

Activities for *Before Exploring a Story*

Capturing Prior Knowledge

BEFORE STORY	First Level	Second Level	Third Level	Fourth Level
Activity Description	<p>Select three or four main pieces of information (who, what, when, where etc.) from the story and ask learners to draw what you are describing.</p> <p>Share and discuss some of the images that are most and least accurate without revealing which they are.</p> <p>Revisit these images after sharing the story to discuss what learners know now and encourage them to choose one thing they'd change about their image.</p>	<p>Before sharing the story, each small group of learners is given one statement from the story and asked to draw a representation of the statement as they understand it.</p> <p>Share group images and discuss how they should be sequenced and then display in the correct order.</p> <p>As more of the narrative, and thereby context, is revealed, discuss how and why some of these images might need to be modified because of learners' new knowledge and understanding of the story.</p>	<p>Deconstruct a variety of fables, legends, myths, traditional tales and films by looking at story structures and character traits that are repeated, borrowed and modified time and again regardless of subject. (<i>E.g. protagonist/antagonist, Seven Basic Plots: overcoming the monster; rags to riches; the quest; voyage and return; comedy; tragedy; rebirth</i>)</p> <p>Study stories from world religions within these frameworks by drawing parallels, discovering differences and connecting prior knowledge and experiences.</p>	<p>Ask learners to compose a piece of fictional text which demonstrates a particular value/issue.</p> <p>After reading a selection of related narratives from world religions about the same value/issue, compare representations, content and reflect on deepened understanding of value/issue. Provide opportunities to refine, clarify and add to complexity of own text if appropriate.</p>

Using Images

BEFORE STORY	First Level	Second Level	Third Level	Fourth Level
	<p>Discuss what might be happening or being shown in the pictures. Ask learners to describe and predict the significance images might have for the story to come and help learners explain links with shared prior knowledge. Return to images frequently throughout the story.</p>	<p>Discuss what might be happening or being suggested by the imagery. Ask learners to explain how an image links with prior knowledge or stories about themes/ideas suggested by images.</p> <p>Gather questions and commentary about style, tradition, cultural and/or religious connections of illustrations/images.</p>	<p>Discuss what might be happening or being suggested by the imagery. Ask learners to explain how an image links with prior knowledge or stories about themes/ideas suggested by images.</p> <p>Gather responses that focus on identifying symbolic representations within the stylistic, cultural, traditional and religious context.</p>	<p>Ask learners to identify what they think might be the moral message, teaching point or lesson being communicated by the image and ask learners to compose their own text exploring this.</p>

Taking a stance on currently held beliefs

BEFORE STORY	First Level	Second Level	Third Level	Fourth Level
	<p>Take the 'temperature' or initial reaction to an action choice or moral dilemma faced by the central character by ask learners to cast a vote in some way (e.g. with coloured counters or sticky notes).</p> <p>Briefly explain the situation that the central character is going to find themselves in, learners then vote for the choice they believe they would make.</p> <p>(Repeat the voting activity again after examining the story to evidence and analyse any change in opinion from the whole group and, where appropriate, individuals.)</p>	<p>Take the 'temperature' or initial reaction to an ethical or moral dilemma featured in the story by involving learners in a 'Conscience Alley'.</p> <p>Divide learners into two lines opposite one another. Pose a question about the choice a central character has to make and give two action choices.</p> <p>Learners on one side are asked to select a short persuasive phrase to support their argument and that they can repeat easily. Learners on the opposite side should do likewise for their allocated stance.</p> <p>Each learner takes his/her turn to process slowly down the centre of the aisle created by the two sides and listen to the comments made.</p> <p>When the moving learner reaches the bottom of the 'alley', he/she casts a vote to express his/her opinion.</p> <p>(After examining and reflecting on the story in depth, this activity can be repeated to evidence and analyse any change in opinion across the group or individually.)</p>	<p>Introduce the moral theme/dilemma explored in the story, and ask pupils to think of stories, events or personal experiences that relate to the theme.</p> <p>Invite learners to describe their responses to each other in pairs.</p> <p>Conduct a class discussion on the theme, inviting learners to give their initial view on the theme, with reasons.</p> <p>Ask learners to listen and respond to the responses they hear, encouraging them to continue the discussion (e.g. agree/disagree with a specific point and give a reason).</p> <p><i>It may also be appropriate to make use of the 'Conscience Alley' (see Second Level) at this level.</i></p>	<p>Introduce the moral theme/dilemma explored in the story, and have learners research this topic.</p> <p>Ask learners to find two viewpoints on the issue, and ask them to describe the two viewpoints with reasons.</p> <p>Then have learners compare the views by identifying similarities and differences.</p> <p>Finally, ask learners to pick one view that they agree with, give one reason why they agree, and one reason why they have rejected the alternative view.</p> <p>(Repeat the task after the story to identify any changes in opinion.)</p>

Activities for Exploring Dilemma Questions **During** a Story

Activities suggested here should not be considered exclusively one specific level, but be modified and adapted to suit:

- the age and stage of the learners,
- its relevance for extending breadth, depth and challenge,
- and the narrative and context of the story chosen for study.

Activity	First Level	Second Level	Third Level	Fourth Level
JUNCTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stop at junctions in the narrative to allow learners to discuss and postulate about what a central character ‘should do’ next i.e. the action choice he/she should make. • Enhance the depth of learning from and about religion by presenting different religious perspectives about the central dilemma choice to be explored and reframed through discussion by learners. <i>(For example, if the story was about the treatment of animals, then present short pieces of text or stories to demonstrate various religious perspectives about the correct treatment of animals and then discuss ‘What might a Buddhist recommend as the action choice for the central character?’ and ‘What might Sikhism recommend...etc.)</i> 			
JUDGEMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the story selected for study ends in judgement of a character’s actions, then it can be effective to withhold the ending of the story and allow groups of learners to discuss, explore and present by dramatizing (if appropriate to source religion) their choice/prediction of ending. • Learners should be expected to be able to justify why their chosen ending is appropriate and explain how it links to the story and its context. • Observing learners could be invited to write or talk about how appropriate and effective each group’s ending is before revealing the actual ending of the story. <i>Further opportunity for discussion and/or written analysis and evaluation of developing beliefs can be sought at this time.</i> 			
TABLE MATS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make use of table mat techniques (<i>Fox Thinking Tool/Wedge Tool etc.</i>) to record independent thought about questions posed by or associated with the story. • Share thoughts with group members and finally identify, discuss and record points of convergence and divergence within group. • Use table mats to stimulate discussion across class, identifying where that overall points of agreement/disagreement are. 			
CO-OP Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-Op Learning (2Stay & 2Stray) / World Café Conversations (www.theworldcafe.com) • Using the value/issue from one story, present differing religious perspectives at each table and rotate groups around room until cross-pollination of ideas and opinions has occurred and important details of discussion have been recorded by writing or drawing on the table mats. <i>Effective question prompts for on table mats include, ‘What would (religion) recommend?’ or ‘What should (character) do?’</i> 			

Activities for Reflecting and Evaluating **After** a Story

Activities suggested here should not be considered exclusively one specific level, but be modified and adapted to suit:

- the age and stage of the learners,
- its relevance for extending breadth, depth and challenge,
- and the narrative and context of the story chosen for study.

Activity	First Level	Second Level	Third Level	Fourth Level
COMIC STRIP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners might be asked to create a Comic Strip of the story individually, but the purpose of the task must include a reflective element which goes beyond simple recall of narrative • Prompts like the following could be included in each box: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>At the beginning of this story I thought...</i> ○ <i>This part made me think...</i> ○ <i>Then I thought...</i> ○ <i>By the end I thought...</i> 			
HOT-SEAT INTERVIEW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct a Hot-Seat Interview by compiling questions to ask when interviewing one character from the story (<i>not always the central character, could be an eye-witness or secondary character</i>). • Either the teacher or a learner then assumes that character and answers questions posed by fellow learners. (<i>A good grasp of contextual knowledge is required for being 'in-role' during this activity.</i>) 			
REFLECTION RECORD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make time and space for each learner to keep a Reflection Record of their thoughts, learning and development of beliefs and values after exploring each story. • The format of such a record should include space to record responses to statement prompts such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>This story reminds me of...</i> ○ <i>This story has made me think about...</i> ○ <i>I would like to ask...</i> ○ <i>I want to think some more about...</i> ○ <i>I wonder...</i> ○ <i>I think (character) should...</i> ○ <i>This is good to know about because...</i> ○ <i>I was surprised...</i> ○ <i>I have changed my mind about...</i> 			

<p>CO-OP Learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-Op Learning (2Stay & 2Stray) / World Café Conversations (www.theworldcafe.com) • Using the value/issue from one story, present differing religious perspectives at each table and rotate groups around room until cross-pollination of ideas and opinions has occurred and important details of discussion have been recorded by writing or drawing on the table mats. <i>Effective question prompts for on table mats include, 'What would (religion) recommend?' or 'What should (character) do?'</i>
<p>RETELLING (different context)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Task learners with Retelling the story within a different context (e.g. a modern day version or from a different character's perspective; even that of the perceived 'villain') in order to draw out issues/values that would or would not transfer across boundaries of culture, religion and context.
<p>DEBATE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In a formal and structured way, Debate a theme, message or value presented in a story. • Ask groups of learners to prepare a final statement of defence of a character's actions or propose their recommendations for a character's actions.
<p>LINKS with CURRENT AFFAIRS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage and provide appropriate resources and scaffolding as necessary to help learners identify links, make connections and/or draw parallels between the story selected for study and local or global Current Affairs.
<p>ALTERNATIVE VERSIONS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use Different Versions (<i>publications, abridgements, translations, sources</i>) of the same story to explore, contrast and compare content, emphasis, bias and context.