



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Tionscadal Léirithe um Theiripe ar Scoil agus Tacaíocht na Luathbhlianta
Demonstration Project on In-school and Early Years Therapy Support

Helping Your Child Express Themselves

**An Oral and Written Storytelling
Resource for Parents**





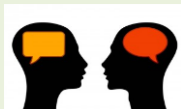
Helping Your Child Express Themselves

Children and young people with speech language and communication needs can have difficulties expressing themselves, explaining things and writing and telling stories. These can impact on social communication and interaction.

You can help your child structure and plan what he/she wants to say verbally through prompts, such as those described below.

Support your child to give accurate and detailed verbal responses:

- Start with **free recall**:
 - *"Tell me about..."*
 - *"Describe the incident/event/information"*
- Then **support him/her to give more details using simple questions** (Use a visual chart to support your child)
 - *"who", "what", "when", "where", "how", "why" (see page 6)*
 - *Describe the person, place, when it happened etc.*
- Leave the silence: Give your child **time to respond, prompt him/her** to keep going and just say it anyway he/she can say it.
- **Write down important points or draw out** in a sequence to support him/her to link things verbally (see page 8).



Be aware of your own language:

- Slow down your talking.
- **Pause often: Briefly pause (1-2 seconds) between each piece of information.**
- Speak in the present tense.
- Always use your child's name prior to asking/telling them something and ensure they are looking at you and paying attention.
- **Provide oral instructions in sequential order (i.e. what comes first, next and last)** – (see page 8).
- Use variety in your voice and emphasize important words.
- Use lots of non-verbal body language.
- **Check understanding at each point, ask your child to explain "what I have just told you" or "what have we just talked about".....if you say "have you understood?", they will most likely say 'yes'.**

**Most importantly look out for any breakdown in communication when either you or they have not understood the message being communicated and identify a different way of explaining it.*



Visual Supports for Developing Oral and Written Narrative

The visual supports below have all been developed to support children and young people to structure their stories/explanations and give more detailed information. They can all be used to support talking and writing.

There are many resources for developing these skills. The below evidence informed resources are examples that have been created by Speech and Language Therapists working with the NCSE and are based on clinical expertise.

Structured and detailed narratives:

Narrative Grid (see page 5): This is a visual way of supporting your child to structure what he/she wants to say or write. It is a prompt to encourage him/her to give enough information to re-tell an event or story.

It can also be used to support understanding of a story/text by re-telling the key information given in that story/text using the grid to support.

Narrative Grid

What are we talking about? 	Who was there? 	Where/When?
What happened first? At the start? And then what happened? 	Was there a problem/dilemma? Or did someone have to do something? 	Plan/Reaction Resolution/end What happened in the end? How did you/people feel?

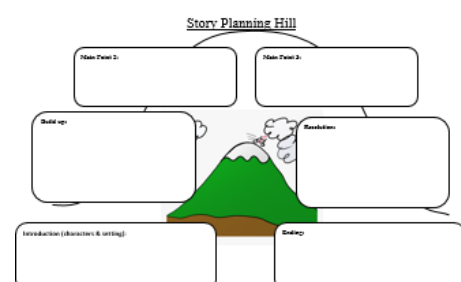
Question Grid (see page 6): This is a simple visual to support key information in a story or explanation. Encourage your child to add more information using the questions.

Who?	What?	When?	Where?	How?	Why?

Story Planning Hill (see page 7): A story planning hill is a way of visually planning the plot and structure of a story. It is a common visual that your child can use to follow the path of the main character up to the top of the hill (the climax of the story) and then back down to the resolution/decision.

There are many different versions of story planning hill templates available on

<https://www.twinkl.ie/teaching-wiki/story-mountain>





Sequencing information:

Sequencing skills are hugely important for storytelling. They help your child organise their thoughts, order events (first, next, last) and link events/information together (cause and effect).

As a parent you can support your child to sequence information by using everyday tasks:

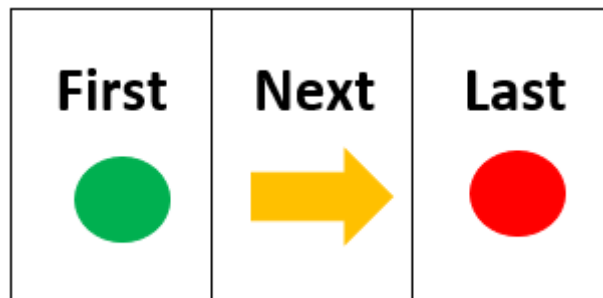
- how to make a drink or a sandwich
- morning routine
- brushing your teeth
- recipes

You can also support your child to sequence more detailed information by supporting them to:

- re-tell well known stories (e.g. nursery rhymes)
- re-tell the sequence of an event or trip (e.g. recent birthday party)

You can use simple visuals such as the First-Next-Last visual (see page 8) and/or the Storytelling Grid/Question Grid (see pages 5 and 6) to visually support both the detail and sequencing of the information.

First-Next-Last: This is a simple visual to support your child to recount information in order.



There are lots more resources and information available on storytelling development in the below resource:

https://www.cht.nhs.uk/fileadmin/site_setup/contentUploads/Services/Clinical/Childrens_Therapy_services/Childrens_Therapy/Speech_Language_Therapy/Narrative_Activity_Pack_website.pdf



Storytelling Grid

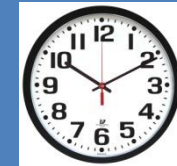
What are we talking about?



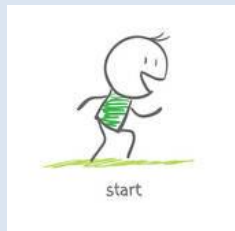
Who was there?



Where/When?



What happened first? At the start? And then what happened?



Was there a problem/dilemma? Or did someone have to do something?



Plan/reaction

Resolution/decision/end

What happened in the end?




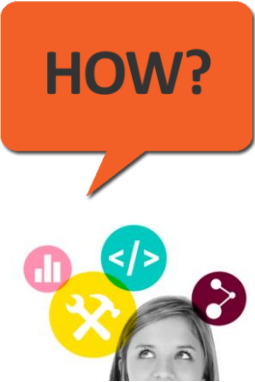
How did you/other people feel?



Question Grid

Could be used to:

- Recall an Event
- Reflect on an issue
- Plan an activity
- Tell news

Who?	What?	When?	Where?	How?	Why?
					



Story Planning Hill

Main Points leading to the Climax:

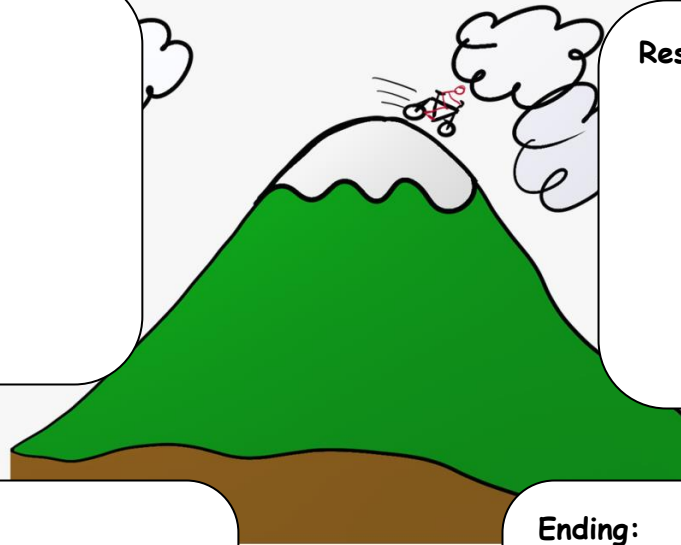
Main Points leading from the Climax to the Resolution:

Build up:

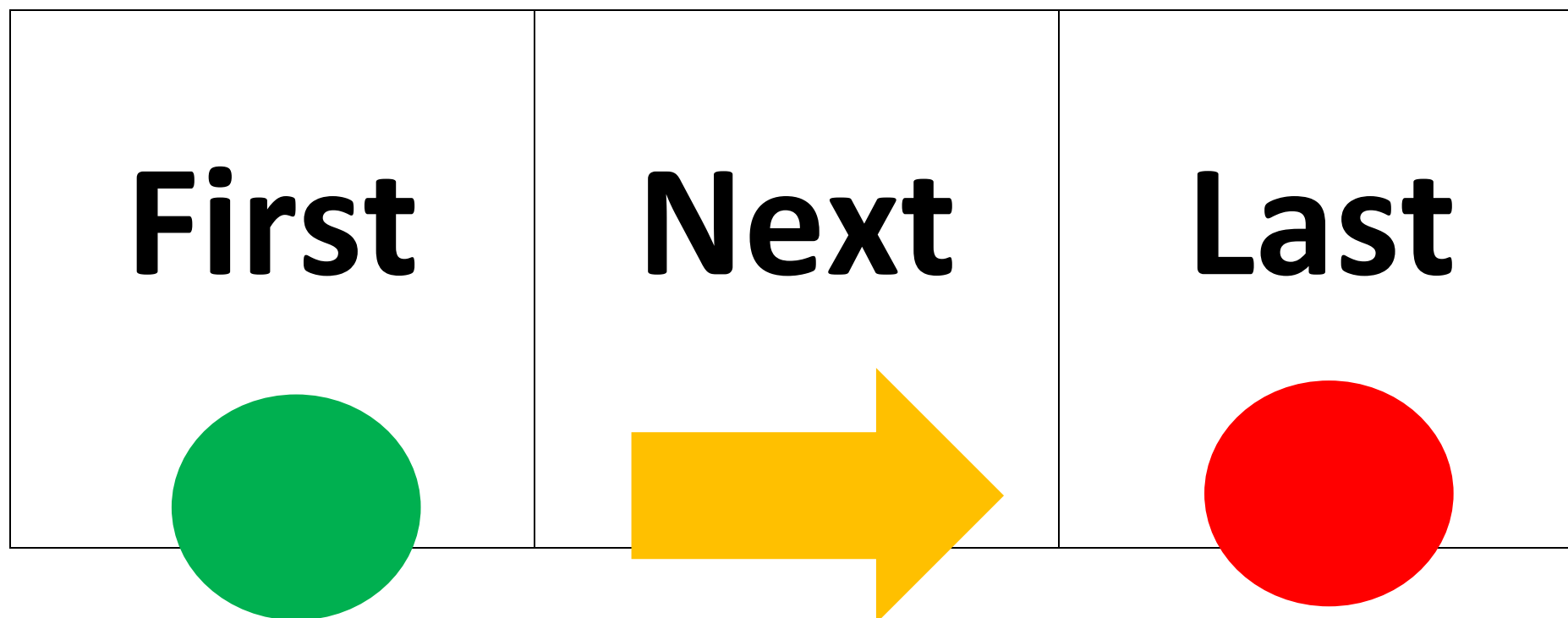
Resolution/Decision:

Introduction (characters & setting):

Ending:



Sequencing: FIRST - NEXT - LAST





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