

The ABCs of Storytelling

A	Allow yourself to tell a story you don't think is perfect yet. Appear to be calm and confident. Ask for advice when you need it.
B	Begin with one story. Believe in yourself and your story. Breathe deeply from your diaphragm.
C	Capture the attention of your audience. Collect stories. Communicate through stories.
D	Discipline your eye contact. Discover the best way for you to learn a story.
E	Eliminate unnecessary gestures. Evaluate stories for ease in learning and telling.
F	Find wonderful material in folklore. Forget about forgetting; you won't if you know your story so well it's a part of you.
G	Gain confidence by telling as often as you can. Gather with other storytellers and listen and share. Gesture when it improves your story.
H	Habitually rehearse your stories before you tell. Heighten your suspense with appropriate pauses. Hook your audience with your introductions.
I	Identify with your characters. Imagine your story; see it happening as you tell it. Improvise if you make a mistake. Your audience will never know the difference.
J	Just be yourself, you'll find your natural style. Journey into the world of storytelling; after a few successes, you'll never want to stop.
K	Keep records of the stories you've learned and told. Know your story inside out
L	Learn only stories you love. Let the story speak for itself -- don't try to explain it. Listen to as many stories as possible.
M	Memorize only the beginning and the end of your stories and essential key phrases. Make eye contact with your audience, so each listener feels the story is a personal gift from you. Match your material to the audience.

N	Note changes you want to make after a performance. Notice audience reactions.
O	Obtain permission to tell stories written by other tellers. Observe what makes other tellers successful. Outline the story structure.
P	Pause to intensify the meaning and heighten the suspense. Practice your stories orally until they are a part of you.
Q	Qualify yourself with adequate practice and preparation. Quiet your qualms. Quit worrying.
R	Read as many stories as possible. Retell a new story as often as possible. Research the background and culture of your stories.
S	Select stories carefully; sometimes they'll select you. Speak clearly and distinctly.
T	Tell every chance you get when you're working on new material. Turn mistakes into learning.
U	Understand your stories thoroughly. Use a mirror to practice gesture and a recorder to evaluate your telling. Utilize material from many sources.
V	Vary your expression with vocal techniques. Visualize the characters, settings and action as you tell.
W	Warm up your voice to make it more resonant and free. Wear comfortable clothing. Widen your horizons with tales from various cultures.
X	x-plore to find the best stories for you. x-press yourself clearly.
Y	Yawn to relax jaw muscles and release tensions before you tell. Yield to stories; if you keep remembering a particular story, it may be trying to tell you to learn it.
Z	Zest, Zeal, and Zip give life to your stories, to you, and to your audience.