

STORYTELLING MNEMONICS

by

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Hearing a story memorized word for word can often be boring for the listener who does not want to hear a word for word monotone. Learning a story in its structural form is a much better way to “memorize.” The following are some ways storytellers learn stories they have written, adapted, or read.

VISUAL METHODS: Visual Spatial Intelligence

Each time you tell your story, you see it anew.

I. The Movie Screen

Close your eyes. The insides of your eyelids are a movie screen.
See your story scene by scene.



II. The Cartoon

Draw a newspaper cartoon strip with 4-8 boxes.
You may use stick figures & balloons for minimal dialogue.
This will pare your story down to the essence.

III. The Story Map

Draw a map of the story scenes from a bird’s eye view.
If there is a journey, map out the path and the places the character sees.
Or if the story is psychological, draw the feelings.

IV. The Outline

If you think well in words but need to see them, make an outline or scenario.
Be sure to “chunk” the different parts using indentations and spaces.

V. The Photocopy

Photocopy your story.
Underline the most important parts. Take it with you.
Read and reread the highlighted parts.

AURAL METHODS: Linguistic Intelligence

I. Read Aloud

Hear yourself read the story.

II. Read into a Cassette Recorder

Use expression and sounds. Play it back in the car or when you do chores.

III. Listen to Storytellers on Tape.

Visit the National Storytelling Association,
www.storynet.org
132 Boone St., Suite 5,
Jonesborough, TN 37659

IV. Record Yourself

Tell the story into the tape recorder. Make up the parts you forget.
Learn to think on your feet. Play it back, noting what changes you wish to make later.



V. Imaginary Tape. Close your eyes and create the sounds effects and hear the words.

KINESTHETIC METHODS: Kinesthetic Intelligence

I. Type or Write the Story Skeleton

Type or write the original story. Then type or write it using your own words.



II. Act the Story

Act the story from the view of one or two characters.

Create character stances, gestures & voices.

III. Mime the Story

With a friend, use mime to share all or parts of the story.

IV. Move the Story

Dance the story as you tell it.

V. Find Props or Storytelling Aides (Visual and Kinesthetic)

Use objects, flannel, puppets, costume pieces, props, etc.

Finally, retell your story as you see the pictures and structure, hear the voices and sounds, or feel the movements and feelings of the story. You now know the story by “heart.”

You do not have to tell it with the exact words; you can improvise. Some phrases you will find you want to use each time, but if you forget them, you will have many others to use and you will not spoil the flow of the story. You might pause for a second or two and then see, hear, or feel where you need to go next.