

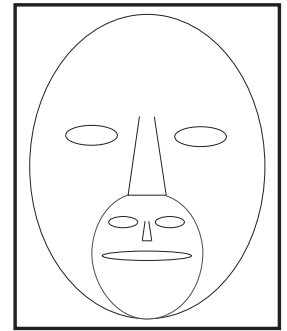


TEACHER'S GUIDE

“My Amazing Face Story” Activity is an arts-in-education exercise to do at home or in the classroom after seeing *Christopher Agostino’s StoryFaces* performance.

This hands-on activity was developed in my school residencies as a way to give kids their own unique experience in the visual storytelling they see me demonstrate in performances. The goal is to get kids to create an original story starring themselves, first through a drawing exercise, and then as a written story meant to be told. For the drawing, students can use the accompanying Drawing Form or draw their own big face oval that has a little face on the mouth — to create the face-on-a-face image I use for animating stories in my performances.

Drawing Form



The idea is simple enough to be very flexible, and I’ve done this activity in schools with kids in elementary through upper grades as a creativity generator and to expand their tools for telling their own stories.

Some kids are more original than others, some are not — and that’s ok. I’m ok with kids using familiar tales (like “Little Red Riding Hood”) or scenes from movies, video games, etc., or if they re-create the stories they saw in my performance — as long as they make themselves the central character in the story, because that will bring their imagination into play.

Some are more skilled at drawing, some are not, and that’s ok too. I tell students to just draw the things in their story as best they can — not to worry how good they look — because they will be telling the story as they show the drawing, they’ll be able to explain the images. Their drawing ability should not be a limit to their imagination.

I have kids do simple pencil sketches for their Face Stories first, with no colouring, so the focus remains on developing the story and not on the quality of the drawing. In class settings, I do all I can to encourage kids to create the most imaginative stories they can, so I try to free them from worrying about drawing skills, or spelling or any limiting factors. Create the story first, you can fix and improve anything later.

Students should start by drawing the whole story idea first onto the big face, before they start drawing the picture of themselves on the little mouth — that can allow the story they come up with to change how they depict themselves.

They should write the story out after the drawing. As an educational exercise this is designed to give students new strategies for developing a narrative story through visual imagery, and I try to get kids “thinking with their pencil” by focusing on the drawing first, and maybe a title, before they write it out.

To complete the experience, the kids should tell the story as they show the drawing, to anyone they can — family members, classmates — and preferably let them tell it more than once. One learns as a storyteller that you don’t really understand a story until you tell it to an audience. Stories grow and change as you tell them and experience the audience response. It is important to give a young storyteller that chance to bring their Amazing Face Story to life in the telling.

Kids should get a chance to see my StoryFaces performance before doing the activity, or you can search for “The Amazing Face Video” on YouTube to see me tell the story of how I learned to turn a face into a story.