**STORYLINE PLANNING GRID - SAMPLE FRAMEWORK**

**The sample framework which follows may be adapted to create many simple Storyline topics:**

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| **STORYLINE** | **KEY QUESTION** | **POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES** |
| 1. Place and Time | Where does it happen?  When does it happen? | Features are listed.  Differences are listed.  A picture, model, map or plan is created. A written description is developed. |
| 2. People | Who are the people? | After discussion visuals of characters are made. Biographies (and job descriptions) are written.  Characters are introduced. |
| 3. Systems | How do you think ‘it works’? | Different aspects are considered.  Ideas are discussed and recorded in various ways - pictures, models, plans, job descriptions, diaries, timetables etc. |
| 4. Incidents | What do you think might happen here?  What do you think would happen if … … ? | Ideas for incidents involving the characters are suggested and discussed.  Groups explore incidents and find ways of recounting their stories.  The Storyline planner can suggest particular incidents/problems.  Groups agree on possible solutions and/or developments. |
| 5. Rules | How do you think we could … avoid … prevent … improve ? | Discussion of incidents / problems leads to consideration of possible rules / laws, models of behaviour. |
| 6. Rhythms | What do you think it would be like … at night/in the day … in winter/summer … when busy/quiet? | Discussion is about atmosphere, contrasts, and changes.  Groups find different ways of exploring and recording their ideas, e.g.  • expressive artwork using different media/techniques  • poetry writing using different structures. |
| 7. A special Event | What do you think would be a special event/ celebration in this setting? | Discussion of possible celebration and/or special event, and decision on which to explore.  Groups agree various aspects, identify tasks and carry them out, e.g. Invitations, programme, food, entertainment, speeches.  The celebration takes place. |
| 8. Review and Evaluation | What did you enjoy?  What would you change?  What did you learn?  What have you still to learn? | Individuals and groups discuss and exchange their responses.  Written reflections may follow. |

**DEVELOPING INCIDENTS**

**The development of incidents is a central feature of every Storyline Topic.**

Early episodes in the Storyline are designed to establish setting and introduce characters. There may also be an early episode about 'how it all works' eg in topics such as flower shop, fish factory, trucking, zoo etc.

Given that students have familiarised themselves with the scenario and created a range of characters appropriate to it (staff, customers, visitors etc.) then it is time to brainstorm a list of possible incidents which could take place.

It is advised that students in the class should suggest their ideas for incidents and that these are listed. Some incidents will be generic and could apply in almost any topic e.g. a lost child or lost money; a fire or a flood; an accident causing injury, or a robbery.

Others will be specific to the particular topic being explored. For example greenfly could cause concern in the flower shop, failure of water supply would be a serious problem in the fish factory, vehicle breakdown or traffic accident in trucking, and animal escape in the zoo.

Bad news is often seen as good news so it may be necessary to suggest to students that there could be positive incidents like finding a lost item or an old friend; meeting a famous person; falling in love; winning an award, etc.

In preparing the Storyline outline the teacher will have in mind certain incidents that should be explored (for curriculum reasons). It will be surprising if the students do not suggest any of these but it should be possible to work with a blend of student ideas and teacher suggestions.

Given that there are many ways to tell the story of an incident and that students may be deployed in various groupings (pairs, small groups, whole class, individual) it should be possible to explore a variety of incidents.

This episode is central to the successful development of the STORY, as each incident becomes a 'chapter' in the Storyline. If it has taken several weeks to build up setting and character a similar period should be spent developing incidents before bringing the Storyline to culmination followed by review and evaluation.

The grid that follows is a useful planning device for ‘incidents’.

Possible incidents are listed on one axis. For example: **fire, robbery, love at first sight**, etc.

The other axis lists 'ways of telling' - for example:

**oral narrative -** telling

**written narrative -** personal account, written in the first person as a character

**picture story / cartoon – using speech bubbles and captions**

**role play & drama - in groups**

**puppets - improvised from 'little people' or 'portrait faces'**

**rap / poem / song - using a known text as a model**

**newspaper report - might be incorporated into 'special edition'**

**radio / TV report - outcome could be audio or videotape**

**dialogue - conversation between two central characters**

**monologue - thoughts and reflections of a character**

There are many other possibilities.

The grid is used to enable planning. Each incident is matched to a way of representing it. Then the teacher or class agree on groupings for the incidents they want to develop. Younger students or classes/teachers working on their first Storyline will benefit from exploring the first incident together. This provides a model or structure and allows the teacher to reinforce ideas about story/narrative - for example that it should have sequence - a beginning, middle and end. Later it may be possible for different groups to work simultaneously on different incidents using different ways of telling. The 'mix and match' possibilities are endless!

Simple rules may be required if students want to involve characters created by others not in their group. For example - Check with owner before suggesting any course of action for a character not your own!

The incidents episode is the heart of the Storyline and it should offer opportunities for exploring and solving problems, also storytelling in a variety of forms.

The teacher will see the potential for weaving together many diverse elements of the desired curriculum in this major episode but it is also important to recognise that this part of the Storyline should be full of FUN, DRAMA, HUMOUR and IMAGINATION.

**INCIDENT PLANNING GRID**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **INCIDENTS**  **WAYS OF REPRESENTING** | **1.** | **2.** | **3.** | **4.** | **5.** | **6.** | **7.** | **8.** |
| oral narrative |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| written narrative |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| picture story |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| role play |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Multi-media  e.g. animation |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| puppets |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| rap/poem or song |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| report – radio, tv or newspaper |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**DEVICES FOR DIRECTING THE LINE OF THE STORY**

**The teacher’s role is to direct the line of the story to ensure appropriate pacing, balance of activities and specific curricular coverage in order that students achieve the planned learning outcomes. The following is a list of ways that can be used to open and close Storylines and introduce incidents. As teachers work with Storyline they add to their repertoire of devices.**

**Some ways of opening a Storyline**

**1. Key question start**

**e.g. What is a circus?**

**2. The addition sum**

**e.g. \_\_\_\_ + \_\_\_\_\_ + \_\_\_\_\_\_ + = farm**

**3. The assignment**

**e.g. We have been asked to design a new play park.**

**4. A Newspaper article**

**e.g. Headline ‘Local Wood to go!’**

**5. The Story-like start**

**e.g. Read a story and then ask ‘What do you think happened next?’**

**6. The Letter/Fax/Text message**

**e.g. The class receive a letter from a charity asking them to organise a function to raise funds.**

**Some ways of creating incidents**

1. **The Sign (added to a frieze)**

**e.g. ‘Funfair closed tonight’ or ‘Road closed’**

1. **The Public Meeting**

**e.g. In a Storyline about a Local Wood the teacher may call a meeting to discuss reaction to the plans to close access.**

1. **Teacher-in-role**

**e.g. In a Storyline about ‘Raiders’ the teacher can take on the role of a prisoner and be questioned by the class in-role as the captors.**

1. **Change to the frieze**

**e.g. In a Storyline about ‘The New Neighbour’ the teacher can add a removal van to the frieze.**

1. **Newspaper Article**

**e.g. An article might present a problem ‘Mysterious object…..’**

**6. A letter**

**e.g. The farmer receives a letter asking him if he will permit the local pony club to hold a gymkhana in one of his fields.**

**7. A problem**

**e.g. In the Storyline the teacher poses the problem ‘How can the stalls be better protected from the wind and rain?’.**

**8. A Story**

**e.g. The teacher writes a short episode to move the line of the story on. The episode could introduce a new character or a problem.**

**9. Using the plot devices of an existing story.**

**Some ways of closing a Storyline**

1. **The natural ending**

**e.g. The patient returns home.**

**2. A class visit**

**e.g. The children visit a farm, a circus, a travel agency.**

**3. The Main event**

**e.g. In the Storyline ‘New Play Park’ the class organise the official opening ceremony.**

**4.A visit from an expert**

**e.g. In the Storyline ‘Sport Centre’ a local athlete may check out health and safety provision.**

**5. A performance to parents**

**e.g. The class tell the story using the various artefacts that they have produced during the Storyline.**