



Once Upon a Time
Starting with story telling

A resource pack designed by Chris Thompson as part of The Describe Project
Longford County Council and Arts Services



Choosing a story to tell, Some initial considerations

Who is the story for?

What kind of story do you think your audience would enjoy?

How long have you got to tell it?

Is your audience used to story telling?

What kind of story would you enjoy telling?

Examine the story you have chosen in the light of these questions.

- ❖ What appeals to you about the story?
- ❖ Why would this make a good story to tell, rather than to read?
- ❖ Will any part of the story be familiar to your audience? Does this matter?
- ❖ Will you need to change the length of the story?
- ❖ Are there any objects, places, characters that would be hard to communicate without illustrations?
- ❖ What could you do to adapt it?
- ❖ What do you want your audience to gain from the experience?



Preparing to tell a story

You do not have to learn every word of a written story by heart.

A story does not have to be cleverly acted out. You are just looking for ways to share the words and pictures that come into your head when you think about your story.

TRY reading at least part of your chosen source story aloud. How does it sound? Do you feel comfortable with the style?

CAN you pick out any phrases or sections of the story that sound particularly effective? You can always learn those bits and keep them in your spoken version.

DO you like the opening line in the written version? Can you alter it to make it stronger if need be.

WHAT about the closing line? A dramatic ending is always good but when you are story telling you often need a few words to remind the audience that you have finished the story.

ARE there any parts where an illustration really helps to tell the story? How can you adapt? Would a picture or prop enhance or distract from the story?

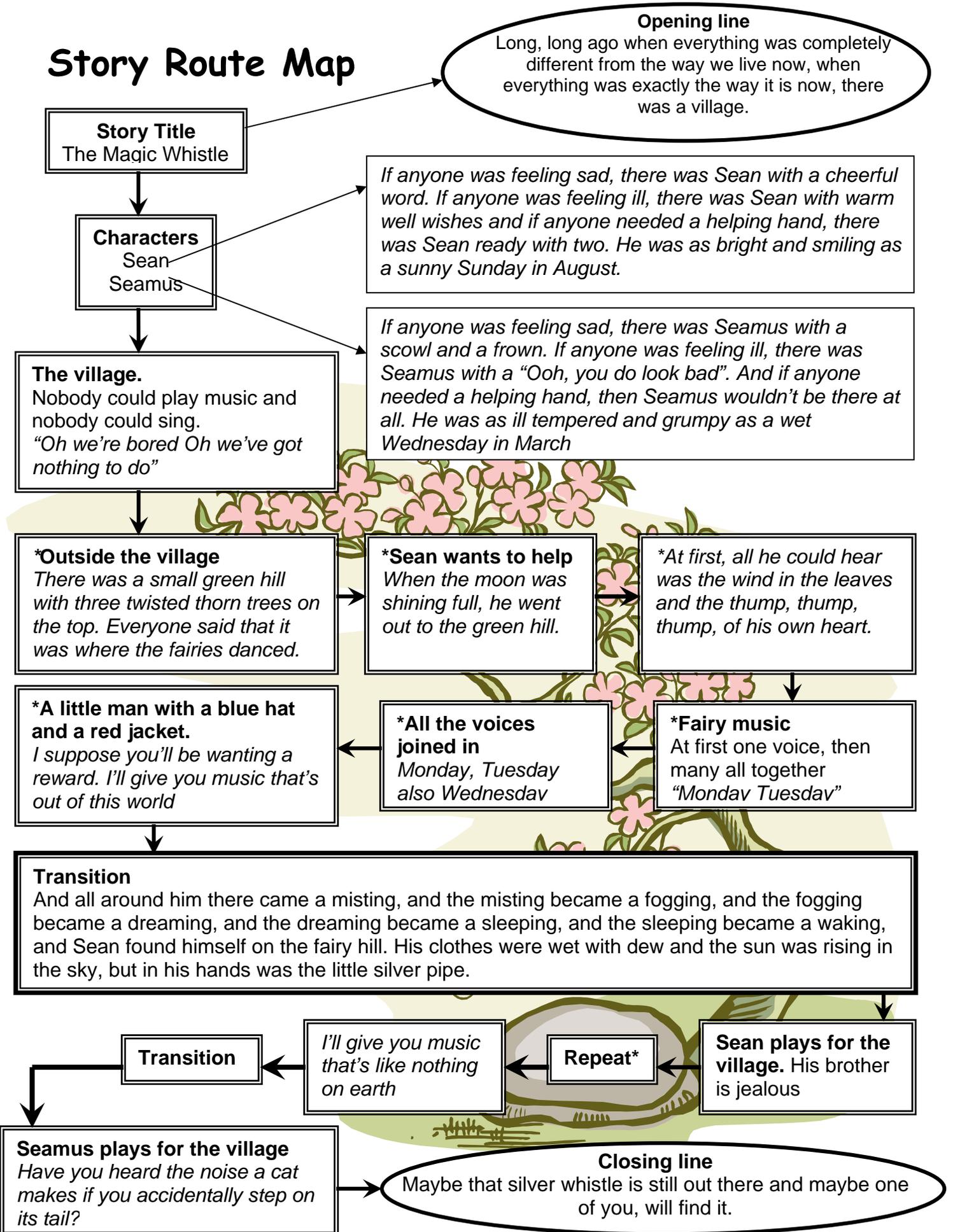
HOW can you remember the story easily? Is it possible to construct a simple story map? Would it help to plant signposts in the story?

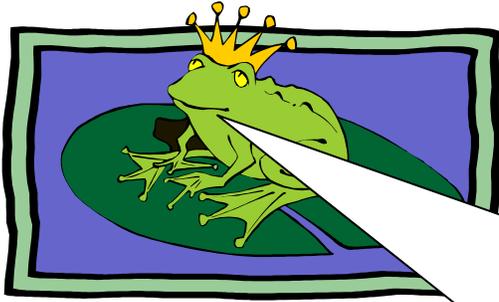
WOULD simple props help you to follow the story line?

HOW is your story to be told? Is it 1st person or 3rd person? With which are you most comfortable.

Can you identify the moods of your story? Do they change? How do you want to communicate this?

Story Route Map





Presenting a story

Every story-teller, however experienced, shares these feelings at times.

Confidence comes with practice, but there are lots of simple ways to help your self.

When you first begin to tell stories, the thorough preparation of the chosen story is the key.

Using simple props or having a story map with you will also help.

When you prepare to tell a story, what do you feel are your main concerns?

- ✗ Forgetting the story?
- ✗ Rambling?
- ✗ Not being heard?
- ✗ Not holding the attendance of the audience?
- ✗ Not making the story interesting?
- ✗ Not knowing how to begin?
- ✗ Not knowing how to end?
- ✗ Feeling too self-conscious?
- ✗ None of the above?
- ✗ **ALL OF THE ABOVE??**

USING YOUR VOICE

Think of a time when you have been bored listening to a lecture, talk etc. What makes it boring is not always just content. Often, we might comment, "His voice just went droning on and on."

Your voice does not have to be loud or dramatic for story telling but it helps if

- You vary the pitch of your voice
- You vary the volume
- You vary the pace of your words
- You are not afraid of pauses
- You allow the tone of your voice to carry feelings
- You are not afraid to exaggerate vocally
- You smile

BODY LANGUAGE

Make sure that you are positioned comfortably. If you are sitting, choose a chair that is not too low or too deep.

If you are slouching, it may impede proper breathing. You will find it difficult to move expressively and it may make it harder for you to be seen or heard.

Make sure you are positioned so that you can easily be seen and make eye contact with your audience.

Although the audience is primarily engaged in a listening activity, people still need to be able to see

you 
It is surprising how much of our bodies we use when we speak.

Enjoy your self. It does not matter if you make mistakes. It is a part of story telling.