

# Musical Storytelling

Arts | Music



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## WHAT MAKES IT MEANINGFUL

Musical Storytelling is meaningful because it blends the creativity of storytelling with the expressiveness of music, engaging multiple senses and emotions. It allows individuals to experience stories in a dynamic and interactive way, enhancing their imagination and understanding of the narrative. By incorporating sound effects and music, it brings the story to life, making it more memorable and enjoyable. This activity also fosters collaboration and creativity, as participants contribute their own ideas and sounds, building confidence and a sense of accomplishment while having fun (The Clay Centre for Young Healthy Minds).

## TIME

10+ Minutes setup. Unlimited play.

## MATERIALS

- A short story or fairy tale (you can make one up or use a favorite)
- Simple instruments or objects to create sounds (e.g., shakers, drums, pots and pans, spoons, bells)
- OPTIONAL: a light playlist to play in the background



## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Pick a short story or fairy tale that you like. It could be a classic like "The Three Little Pigs" or something you create yourself. Make sure it has plenty of action or moments where sounds could be added.
2. Think about the key moments in the story and what sounds could make them come to life. For example, the sound of footsteps, a door creaking, wind blowing, or rain falling. Choose simple instruments or household objects to create these sounds. Pots and pans can be drums, a shaker can mimic rain, or a spoon tapping on a glass can be a knocking sound.
3. If you want, start the storytelling with some soft background music to set the mood. You can play gentle music during calm scenes or more energetic tunes during exciting parts. This helps set the tone for your story.
4. Begin narrating the story, adding in sound effects at the right moments. For example, if the story mentions a storm, shake a rain stick or tap lightly on a drum to create the sound of raindrops. If a character is walking through the forest, tap your feet or use a stick to mimic footsteps.
5. If you're with friends or family, assign each person a sound effect to make when their part of the story comes up. This makes it a collaborative and interactive experience. You can also take turns being the storyteller while others handle the sounds.
6. Don't forget that your voice is a powerful tool! You can make sound effects like wind blowing, a dog barking, or a door creaking with just your voice. You can also use different tones and pitches to represent different characters or emotions.
7. To make the storytelling even more engaging, add some simple actions or movements. For instance, if a character is running, you can pretend to run in place. This helps bring the story to life and makes it more dynamic.
8. As you finish the story, create a musical finale! Use all your instruments and sounds to celebrate the ending, whether it's a happy one with upbeat music or a calm one with soft, soothing sounds.

## RESOURCES

- Music and its positive effects on Mental Well-Being: [Psychiatry.org - The Transformative Power of Music in Mental Well-Being](https://www.psychiatry.org/mental-health/the-transformative-power-of-music-in-mental-well-being)
- Cognitive benefits of music: [How musical training affects cognitive development: rhythm, reward and other modulating variables](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4011111/)
- Power in play with music: [The Power of Music: To Feel, Heal, and Connect - MGH Clay Center](https://www.massgeneral.org/healthcare-innovation/the-power-of-music-to-feel-heal-and-connect)
- Giving encouragement and praise: [Praise, encouragement and rewards](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC4011111/)
- How to make a Spotify Playlist: [Create playlists - Spotify](https://open.spotify.com/playlist/create)
- How to make a YouTube Playlist: [Create & manage playlists - Android - YouTube Help](https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/9372426)
- How to make an Apple Music Playlist: [How to create a playlist in the Apple Music app - Apple Support \(CA\)](https://support.apple.com/HT204073)

\*All prices are quoted from listings on *Amazon.ca*

## SUPPORTS NEEDED

This activity requires some fine and gross motor skills, assist when necessary. Some individuals may also need a bit of encouragement for play! Be sure to prioritize creativity and independence in this activity.

## OTHER THINGS TO NOTE

Encourage everyone to get creative with their sound effects—there's no right or wrong way! Try telling the same story with different sounds or instruments to see how it changes. Record the storytelling session to listen back and enjoy your creation. This "Musical Storytelling" activity combines the magic of stories with the excitement of making music. It's a wonderful way to use imagination, creativity, and teamwork to create a memorable and engaging experience!