Storytelling Warm-Ups to Scripted Scenes: Bridge Week

Multi-day (4 days) · Grades 6–8 · Intro to Theater

Lesson Goals

Central Focus

Students will strengthen ensemble storytelling skills by re-looping familiar collaborative games, build stamina and story structure using a full narrative-arc game, and begin performing simple, content-neutral scripted lines to discover how staging and delivery choices – not the words themselves – create meaning.

State Standards

- 6.TH:Cr2.b – Contribute ideas and accept and incorporate the ideas of others in preparing or devising drama/theatre work.
- 7.TH:Cr1.a – Investigate multiple perspectives and solutions to staging challenges in a drama/theatre work.
- CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.4 – Present claims and findings, sequencing ideas logically and using relevant descriptions, facts, details, and examples; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

Learning Objective

I will collaborate with my classmates in structured storytelling games, build a complete story using a shared story structure, and use simple scripted lines with different staging choices to create different meanings and settings.

Academic Language and Language Supports

Language function: Build, sequence, transform

Language demand: Speaking, Listening, Collaborating, Sequencing

Lesson vocabulary: Reviewed vocabulary vital for lesson: story circle, offer, “yes, and,” story spine, beginning/middle/end, scene, character, dialogue, blocking, objective. Vocabulary-specific language reviewed with individual students as needed.

Syntax: Students use structured sentences to build on a shared story and describe character choices.

- “One thing my character wants is ___ because ___.”

- “Once upon a time ___, every day ___, but one day ___, because of that ___, until finally ___, ever since then ___.”

Discourse: Students will build stories together in groups and give each other feedback on what worked, using sentence stems.

- “One part of our story that worked well was ___ because ___.”
- “Next time we could try ___.”
- “In our scene, my character wants ___ because ___.”

Materials

- Notebooks
- Slide deck
- Prompt slips/index cards for storytelling games
- Story Spine worksheet (six-line structure handout)
- Timer
- Printed/displayed Scene 1 and Scene 2 contentless scene scripts (see appendix)
- Style prompt cards (5) and Setting prompt cards (5) for Day 4
- Exit ticket slips

Differentiation

English Language Learners

- Provide sentence frames and story spine starters visibly posted.
- Allow students to think through their story contribution in home language before speaking aloud.
- Pair strategically with supportive peers during group story-building.
- For the contentless scene game: do a full choral read-through of both scripts before groups begin, keep the script visible/printed throughout so no lines need to be memorized, and pre-teach the handful of words in the script with a quick gesture or visual for each.

Gifted/Advanced Students

- Challenge them to add specific sensory detail or an unexpected twist to their story contributions.
- Invite them to help model the story spine structure for the class.
- Ask them to identify the exact “beat” where their scene's conflict begins.

IEP/504

- Offer a clear, concrete turn-taking structure (e.g., a physical object passed to indicate whose turn it is).

- Allow students to pass on a round if needed and re-join the next.
- Provide a visual copy of the story spine sentence starters.

Culturally Responsive Teaching

- Affirm and welcome story details, humor, and references that reflect students' home cultures and languages.
- Celebrate a range of storytelling styles and traditions as valid ways to build a story together.

Day 1: Re-Loop the Ensemble

5 min Step 1 – Hook & Objective

Welcome students back and explain that this week is about getting back into our ensemble storytelling groove and using it to start moving toward building scenes. Restate the objective in student-friendly language.

8 min Step 2 – Re-Loop: One-Word Story Circle

Quick refresher round(s) of the one-word story circle game, reminding students of the “listen and build” rule.

> **Assessment 1.1 (Informal) · Standards: 6.TH:Cr2.b**

12 min Step 3 – Re-Loop: “Yes, And…”

Restate the core “Yes, And” rule (accept the offer, add something new); run 2–3 rounds with rotating pairs/small groups.

15 min Step 4 – New Game: One-Line Story Swap

Introduce a new fast-paced storytelling game: the group builds a story one line at a time, with each line ending in a silly twist that changes direction. Explain the twist rule, model one round with the teacher, then run in small groups.

> **Assessment 1.2 (Informal) · Standards: 6.TH:Cr2.b**

5 min Closure: Step 5 – Reflection

Quick group share-out of a favorite silly moment from One-Line Story Swap. Exit ticket: “One thing my group built well today was ___.”

Day 2: The Big Story

5 min Step 1 – Hook & Objective

Explain that today is the “big story” day — building one full story together, start to finish, using a story spine, in groups.

5 min Step 2 – Introduce the Story Spine

Model the six-line structure aloud: “Once upon a time…” “Every day…” “But one day…” “Because of that…” “Until finally…” “Ever since then…” using a quick teacher example.

> **Assessment 2.1 (Informal) · Standards: 7.TH:Cr1.a, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.4**

15 min Step 3 – Small Group Story Spine Build

Groups build their own story using the spine structure, taking turns contributing lines and mapping key beats in their notebooks.

10 min Step 4 – Share Out

A few groups perform/share their completed story spine aloud for the class, in sequence, using clear voice and simple staging — a good moment to showcase the ensemble's storytelling growth if we have visitors.

> **Assessment 2.2 (Formal) · Standards: 7.TH:Cr1.a, CCSS.ELA-Literacy.SL.8.4**

3 min Closure: Step 5 – Reflection

Notebook prompt: “One part of our story that worked well was ___ because ___.”

Day 3: From Story to Scene

5 min Step 1 – Hook & Objective

Explain that today we start turning a story into a scene — adding characters who can be seen and heard on stage, not just narrated.

10 min Step 2 – From Story to Scene

Revisit one group's story spine from Day 2 (or build a fresh mini one as a class). Identify together: Who are the characters? Where are they? What do they want? Chart responses on the board.

> **Assessment 3.1 (Informal) · Standards: 6.TH:Cr2.b**

20 min Step 3 – Contentless Scene Build

In small groups, students physically stage their story's key beats as a wordless/contentless scene (blocking, gesture, simple sound — no scripted dialogue yet), focusing on a clear beginning, middle, and end.

10 min Step 4 – Share & Name the Parts

A few groups share their contentless scene; as a class, name the beginning/middle/end and each character's objective.

5 min Closure: Step 5 – Reflection

Notebook prompt: “My character's objective in our scene is ___ because ___.”

Day 4: Same Words, Different Meanings

5 min Step 1 – Hook & Objective

Explain that today we discover how the exact same simple lines can mean completely different things depending on how we say them and move. Because the script is so short and simple, everyone – including any guest friends joining us today – can jump in and follow along right away.

10 min Step 2 – Introduce the Contentless Scene

Display Scene 1 (a very short, plain two-person script – see appendix). Read it aloud chorally as a whole class first so everyone hears the pronunciation and meaning together. Explain: the words themselves are neutral – it is our choices that give them meaning.

> **Assessment 4.1 (Informal) · Standards: 6.TH:Cr2.b**

20 min Step 3 – Round 1: Same Scene, New Style

In small groups, students perform Scene 1 several times in a row. Each time, give the group a new style card: “like you're happy to see each other,” “like you're enemies,” “like they stole something from you,” “like it's a surprise party,” “like one of you is in trouble.” Teacher circulates and evaluates how each group's choices change the meaning of the same words.

> **Assessment 4.2 (Formal) · Standards: 6.TH:Cr2.b, 7.TH:Cr1.a**

15 min Step 4 – Round 2: Guess the Setting

Display Scene 2 (a second short, plain script – see appendix). Each group secretly receives a setting card (the beach, a doctor's office, a candy store, a classroom, a bus stop). Groups perform Scene 2 while physically showing where they are through blocking, gestures, and imaginary objects – without naming the place out loud. After each group performs, the rest of the class discusses in small table groups to guess the setting together before sharing their guess aloud.

5 min Closure: Step 5 – Reflection

Notebook prompt: “The same words felt totally different when ___.” “One clue that helped me guess the setting was ___.”

Appendix: Contentless Scene Scripts

Scene 1 (Round 1 – Same Scene, New Style)

A: Hi.
B: Hi.
A: You are here.
B: Yes.
A: I see you.
B: I see you too.
A: What now?
B: I don't know.

Scene 2 (Round 2 – Guess the Setting)

A: Wait here.
B: Okay.
A: Look at that.
B: Wow.
A: Can I have one?
B: Yes.
A: Thank you.
B: You're welcome.

Style Cards (Round 1)

- Like you're happy to see each other
- Like you're enemies
- Like they stole something from you
- Like it's a surprise party
- Like one of you is in trouble

Setting Cards (Round 2)

- The beach
- A doctor's office
- A candy store
- A classroom
- A bus stop