

Storytelling Techniques Young Listeners Respond To

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Photo: Julie Brown

Are you looking for more traction when telling stories to kids. Here is a checklist of some techniques to help your stories appeal to youth.

Alliteration: the use of *strings of similar sounding words* is pleasing to the ear.
Ex. "She sells Sea Shells..."

Rhyme and Rhythm: Also pleasing to the ear.
Example: Dr. Seuss.

Funny Names: Kids are captivated by distinctive names. Some are funnier than others. Read Craig's article on funny names:
www.ExpressionsOfExcellence.com/ARTICLES/funny_names_harrison.pdf

Distinctive Voices: Help differentiate different players in a story. Dialog should be present tense: yell, whisper, whine, roar, kvetch (complain), bellow, etc.

Exaggeration: Whether in voices, feelings, sensations, etc., extremes can be powerful.
"It was sooooooo cold..."

Humor: Kids like funny sounds, surprises, and especially slapstick.

Being put into the story: Listeners like to be involved in the story. Put them there! Give them a part to play: sounds & sound effects, movements, etc.

Repetition: Kids anticipate the repetition. The "rule of three" rules in stories. It's a familiar structure for sharing information. Use it.

Call and Response: See Craig's handout on this West African technique for audience participation: www.LaughLovers.us/handouts/Harrison_Call&Response.pdf

Anthropomorphization: The ascribing of human features to plants, animals, things. Giving human qualities to non-humans.

While this list is far from exhaustive, the use of these and other techniques will enhance your telling of stories, whether for teens, small kids or big ones (AKA Adults).



Storyteller Craig Hackin' 'Boo Harrison tells tales of humor and humanity. Visit www.HackinBoo.com for more information about his stories, speeches and workshops. Reach him at 510-547-0664.