

The Write Stuff

10 Part Series

Storytelling

with master storyteller Jeff Gere

Writing Creatively

with author/illustrator Robin Rector Krupp

Animal Nonfiction

with photojournalist Evelyn Gallardo

Poetry Writing

with poet Kristine O'Connell George

Biography Writing

with biographer Jeri Chase Ferris

Mystery Writing

Science Fiction Writing

Historical Fiction Writing

Fiction Writing

Sports Writing



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CRANIAL COMBUSTION
Presents

Storytelling

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Jeff Gere



The WRITE STUFF
10 Part Series



INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDE

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INTRODUCTION TO SERIES

The purpose of “THE WRITE STUFF” video series is to motivate students to write by having published authors share with them their writing secrets. Each video is designed to teach a student the practical writing skills necessary to successfully create one specific genre of literature. The full series would give students experience writing in 10 different literary genres: fiction, animal nonfiction, historical fiction, sports writing, mystery, poetry, creative writing, biography, storytelling and science fiction. Authors explain their writing skills in easy-to-follow steps and reinforce each skill with examples from their own published works. In addition to learning new writing skills, students will enjoy meeting these colorful and critically acclaimed authors whose enthusiasm for writing is contagious!

An instructional guide is designed to complement each video, suggesting exercises to help aid teachers, parents, and students. These interactive exercises will further develop a student’s writing ability and enhance the joy of creativity.

The instructional guide provides:

- *Student friendly exercises!*
- *Fun-to-do follow-up activities!*
- *Easy-to-learn reinforcement lessons!*

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REINFORCEMENT LESSONS:

Lesson #1: Invite an experienced storyteller from the community to class to share some stories with students. Then ask the storyteller if they would share any personal storytelling tips with the students and let the students ask them questions.

Lesson #2: On the Internet, look for storytelling festivals that may be happening close to your community and encourage students to attend and discover the many different professional storytellers and their unique styles and what it is like to be captivated by a well-told tale.

Lesson #3: Storytellers have video tapes and audio cassettes available in libraries, storytelling festivals, and by special order at web sites on the Internet. Find some storytelling tapes or cassettes by a variety of well-respected storytellers and play a sampling for students so that they can experience for themselves the fun of storytelling at its best.

This video represents only a small part of the storytelling workshops that Jeff Gere conducts at schools and libraries throughout the year.

*For information about how you can schedule Jeff;
E-Mail: jeffgere@lava.net*

FOLLOW-UP ACTIVITIES:

- 1) Videotape each student telling their story. Play back the tape and have each student critique his own performance and look for ways to improve. Am I loud enough? Can an audience understand the story? Are there any ways I could make my story more entertaining by using the following: mime, sound effects, adding words, character voices, placement, dynamics, or participation?
- 2) Arrange for some of your best storytellers to perform their stories for the students in a younger class.
- 3) Try using a puppet to introduce yourself and your story.
- 4) Organize a storytelling festival with other classes who are also studying storytelling. Divide the stories into categories: Funny stories, Scary stories, Stories about Peace and Friendship, True Stories or any other theme that may be appropriate. The different categories could be told at different locations at different times or even on different days. Maybe Scary Stories could be told in a semi-dark classroom around a mock campfire.

STORYTELLING With Jeff Gere

Nervous about speaking in front of others? Worried about how you look or sound? Afraid you won't remember what to say? Master storyteller, JEFF GERE, shows kids how to "wow" audiences with a well-told tale. Using puppets, his elastic face, and outright physicality, Jeff entertains as he demonstrates the fun techniques he uses for overcoming these problems. Jeff's eight step "Tell Well" storytelling system will have students giving performances worthy of applause when they enhance their stories using mime, sound effects, and character voices.

Jeff Gere's Credits:

- *Drama Specialist, City & County of Honolulu Parks Department since 1987.*
- *20 years of solo storytelling in museums, all school levels, public and private events, radio and television.*
- *Taught storytelling workshops at the University of Hawaii for eight years.*
- *Creator, and director of the Talk Story Festival since 1989, Hawaii's largest celebration of storytelling and oral history, attended by 4,000.*
- *Silly 'N Spooky Tales, one hour of original tales and puppetry video. Parent's Choice, Honors.*
- *Chicken Soup for the Soul - Hawaii, includes 5 moving tales by Gere, 2001.*

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES:

After viewing the program, students should be able to:

- Use mime to tell a simple story.
- Enhance the telling of a story with sound effects.
- Add words and narration to mime and sound effects to improve the performance of a story.
- Change their voice, body position and posture to fit a character's personality.
- Alter the dynamics of a story to make it more entertaining
- Use three different participation techniques to increase audience involvement in a story.
- Entertain an audience with a well-performed story.

KEY WORDS:

Have the students match the words with the correct definitions.

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| ___ dynamics | ___ participation technique |
| ___ character voices | ___ sound effects |
| ___ placement | ___ mime |

- 1) Do what I do, say what I say.
- 2) Movement.
- 3) Changing your body position and posture to fit a character's personality.
- 4) Variety in speed, pitch and loudness.
- 5) Zoom, growl, kerplunk, sigh, roar.
- 6) Changing your voice to sound like a different personality.

EXERCISE #1: Help Finding a Story

Draw lines from the story sources to the places they can be found. Some story sources may be found in more than one place.

- | | |
|--|------------------------|
| • Interview Parents or Grandparents | • Library |
| • Web sites | • Home |
| • Books or Magazines | • Your Own Imagination |
| • An Older Person who has an Unusual or Extraordinary Experience | • The Internet |
| • A Past Experience | • Your Community |

EXERCISE #7: Practicing Placement

Briefly tell students the Aesop's Fable, The Lion and the Mouse. Then have them improvise the conversation between the lion and the mouse starting from the moment the lion catches the mouse and use character placement to show the audience the difference between the great big lion and the tiny frightened mouse.

A hungry lion caught a mouse and wanted to eat him. But the little mouse begged for his life and promised to do the lion a big favor some day if the lion would let him go. The lion laughed at the thought that such a small creature could ever do anything useful for such a big powerful creature like himself. But he took pity on the mouse; after all, it only amounted to one small bite, and finally let it go.

Later, the lion became hopelessly entangled in a hunter's net and, in fear for his life, let out a mighty roar. Hearing the lion, the mouse ran to see what had happened. At once the tiny mouse began gnawing through the ropes, eventually freeing the lion, and fulfilling his promise.

It pays to be kind to others regardless of who they may be.

EXERCISE #8: Participation

TRUE OR FALSE:

___ You should never make noises with your mouth when telling a story.

___ To get an audience's attention, ask a question.

___ Good storytellers never have the audience repeat what they say.

___ Storytelling takes lots of hard work and practice.

EXERCISE #4: Practice Using Words To Tell a Story

Assign students to pick their favorite comic strip from the newspaper and bring it to class. It should be something they think is really funny. While holding the cartoon for reference but without showing it to the class, have each student tell the class what happens frame by frame as if they were sharing the joke with their best friend. This can also be done in groups if the class is large.

EXERCISE #5: Practicing Character Voices

Ask students to bring a variety of puppets to class from home. Give each student a puppet and have them make up a voice for their puppet that suits the puppet's personality. Let the students visit with each other but only by talking through their puppets. Set a timer for 2-3 minutes. When the timer rings, have everyone switch puppets and voices until all the students have created at least 5 different voices. This can be done in groups if there are not enough puppets for the entire class.

EXERCISE #6: Practicing Dynamics

Choose a nursery rhyme or song that you already know by heart such as: "The Eensy Weensy Spider," "Old MacDonald," "Mary Had a Little Lamb," or "Row, Row, Row Your Boat." Now speak the lyrics (no singing) changing the dynamics (speed, volume, pitch) so it sounds like a minister delivering a sermon, a teenager in love, the ringmaster at a circus, a sportscaster calling a game, a DJ's patter on the radio, someone riding a ferris wheel or a rollercoaster, or anything else you can think of that is very different from the original song.

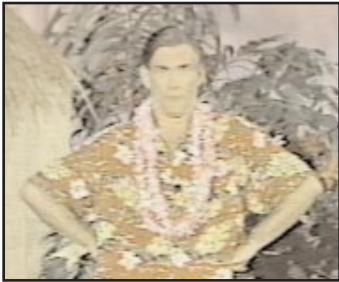
EXERCISE #2: Practice Using Mime

1. Have each student write two or three actions on different slips of paper. Examples of actions that work well would be: eating a lemon, catching a fish, a fish getting caught, giving a dog a bath, getting fleas, a bird eating a worm, or trying to fly a kite.
2. Divide the class into two teams.
3. Have Team 1 put all their papers into one bag or box and have Team 2 put all their papers into a different container.
4. Give the Team 1 box to Team 2 and the Team 2 box to Team 1.
5. Have students from each team take turns picking a paper out of their box and miming the action to their team. Remember, no talking or making sound effects. Time how long it takes for each team to guess what the student is doing. Set a time limit of 3 minutes for each turn. There is a ten second penalty every time a student talks or makes sound effects while he is miming.
6. The team with the lowest cumulative time wins.

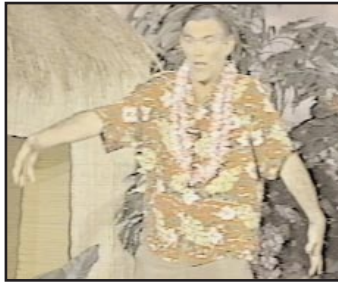
EXERCISE #3: Practicing Sound Effects

1. On a sheet of clean paper, have each student make up a list of ten things that make noises such as: a car, a chicken, a storm, a blender, a washing machine, a leaky faucet, a bear, an airplane, etc.
2. Turn the papers face down and pass them forward three students. No peeking at what was written.
3. Partner up with a student sitting next to you. Look at your list but don't let your partner see it.
4. Take turns trying to make make your partner guess the name of each thing on the list by making only sound effects.
5. Each partner should write down next to the item how many guesses it took - that is the score for the person making the sound effects. The guesser gets no score. The better the sound effects, the easier it should be for the person to guess what it is.

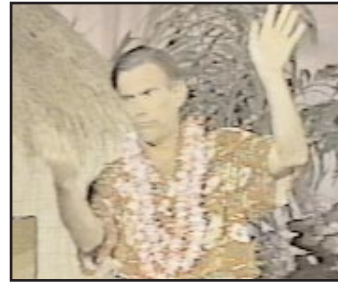
THE TELL WELL STORYTELLING SYSTEM



STEP #1:
Find a Story



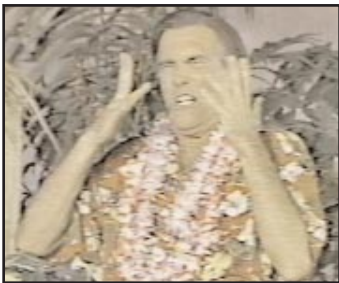
STEP #2:
Mime



STEP #3:
Sound Effects



STEP #4:
Add Words



STEP #5:
Character
Voices & Placement



STEP #6:
Dynamics



STEP #7:
Participation



STEP #8:
Performance