

APPlause!

K-12 Performing Arts Series

Fun, Foolery and Folktales!
Donna Washington Storyteller

For Grades K - 2 and Family Audiences

Curriculum Connections: Language and literacy development, building a story



Storytelling With Donna Washington

We are Still Sharing Stories!!!

Elementary School Storytelling Guide

2020-2021

DLW Storyteller Inc.

QBOT5@aol.com

www.donnawashington.com

<http://donnawashingtonstoryteller.blogspot.com/>

Contents

Page 1.....	Cover
Page 2.....	Table of Contents
Page 3.....	Storytelling/Residencies in a Pandemic?
Page 4.....	Biography
Page 5.....	What Kinds Of Stories Will She Tell?
Page 6.....	Before The Performance – Theatre Core
Page 7.....	Storyteller’s Toolkit – Exercises – Theatre Core
Page 9.....	After The Performance – Theatre Core
Page 10.....	Tongue Twisters – Language/Vocabulary
Page 11.....	Circle Stories! – Writing/Vocabulary
Page 13.....	Story Prompt Storage – Writing/Vocabulary
Page 14.....	How Does It End? – Writing/Imagination
Page 15.....	On The Internet – Electronic Resources
Page 16.....	Bibliography

Storytelling/Residencies in a Pandemic?

Yes! We can have all sorts of arts interactions in virtual mode!

2020 has been a challenging year. We have had to make lots of adjustments. Donna Washington is on it! This year, DLW Storyteller Inc. is offering an array of options to bring storytelling and residencies into your school!

The exercises in this guide are designed to work whether your students are virtual, social distancing in the classroom, or partially present and partially virtual!

You will also find some **background about Ms. Washington** as well as recommendations for things to discuss before and after the assembly. This year, as our work will be virtual, the rules for good audience behavior are different. Make sure you go over the suggestions ahead of time so we can all have a successful arts interaction.

Have a great show!

Donna Washington
DLW Storyteller Inc.

Biography

Donna L. Washington was born October 6, 1967 in Colorado Springs, Colorado to Sgt. Don Washington and his wife Gwendolyn. Growing up as an Army Brat meant Donna lived in Colorado, Texas, Georgia, Germany, Korea, Indiana, Japan, Oklahoma, Indiana, and Virginia before she graduated from High School. She has visited almost every state in the union except Alaska. The Washington Family has seven children. Anney, Don, Donna, Joseph, Darren, Milton, and Duyen.

In 1989, Donna graduated from Northwestern University with a Bachelor's of Science in Speech. She remained in Evanston, Il for seven years after graduation. She toured to Brussels with the Chicago Children's Theatre and did a few other shows in the area before becoming a full-time professional storyteller.

She has been a storyteller for 33 years.

She is a very animated storyteller who tells stories for audiences ages four to one hundred and four!

Donna usually travels the world telling stories, and has been featured at hundreds of national and international storytelling festivals. She has won Gold Parent's Choice Awards, Silver Parent's Choice Awards, Children's Music Web Awards, IParenting Excellence in Media Awards, National Association of Parenting Awards, and Storytelling World Awards for her eleven recordings of stories.

Donna is also a published author. Her credits include many articles for magazines and books about storytelling as well as picture books. Her titles include: A Big Spooky House, A Pride of African Tales, The Story of Kwanzaa, Li'l Rabbit's Kwanzaa, and Boo Stew which will be out at a future date.

These days, Donna lives in Durham, NC with her husband Dave and their two cats, Love Bug and Flash.

What Kind of Stories Will She Tell?

Because the work is virtual, if students are home, they will watch what they watch! Still, the sets are designed for specific age ranges.

Grades K-2 will hear stories that work on pre-reading skills. The pieces will be very interactive with simple problems and plots so that the students can focus on the use of language. The stories encourage scope and sequencing (correct ordering of events), predictive behavior, turning language into crisp images in the mind, increasing vocabulary and imparting a love of the rhythm and sounds of words. The stories also encourage a student to notice that during the repetition something changes every time. It is important to listen closely and remember things so that they can predict what will happen later. Working with this skill in an active listening situation also helps improve the attention span. All of these vital skills occur while the students are busily playing with the storyteller and the educators. They enhance the brain functions that encourage transition into reading.

Grades 3 - 5 will experience stories that deal with social behaviors and making good choices. Character education is embedded in these stories but it doesn't hit them over the head. Students are encouraged to think more deeply about the themes even as they laugh to the point of making their faces hurt. These stories have characters with more complicated motivations. The plots are more complicated as well, and the basic theme is that we are responsible for our choices, and we need to be aware of the people around us in the world. The tales are paced much faster than the K-2 stories and they have more nuance. The basic idea of pre reading skills is still present in the tales, but it is not the primary reason for the stories.

Grades K – 5 If the audience is mixed and therefore not in similar social or developmental stages, then it isn't possible to do sets that will play to the specific needs of the entire group. You certainly would not read the same types of books to a group of fifth graders that you would to a kindergarten class. While fun and entertaining, the tales will be general and have no specific goals. It is probable that the younger kids will not understand what happened in some of the stories. The older students will enjoy all of the tales but they will not be challenged by all of them. This is not to say that the reading skills will not be in effect, they just won't be focused.

Before the Performance

1. If your show is pre-recorded, the students will not be able to ask me questions on the day, but if your school wants to submit some questions to QBOT5@aol.com, I will answer them and send them back...as long as you don't send me hundreds!
2. If your show is live/virtual and you have made prior arrangements, we can try to take questions on the day, but it will depend on the platform and how the audience is receiving it. If real time questions are not possible, you can try option one.
3. If I am virtual not pre-recorded, and the audience is in the same space, we can proceed like we are having a Zoom meeting!

Some Things To Discuss

Storytelling is one of the oldest art forms and is around us all the time. We get stories from television, songs, dance, theatre, and newspapers. We share stories around the table, on the playground, between classes, at holidays, on the phone, in the kitchen or anywhere else people gather together. They help us build community.

Can you think of places, times or events when people tell stories?

What are some of your favorite stories?

Are there stories your family likes to tell when they get together?

Are there any stories that every single person in your class knows?

What is the difference between lying and telling stories?

Are folktales real? (Younger audiences often ask me this question. I tend to answer that all stories are actually stories, but that doesn't mean they actually happened.)

Do you think every culture in the world has stories?

A Storyteller's Tools – Exercises You Can Do With Your Students

Face

How do you use your face to tell parts of a story? If you wanted to let someone know how you felt, what would you do to your face? How many different expressions can you think of? How many can you show? What happens to your face when you are trying to let someone else know how you feel without words?

- How can your eyes show surprise?
- How could your face show anger?
- How could your mouth show something tastes bad?

Hands

Your hands can show size. They can point directions. They can be used to show how characters are different from each other.

- Gesture to show how big something might be
- Movement – tell us which way something went or what shape it has

Body

Your body is also a good tool you can use to help you tell a story. What sorts of things can a body tell you? Can it tell how you feel? Can it tell what you want? Can it tell whether or not you are uncomfortable? What can it tell you? How could you use your body to tell a story?

- How would you stand if you were happy?
- How would you stand if you were sad?
- How would you stand if you were frustrated?
- How would you stand if you had to go to the bathroom?

- How can your body show that you are cold?
- How can your body show you are feeling brave?
- How can your body show you are angry?

Voice

Your voice can certainly tell a story, but it does more than just give the audience words. The voice is a fantastic tool that conveys many types of sounds and meanings using tone and pitch and pacing. Think of some ways a storyteller or actor could use their voice to make a story or character come to life. How could you change how old you sound? How could you change the speed? What does speed do to your voice? What changes if you speak very high or very low?

- Sounds
- Character Voices
- Pace
- Pitch
- Volume

The most important tool a performer has is the audience. A storyteller uses the audience in a very particular way. What do you think the storyteller is going to do with an audience? Make a list of guesses. It might surprise you just how important the audience is during a storytelling presentation.

Questions for After the Performance

How did the Storyteller use the Storyteller tools?

Can you remember some of the expressions the storyteller used?

Can you remember some of the gestures the storyteller used?

How did the storyteller use gesture to enhance the stories?

Can you remember some of the things the storyteller did with her voice?

Can you do some of the sound effects?

How did the storyteller use the audience?

What things do you remember about the stories?

Do you know any stories similar to the ones the teller told?

What images can you recall from the stories?

Would you change the endings of some of the stories?

If you were going to tell a story, what kind of story would you choose?

Why would you choose that kind of story?

How was the performance different from a play?

How was the performance different than a dance?

How was the performance similar to what an actor does?

Do you think a storyteller has a director?

Do you think a storyteller has a choreographer?

Do you think a storyteller has a script?

Do you think a storyteller ever uses visual art to create stories?

Tongue Twisters!

There are wonderful places to find tongue twisters!

Mother Goose is a good place. Many people have an old copy of Mother Goose lying around the house from when they were little. Look in it now and you'll find some wonderful tongue twisters.

Dr. Seuss's **Fox in Sox** and **Oh Say Can You Say** are also great books.

Your media specialist can find others for you!

Tongue Twisters are great because they force you to annunciate. Many performers like to use tongue twisters to warm up their vocal apparatus before they perform. Here are some of my favorites!

Here are some links to some great tongue twisters!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vf07I4CHvdY> - Donna Washington Doing Some Tongue Twisters

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DzM1oPFamfM> – Donna Washington doing Betty Boughta

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DE0JHALoKDw> – Donna Washington Peter Piper

Circle stories are a fun activity to get students in the storytelling frame of mind!

If you are all virtual, you can do this in breakout rooms.

If you are all partially virtual, then put kids in breakout rooms and have your “live” kids join them in small socially distanced groups.

If you are in the class together, then simply put them into socially distanced groups.

Shoot, that ain’t nothin’!

Put the students in groups of ten or more. The first person makes a statement that is patently impossible to begin the story.

“Yesterday I got up and the whole world had turned green. I was forced to climb up to the sun and check out what was going on. I had to wash the whole sun to get the green gunk off of its surface.”

The next person says, “Shoot, that ain’t nothin’!” This next person tries to tell an even bigger whopper building off of the first.

“As I was climbing down from the sun, a comet was on its way across our galaxy, I jumped off the sun and started surfing on the comet.”

The next person says, “Shoot, that ain’t nothin’!”

There is no real end for this story. Choose the last person to go ahead of time or the teacher can just call it quits.

Good Thing Bad Thing

Put the students in groups of ten or more. In this circle story, the first person starts by saying something good or bad.

“I got up yesterday and discovered that I had grown another head on my shoulders.”

The next person says,

“But the good thing was I had a history test that day and my new head was smarter than my old head”

The person says,

“But the bad thing was that head only spoke Chinese.”

The next person says,

“But the good thing was we had a substitute who spoke fluent Chinese.”

Story Prompt Storage

The biggest thing children complain about is not having anything to write about or not being able to think of an idea. Story Prompt Storage helps with both of these problems. On one page of their writing notebook, have the students write down ideas for stories they would like to write about.

Examples:

The time I accidentally got shot out into outer space

The haunted house next door

The time I was lost at.....

The time I found

The first person to climb Mt. Everest

The first person on the moon

What it is like to be a paleontologist

How do you make ice cream?

What is my favorite kind of bug?

Why I want an iguana for Christmas

After they have their ideas, when it is time to do writing, if they can't think of anything they can go to their page and look at their prompts. They should have room to write prompts down all year so that as their interests grow and change they will have the ability to come up with new things to add to their list of potential ideas.

How Does It End?

If you are all virtual, you can do this in breakout rooms.

If you are all partially virtual, then put kids in breakout rooms and have your “live” kids join them in small socially distanced groups.

If you are in the class together, then simply put them into socially distanced groups.

1. In this exercise, the educator tells the first half of a folktale and the students individually come up with what they think the end of the story should be.
2. Put the students into small groups. The students discuss their ideas. There are no wrong answers, but it will help some students come up with ideas and others clarify their thoughts.
3. Talk about how the endings differed in the groups.
4. Have the students write out their endings. Collect up the endings.
5. Over the course of the month, maybe at the beginning of the day or at the end, read the story and use one of the endings that was submitted.

On The Internet:

In 2012 I began a blog for educators, storytellers and teaching artists. If you would like to find out more about what it is like to be a professional storyteller, read some of the philosophies behind storytelling, or look deeper into the educational, emotional and social development encouraged by storytelling, stop by and give it a gander. The blog is called Language, Literature and Storytelling. You can find it at

www.Donnawashingtonstoryteller.blogspot.com

“Every story I tell is true...except for the parts I make up!”

www.donnawashington.com (for books and more!)

digitalstoryteller.com (for resources about storytelling on line)

www.bookhive.org (in the Zinger Tales section you can watch me tell stories online)

www.CDBaby.com (log on to buy copies of my CDs!)

www.winbooks.com (for information about some really great authors!)

www.ncstoryguild.com for information about storytelling in North Carolina

www.storynet.org for information about storytelling in America

www.storybee.org for lots and lots of free stories!

Resources

Compiled by Janice M. Del Negro PhD

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APPlause!

K-12 Performing Arts Series

Enriching lives, sparking imaginations, and inspiring a love of learning through the arts!

Arts education and outreach programming at Appalachian is committed to connecting university arts resources to a diverse audience of community arts patrons, teachers and learners in the campus community, and in the public, private and home school network across our region. In doing so, the series strives to broaden and deepen arts experiences for audiences of all ages, while ensuring access to the arts for young audiences, building future audiences for the arts, and inspiring a love of learning through the arts.

Every season, affordable music, dance, film, and theatre events are offered to students and their teachers from K-12 classrooms across the region. Students experience everything from high-energy acrobatics and Appalachian music to international dance and literary classics brought to life through theatrical productions. In recent seasons, more than 8,000 students across our region have attended APPlause Series events.

This academic year, the APPlause! Series will be completely virtual and completely free, offering compelling programming to connect to K-12 classrooms, thanks in large part to generous donors who believe in supplying educators with arts programming that will spark creativity and inspire a love of learning.

*Chuck
and Anna
Eyer*

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*Steve
and Sue
Chase*

