September	The Legend of Spud Murphy	Eoin Colfer		

**spud** *n. potato (informal)*

### 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.

**Did you know?**

Speech marks show when a character starts and stops talking. Question marks and exclamation marks show the expression.

### 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

5 sick for days.”

“That was your own fault,” said Mum.

“I only had a drink of water.”

10 “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.

15 “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.

20 “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.”

25 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.”

30 “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  
35 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  
40 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.

45 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*



**Prepare to read the extract aloud and present your performance.**

- 1 Decide who will take each role (Narrator (Will), Mum, Dad, Marty).
- 2 Discuss how to make your reading interesting to listen to. How will each person speak? Try out some ideas and practise your reading together.
  - Use the punctuation to know when to pause or add expression.
  - Use body language as well as expression.
- 3 Present your reading aloud for another group.

Why do you think reading silently is faster than reading aloud?



## 4 Check your understanding



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?



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

You look at the book. You looked at the book.

**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.



How do the different verbs change the effect of the sentence?

**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.

Present tense	Past tense
read	thought
say	read
think	was
find	found
is	had
have	said

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?

**Any volunteers?**  
Who'd like to share their ideas with the class?



**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?

### Did you know?

Verbs that tell us how the person is feeling when they speak create an effect called **mood**.

said gasped cried whispered sobbed pleaded  
laughed wailed implored muttered chuckled

"Don't make us join the library," Marty begged.

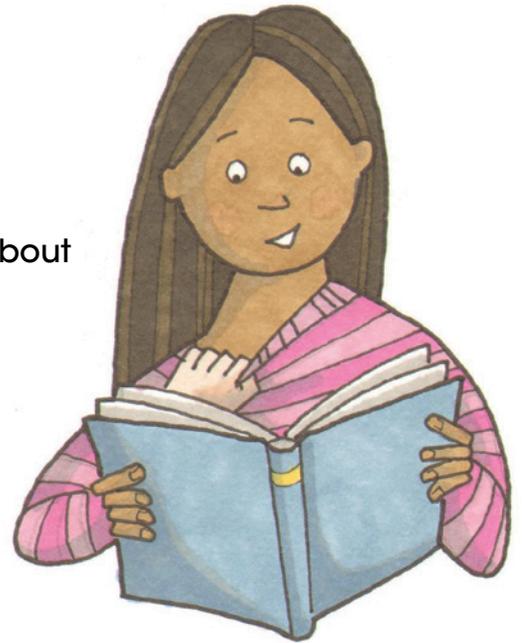


## 6 Explore beginnings

**A**  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.



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

### Tip

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

