

How Stories Get Made

Ideas, words, genres, revision, and pictures turn a thought into something a reader can enter.

6 core books	Grades 1-4	Revised after catalogue audit
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You are the teacher.

You know your students and what they need today. Use what works. Change what doesn't. Make it yours.

Teaching purpose

Students compare several ways a story comes into being: beginning with an idea, thinking about the reader, writing for a purpose, testing genre, making deliberate language choices, and combining words with pictures. The sequence treats authorship as a series of choices rather than a single act of writing.

Recommended grade band

Grades 1-4

The Big Question

How does an idea become a story a reader can follow?

Source and confidence boundary

Core title IDs, authors, formats, and reading levels shown here were rechecked against the updated Book_List.xlsx. Descriptive framing was tightened during this audit; where the catalogue does not provide a reading level, none is invented.

Before reading

Ask students to name the different jobs an author may do before a book is finished: imagine, choose, write, draw, organize, reread, change, and think about the reader.

Core reading sequence

BEGIN

A Squiggly Story

Book ID 8391 · Andrew Larsen · Reading level 2.3

Why it belongs: A child discovers that a story can begin before conventional spelling is fully in place: marks, ideas, talk, and imagination can all carry meaning.

Unique contribution: It makes authorship accessible at the starting line - the idea comes before perfect writing.

Ask What has to exist before the words are perfect?

TURN TO THE
READER

How to Read a Story

Book ID 7759 · Kate Messner · Story Book · Reading level 2.9

Why it belongs: A playful how-to book makes the reader's actions visible, from choosing a story to entering its world and sharing it.

Unique contribution: It adds the audience: writers make choices for someone who will eventually read.

Ask What does this book suggest a story needs from its reader?

Salma Writes a Book

Book ID 8420 · Danny Ramadan · Story Book

Why it belongs: Salma researches what it means to be a good older sister and learns that a real relationship cannot be solved by a guidebook alone.

Unique contribution: It shows writing as purposeful inquiry - and shows where lived experience resists a simple written formula.

Ask What can Salma put into a book, and what does she have to learn by living it?

This is Not My Story

Book ID 8395 · Ryan Uytendewilligen · Graphic Novel · Reading level 2.3

Why it belongs: A character is pushed through different kinds of stories and keeps resisting the roles and conventions being assigned.

Unique contribution: It makes genre visible as a set of author choices rather than a fixed container.

Ask Which changes matter when the same character enters a different kind of story?

Book ID 7964 · Jane Sutcliffe · Story Book · Reading level 4.9 · Teacher read-aloud

Why it belongs: A book about Shakespeare's language foregrounds the power of memorable words, expressions, and verbal invention.

Unique contribution: It shifts attention from plot to diction: authors also make stories by choosing and shaping language.

Ask How can one unusual word change the way a reader sees a scene or character?

Book ID 7999 · Liniers · Graphic Novel · Reading level 2.3

Why it belongs: Henrietta creates a comic by inventing, drawing, narrating, reacting to, and revising the story as it grows.

Unique contribution: It closes the sequence with authorship made visible on the page: words and pictures develop together.

Ask What can a picture do that the words do not have to do?

Optional extensions

Ook the Book

Book ID 4777 · Lissa Rovetch

Why optional: A playful print-and-sound extension for younger readers.

The Book Bandit (Graphic Novel)

Book ID 6757 · Melinda Thielbar

Why optional: A genre extension in which a library mystery gives another reason to ask how authors shape a problem for readers.

Selection note

The core sequence is limited to six titles so each book has a distinct instructional job. Optional titles should extend the question rather than merely add more books on the same topic.

Across-the-set teaching moves

1. Keep an author-choices chart: idea, audience, purpose, genre, words, pictures, revision.
2. After each title, ask what changed because an author made one particular choice.
3. Distinguish making a story from merely producing neat handwriting or correct spelling.
4. Compare the jobs of writer, illustrator, character, and reader when a book blurs those roles.
5. Invite students to revise one small choice - title, point of view, genre, word, or image - and explain the effect.

Book-to-book connections

A Squiggly Story + How to Read a Story

Compare the beginning of authorship with the needs of the eventual reader.

Salma Writes a Book + This is Not My Story

Compare writing for a real purpose with resisting a story form that does not fit.

Will's Words + Written and Drawn by Henrietta

Compare language invention with visual invention as tools for making meaning.

Culminating discussion

Choose three books and explain three different decisions an author can make that change what the reader experiences.

Teacher look-fors

- Names a specific author choice rather than saying only that a book is creative.
- Explains how a choice affects a reader.
- Distinguishes genre, language, and visual choices.
- Recognizes revision or rethinking as part of making a story.

Existing-set duplication check

Closest existing Text Set: Patterns and Repetition in Stories

What overlaps: Both sets examine deliberate choices that shape how a story works.

Why this set is genuinely different: Patterns and Repetition studies one structural device across stories; this set studies the broader process of authorship from idea to finished meaning.

Production note

This is the repaired post-audit edition. Final coding should preserve these title IDs and recheck live links/covers before deployment.