



Snapshots

Time required
(mins)



Key Stage 2

Learning outcomes

- ✓ I can use my own life and experience as something to start writing about
- ✓ I can begin to use art as a way to tell stories

Preparation time

None

Resources needed

- Pencils / pens
- Paper or notebooks

How Do You Draw a Story?

A short visual storytelling and writing warm-up activity to help deepen an understanding of the Tate Year 3 Project.

What happens

1. Ask pupils to write a one-sentence story about a moment in their lives. It might have been on the way to school this week, a recent experience or a major family event. Give them a three-minute time limit and keen beans can stretch to two sentences, but no more as it's important to keep it simple.
2. Pupils then pair up and swap stories.
3. Ask pairs to draw each other's story, emphasising that this isn't about creating a great artwork but instead is about trying to include all of the people and objects that might be in the other person's story. For instance, "I got up, got dressed, made my bed, had breakfast" suggests places, people and objects.
4. Ask pupils to think about what's important to include in their story drawing. What should be most prominent, what in the background?
5. Once each story has been drawn, each pair gets together with another pair and once again, swaps drawings. Using only the drawings, each person has to tell the 'story' they see on the paper. Who are the main characters? What do they look like? What are they doing? How do they feel?
6. Pairs can then discuss how 'close' each viewer got to the written story.

Reflection questions

- *If you were to write your story again, what information or words would you add to make it clearer or more interesting to other people?*
- *How different or similar was the drawn version of your story to the written version? Which version did you prefer, and why?*
- *Can art help us better understand a story or an experience?*

Extension

- Reverse the activity by beginning with a photograph – either printed out or projected on the whiteboard – and asking pupils to write the story of what's happening there, considering people, place, objects, mood and emotions. Ask pupils to pair up and compare stories, then discuss as a class what was observed. How are visual and written stories similar and different? What other examples of 'visual' stories can we think of (e.g. film, comics and graphic novels)?

This activity works well with

- A Day in Our Life
- String Connections