



Reading Comprehension Classroom Activity

Story Maps

Overview

Young readers and listeners make sense of stories, build vocabulary, and strengthen oral language when they understand narrative structure better. This activity uses a variety of story map organizers to help students identify characters, settings, problems, and events. Through discussion and drawing/writing, students practice using vocabulary in meaningful, connected ways.

Focus: Narrative structure and oral language development

Grade Range: K-2

Goal: Help students identify, discuss, and organize key story elements to support comprehension and vocabulary use.

Materials Needed

- Storybooks or short narrative texts (can be read aloud)
- Printed student story map pages
- Pencils, crayons, or markers

Instructions

1. **Model the Process:** Choose a familiar story and model how to fill in the story map, thinking aloud as you identify story elements.
2. **Guided Practice:** Read a story aloud and guide students through one of the graphic organizers as a group.
3. **Independent or Partner Practice:** Let students complete their own story maps based on a shared or familiar text.
4. **Vocabulary Emphasis:** Encourage students to use descriptive words when filling in their organizers. Model language as needed.

Tips for Differentiation

- Use drawing-based organizers for early writers.
- Provide sentence stems for developing writers.

- Offer support by rereading or retelling the story before students work.
- Challenge advanced students to create their own story maps or add a writing prompt.

Wrap-Up Questions

- What details helped you figure out the problem in the story?
- Did the setting affect what happened?
- What were your favorite words you used today?

Student Practice Sets

There are 6 story map options. Use them flexibly based on the text or student level. Each includes space for drawing or writing.

- **Story Map 1—Character & Setting**

Helps students identify the main character and setting of the story, building foundational understanding of who the story is about and where it takes place.

- **Story Map 2—Beginning / Middle / End**

Guides students to organize the story into three key parts, supporting sequencing and recall of major events.

- **Story Map 3—Problem and Solution**

Focuses on identifying the central conflict and how it was resolved, encouraging comprehension of cause-and-effect in stories.

- **Story Map 4—Character, Setting, Problem, Solution**

Combines core narrative elements into one organizer, giving students a fuller picture of how story parts work together.

- **Story Map 5—Story Sequence (First, Then, Next, Last)**

Breaks the story into four sequential steps, helping students retell events in logical order by using transitional language.

- **Story Map 6—Story Snapshot: Who? Where? What happened? How did it end?**

Offers a quick overview of the story by using simple guiding questions—ideal for early learners or oral language support.

Student Name: _____

Date: _____

Story Map

Book Title:



The main character is:

A large rectangular box with a wavy green border, intended for drawing or writing.

The setting is:

A large rectangular box with a wavy green border, intended for drawing or writing.

Student Name: _____

Date: _____

Story Map

Book Title:

Beginning

Middle

End

Student Name: _____

Date: _____

Story Map

Book Title:



Problem



Solution

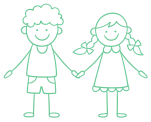


Student Name: _____

Date: _____

Story Map

Book Title: _____



Characters

A large rectangular box with a wavy green border, intended for writing about the characters in the story.

Setting

A large rectangular box with a wavy green border, intended for writing about the setting of the story.

Problem

A large rectangular box with a wavy green border, intended for writing about the problem in the story.

Solution

A large rectangular box with a wavy green border, intended for writing about the solution in the story.

Student Name: _____

Date: _____

Story Map

Book Title:

First,

Next,

Then,

Last,

Student Name: _____

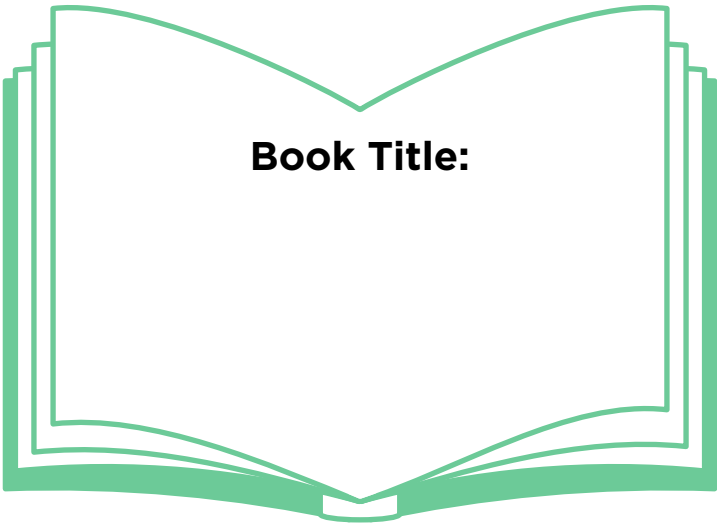
Date: _____

Story Map

Who is this story about?

Where did the story take place?

What happened?



How did it end?