

Unit 28: Storytelling as Performance

Unit code:	K/502/5400
QCF Level 3:	BTEC National
Credit value:	10
Guided learning hours:	60

● Aim and purpose

This unit is designed to develop learners' skills of storytelling as a performance art in its own right.

● Unit introduction

Storytelling is probably one of the oldest performance activities known to any civilisation. Much of ordinary human discourse involves the telling of stories. A response to very ordinary conversations results in the recounting of a story. Throughout history stories have been told in many ways: through music and drama, through dance and literature. This unit is designed to introduce learners to storytelling as a performance art in its own right. The art of the storyteller can certainly be enhanced and supplemented by other means and this unit does not seek to ignore those elements. It does seek, however, to see the art of storytelling as a unique form.

The subject matter of a story can be many and varied. There is no restriction as to what a story might treat. The story can be serious or frivolous, modern or ancient, long or short, moral or decadent, instructive and entertaining. It can be based on real events or be totally fictitious. Each story will become a small jewel of meaning for and of itself. While stories can be scripted, they are often delivered in a manner that requires a certain amount of invention in the telling – at each telling a slightly different emphasis, or perhaps a fresh use of language.

While there are professional storytellers, the techniques and skills required can also serve to boost the armoury of the actor. Understanding the structure of the story can assist in the understanding of a whole play. The audience for a story can be of any age and it can be performed in any setting, both formal and informal. Often the storyteller works as a solo artist, but a story could also be delivered by small groups of tellers, where the art of story is a bridge with the complete drama.

● Learning outcomes

On completion of this unit a learner should:

- 1 Be able to research source material for a story
- 2 Be able to create stories
- 3 Be able to use storytelling techniques
- 4 Be able to tell stories to selected audiences.

Unit content

1 Be able to research source material for a story

Research: eg reading stories, newspapers, magazines, group workshops, self-imagination, listening to stories told by others

Source material: eg myths (universal, national, local), legends, religion, fairy tales, classics, literary, novels, children's books, children's stories, poems, plays, films, documentaries, news, history, personal experience, reported experience of others

2 Be able to create stories

Create: develop research material; workshop; structure eg storyline, scene setting, action, atmosphere, tension, mood, narration, character, multi-role; style eg comic, tragic, melodramatic, use of movement, music, song

Purpose of story: eg serious, informative, instructive, educational, entertainment, historical, mythological, moral

3 Be able to use storytelling techniques

Techniques: eg vocal control, facial control, focus, concentration, discipline, gesture, sitting, standing, moving, repetition, control of audience, embracing whole audience, eye contact with audience, pace, tone, pitch, rhythm, use of performance space, use of props, recorded using appropriate microphone and camera technique

4 Be able to tell stories to selected audiences

Target/selected audience: eg age, gender, race, mixed

Assessment and grading criteria

In order to pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria for a pass grade describe the level of achievement required to pass this unit.

Assessment and grading criteria		
To achieve a pass grade the evidence must show that the learner is able to:	To achieve a merit grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass criteria, the learner is able to:	To achieve a distinction grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass and merit criteria, the learner is able to:
P1 show evidence of research into source material used for a story [IE]	M1 show evidence of detailed research into source material used for a story	D1 show evidence of comprehensive research into source material used for a story
P2 create a story showing evidence of an attempt at style and structure [CT, SM]	M2 create a story showing control over style and structure and a degree of imagination	D2 create a story showing complete control over style and structure with flair and imagination
P3 create a story that shows limited awareness of the needs of the target audience [CT, SM]	M3 create a story that shows awareness of the needs of the target audience	D3 create a story that shows complete awareness of the needs of the target audience
P4 demonstrate a degree of control over storytelling techniques	M4 demonstrate control over storytelling techniques, with occasional lapses in consistency	D4 demonstrate full control over storytelling techniques, with complete consistency and confidence
P5 communicate a story, showing limited awareness of how the style is suited to the target audience.	M5 communicate a story, showing awareness of how the style is suited to the target audience.	D5 communicate a story showing complete awareness of how the style is suited to the target audience.

PLTS: This summary references where applicable, in the square brackets, the elements of the personal, learning and thinking skills applicable in the pass criteria. It identifies opportunities for learners to demonstrate effective application of the referenced elements of the skills.

Key	IE – independent enquirers CT – creative thinkers	RL – reflective learners TW – team workers	SM – self-managers EP – effective participators
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Essential guidance for tutors

Delivery

Early work should be based around the exploration of starting points for various types of stories.

Group and individual research into a variety of source material, eg children's books, short stories, news stories, traditional myths and legends should be undertaken by learners who should be encouraged to discuss the style, content and purpose of a range of examples. It will be beneficial for learners to share their research findings with others. Learners should then build on the findings of their research to explore the stylistic features of a range of examples.

Practical tutor led activities should be used to explore a variety of storytelling techniques for use with a range of target audiences. Learners should be introduced to different methods of communicating in performance via discussion and analysis of how stories, plots, events, incidents, issues and themes can be communicated to an audience, using words and images. Vocally, they might use choral work, sound collage, poetry, repeated or random words as well as narration and dialogue. Physically they may use physical theatre techniques, dance, free and choreographed movement and gesture. Technically the telling of a story might be enhanced by the use of a variety of tools such as masks, costume, puppets, props, lighting and sound, but it is essential that the story being told remains the focus of the work.

Regular opportunities to practise storytelling should be provided, particularly where solo work is concerned. Confidence in controlling an audience is a crucial factor in successful storytelling so learners should act as each other's audiences during class-based activities. Observing the work of other learners should help to develop critical powers and the ability to analyse the effectiveness of specific styles and techniques.

Outline learning plan

The outline learning plan has been included in this unit as guidance and can be used in conjunction with the programme of suggested assignments.

The outline learning plan demonstrates one way in planning the delivery and assessment of this unit.

Topic and suggested assignments/activities and/assessment
Introduction to the unit and structure of the programme of learning
Starting points – researching and developing ideas for stories. (LO1) Group and individual research into a variety of source material, eg children's books, short stories, news stories, traditional myths and legends.
Creating stories – style, content and purpose. (LO2) Practical activities to explore the key features of a range of different stories.
The storytellers' toolkit. (LO3/4) Practical activities to explore a variety of storytelling techniques for use with a range of target audiences.
Assignment 1 – Myths and Legends (P1, M1, D1, P2, M2, D2, P3, M3, D3, P4, M4, D4, P5, M5, D5) Research into a traditional myth or legend. Use of research material to develop a story for a target audience. Rehearsal of story. Presentation of story to target audience.
Feedback from assignment.
Assignment 2 – Storytelling Festival (P1, M1, D1, P2, M2, D2, P3, M3, D3, P4, M4, D4, P5, M5, D5) Research into a range of starting points for children's story. Use of research material to develop two contrasting stories for a storytelling festival. Rehearsal of stories. Presentation of stories as part of a festival for children.

Assessment

Learners will need to develop confidence in the use of storytelling techniques in a number of contexts. It is therefore advised that learners are given at least two opportunities to demonstrate these skills in assessment activities.

Grading criterion 1 requires learners to investigate a given or chosen type of source material for a story. To achieve P1 learners must be able to produce a moderate amount of research material that results in an unelaborated account of the suitability and potential of the material they have examined. For M1, research activities will result in a more detailed account of the ways in which the material might be used. To achieve D1 research will be wide ranging and will result in learners being able to fully assess the potential of materials discussing why certain material is suitable and how it might be used.

Grading criteria 2 and 3 require learners to create a story using appropriate style and structural elements. They will need to show an awareness of the target audience in their presentation of the story.

Learners achieving P2/3 will have made an effort to use stylistic and structural elements but this will not be completely successful in terms of the work's suitability for the target audience. For M2/3, learners will show a better understanding of use of stylistic and structural elements and will have used these elements in a creative manner that, for the most part, meets the needs of the audience. Learners achieving D2/3 will be able to manage the stylistic and structural elements fully to produce work that demonstrates a more sophisticated use of the source material. At this level the work should show a comprehensive understanding of the needs of the target audience, creating a story that is completely suitable for their needs.

Grading criterion 4 assesses learners' ability to use storytelling techniques appropriate to the context of the piece. This might include vocal control, facial control, gesture, focus, use of performance space, costume and/or props. Learners achieving P4 will be able to show the use of appropriate techniques but control will not be consistent in all areas. For M4, learners will demonstrate a better degree of control and any lapses in consistency will be infrequent and will not detract from the overall presentation of the work. To achieve D4 learners should demonstrate full control over techniques and should perform with flair and ease.

Grading criterion 5 assesses learners' ability to communicate with their audience. To achieve P5 learners should demonstrate some awareness in performance of the needs of the target audience however their understanding of how the style of their presentation can be suited to the audience will not be completely secure. Learners achieving M5 will use their understanding of the stylistic elements of the story to present the work in a manner that suits the target audience. For D5, learners will demonstrate a full appreciation of how the style of presentation can be tailored to the needs of the audience, responding to reactions of audience members in an appropriate and imaginative way.

Programme of suggested assignments

The table below shows a programme of suggested assignments that cover the pass, merit and distinction criteria in the assessment and grading grid. This is for guidance and it is recommended that centres either write their own assignments or adapt any Edexcel assignments to meet local needs and resources.

Criteria covered	Assignment title	Scenario	Assessment method
P1, M1, D1, P2, M2, D2, P3, M3, D3, P4, M4, D4, P5, M5, D5	Myths and Legends	<p>Work on a brief to create and perform a story for a given target audience.</p> <p>Activities include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • research into a traditional myth or legend • use of research material to develop a story for a target audience • rehearsal of story • presentation of story to target audience. 	<p>Research log and summary of findings.</p> <p>Draft(s) of story.</p> <p>Rehearsal log.</p> <p>Recording of presentation of story.</p>
P1, M1, D1, P2, M2, D2, P3, M3, D3, P4, M4, D4, P5, M5, D5	Storytelling Festival	<p>Contribute to festival of storytelling, creating and performing two contrasting stories for a given target audience of children.</p> <p>Activities include</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • research into a range of starting points for children's story • use of research material to develop two contrasting stories for a storytelling festival • rehearsal of stories • presentation of stories as part of a festival for children. 	<p>Research log and summary of findings.</p> <p>Draft(s) of stories.</p> <p>Rehearsal log.</p> <p>Recording of presentation of stories.</p>

Links to National Occupational Standards, other BTEC units, other BTEC qualifications and other relevant units and qualifications

This unit forms part of the BTEC Performing and Production Arts sector suite. This unit has particular links with the following unit titles in the BTEC Performing and Production Arts suite:

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Preparing Work for an Audience	Devising Plays	Devising Plays
Presenting Work to an Audience	Acting Skills and Techniques	Stand-up Comic Technique
		Script Writing

Essential resources

Learners will require access to a range of material for use in the research of possible starting points and sources for stories. These could include texts such as children's stories, myths and legends and newspaper articles as well as recorded materials such as videos and DVDs. Access to a rehearsal and performance space is a requirement. Props and costumes will also be required as appropriate.

Employer engagement and vocational contexts

Assignments should be set within a vocational context. Links with primary schools and nurseries might be used to allow learners to create and present stories to an audience of young children.

Indicative reading for learners

Textbooks

Aesop – *The Complete Fables* (Penguin Classics, 2003) ISBN 9780140446494

Andersen H C – *The Complete Hans Christian Andersen Fairy Tales* (Gramercy Books, 1994)
ISBN 9780517092910

Dawood N J – *Aladdin and Other Tales from the Arabian Nights* (Puffin Classics I, 1996)
ISBN 9780140367829

Grimm J and W – *The Complete Illustrated Fairy Tales of The Brothers Grimm* (Wordsworth Editions, 1998)
ISBN 9781853268984

Horowitz A – *Myths and Legends* (Kingfisher Books, 2007) ISBN 9780753415252

Johnstone K – *Impro for Storytellers* (Faber and Faber, 1999) ISBN 9780571190997

Lancelyn Green R – *Tales of the Greek Heroes* (Puffin Classics, 2009) ISBN 9780141325286

Website

www.mainlesson.com

The Baldwin Online Children's Literature Project; includes over ten thousand children's stories

Delivery of personal, learning and thinking skills

The table below identifies the opportunities for personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS) that have been included within the pass assessment criteria of this unit.

Skill	When learners are ...
Independent enquirers	researching source material to be used for a story
Creative thinkers	creating a story that is suitable for a target audience
Self-managers	organising time and resource to create a story that is suitable for a target audience.

Although PLTS are identified within this unit as an inherent part of the assessment criteria, there are further opportunities to develop a range of PLTS through various approaches to teaching and learning.

Skill	When learners are ...
Independent enquirers	finding out about the needs of their target audience
Reflective learners	considering skills developed in other areas of the programme that could be used when presenting a story
Team workers	working with others when undertaking research activities and sharing findings
Self-managers	ensuring that deadlines are met.

● Functional Skills – Level 2

Skill	When learners are ...
English	
Speaking and listening – make a range of contributions to discussions and make effective presentations in a wide range of contexts	discussing research findings with others
Reading – compare, select, read and understand texts and use them to gather information, ideas, arguments and opinions	investigating possible source materials for stories
Writing – write documents, including extended writing pieces, communicating information, ideas and opinions, effectively and persuasively	producing written drafts of stories.