



Crash Course in Storytelling

By Kendall Haven, Mary Gay Ducey

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Storytelling can be easy, fun, and above all doable, especially with the simple, easy-to-follow directions given by these two master storytellers. This book provides everything you need to become a master storyteller yourself. Simple examples and summary directions for exercises and games reinforce and demonstrate key concepts. Step-by-step plans help you choose a story, and learn it in preparation for presentation to an audience. Audience management, practice activities, and the authors' motivation exercises are offered as are techniques to guide you through any of the possible major telling problems. Storytelling extras (props to puppets including costumes) and lists of grade-appropriate, time- and teller-tested stories are provided.

This basic guide by experienced storytellers provides all that is needed to encourage any novice storyteller to take the plunge. Lists of never-fail stories and simple techniques for managing an audience go a long way to dissolve the angst. Practice activities and motivation exercises as well as tips for overcoming the major problems and catastrophes that might be encountered pave the way for a smooth first storytelling experience.

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Editorial Review

From School Library Journal

This is the most user-friendly handbook for librarians who seek the tools, resources, and the confidence to incorporate more storytelling into their programming. The authors offer clear, basic, and tested guidelines that include how to select, learn, and tell a story; tips on voice and body movements; audience participation; and the pros and cons of using puppets and props. Other fine books for beginners are Margaret Read MacDonald's *The Storyteller's Start-Up Book* (August House, 1993); Norma J. Livo's *Storytelling: Process and Practice* (Libraries Unlimited, 1986); and Martha Hamilton and Mitch Weiss's *Stories in My Pocket* (Fulcrum, 1996). Haven and Ducey excel in giving the hand-holding, step-by-step encouragement needed by new tellers as they make the leap from reading aloud to telling. Strategies for handling "catastrophes" (e.g., forgetting what comes next, or leaving out an important part of the tale) are invaluable for building assurance. Novices will also learn to accept their individual styles, strengths, and comfort levels rather than to compare themselves with professional tellers. The appendixes discuss copyright issues and give definitions of different types of traditional tales. Research data presented here to support the need for more stories in children's education should be shared with library and school administrators. An essential purchase.—*Judy Sokoll, Florida Storytelling Association, Naples*

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Review

"As would be expected from master tellers like Haven and Ducey this book has lots of good sound advice for beginning tellers. And rather than taking sides on issues, they present both sides of topics such as props or no props...participation or no participation. Their advice on learning, practicing, performing is all well thought out and easy to follow....[T]his book will be very useful to anyone beginning their path to storytelling." - **In The Wind**

"While there are many books that cover storytelling, ^ICrash Course in Storytelling^R is geared specifically toward busy librarians. It is written and formatted for those who need a quick working plan to begin storytelling. It is well-organized, allowing for quick reference to the details one might need in undertaking the storytelling process....This up-to-date book will be a great help to beginning storytellers in public libraries, school libraries, and other storytelling venues." - **Reference & User Services Quarterly**

"Written by two master storytellers, this guide for librarians describes a variety of proven techniques that anyone can use to engage young listeners and make stories come alive. Topics include (for example) how to choose a story, what to do when memory fails, and how to encourage audience participation. Copyright issues are addressed in the appendix. The volume concludes with a list of recommended sources for stories." - **Reference & Research Book News**

"Haven and Ducey are expert storytellers. In this crash course of 136 pages--no long narratives here--they introduce the craft and teach us how to do it better. It is kind of like the For Dummies series with major points and suggestion lists. So, whether you or someone in your school needs to brush up on storytelling skills, here is a short, easy-to-use guide, which can even be used as a text for storytelling classes. Highly recommended for teachers, teacher-librarians, and public librarians." - **Teacher Librarian**

"This is the most user-friendly handbook for librarians who seek the tools, resources, and the confidence to incorporate more storytelling into their programming. The authors offer clear, basic, and tested guidelines that include how to select, learn, and tell a story; tips on voice and body movements; audience participation;

and the pros and cons of using puppets and props...Haven and Ducey excel in giving the hand-holding, step-by-step encouragement needed by new tellers as they make the leap from reading aloud to telling. Strategies for handling catastrophes (e.g., forgetting what comes next, or leaving out an important part of the tale) are invaluable for building assurance. Novices will also learn to accept their individual styles, strengths, and comfort levels rather than to compare themselves with professional tellers....An essential purchase." -

School Library Journal

"Authors Kendall Haven and Mary Gray Ducey encourage librarians to stretch their storytelling wings, and their supportive guide offers practical advice on such matters as choosing and presenting stories, using props and costumes, and encouraging audience participation." - **American Libraries**

"The authors have organized a self-help book for anybody who needs more encouragement in becoming a better storyteller. With each chapter the techniques progress and develop from how storytelling fits in your library to techniques to help in your storytelling. The authors use published studies to show how storytelling is beneficial to children. They cover important techniques for storytelling and provide encouragement for those just starting out. Some important chapters include how to choose a story, learning stories, practicing, and first aid... A must read for all librarians in children services." - **Public Libraries**

About the Author

Kendall Haven is a nationally recognized master storyteller and the author of numerous books, including *Marvels of Math*, *Write Right!*, and *Close Encounters with Deadly Dangers*. A former research scientist, he is based in Fulton, Calif.

MaryGay Ducey, a public librarian and professional storyteller, is past-chair of the National Storytelling Association's Board of Directors. She has been featured at every major storytelling festival in the United States and conducts one- and two-day courses on storytelling.

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