



African
Storybook.org

African Storybook Guides

Creating Storybooks with Children

This Guide is about storybook development and creation with children, from an idea to a published storybook. Writing a story and developing a storybook are rewarding processes involving a range of activities and competencies that can be used for language and literacy teaching. The process of storybook creation is also a way for children to reflect on their life experiences and to make meaning of those experiences in the words and pictures of a story.

The main outcome of this process is for children to write stories and create pictures for their own storybooks on paper and/or in digital form (for example, on a mobile phone or tablet). Teachers and librarians can link or adapt the activities in this Guide to their curricula – especially literacy, language and arts – and use the process for a school project. Storybook creation also works well for a holiday workshop.

Teachers and librarians can use the ideas in this Guide to create stories and storybooks *with* learners, and also to create storybooks *for* learners – for example, storybooks for a particular class or around a particular topic.

Storybooks created on paper – for example, in a drawing book – can be created digitally offline on a tablet or mobile phone with the African Storybook Maker App. The Maker App is available for free from Google Play and Apple App Store. With a bit of practice, the Maker App is a quick and easy way to create an illustrated storybook with a cellphone or tablet.

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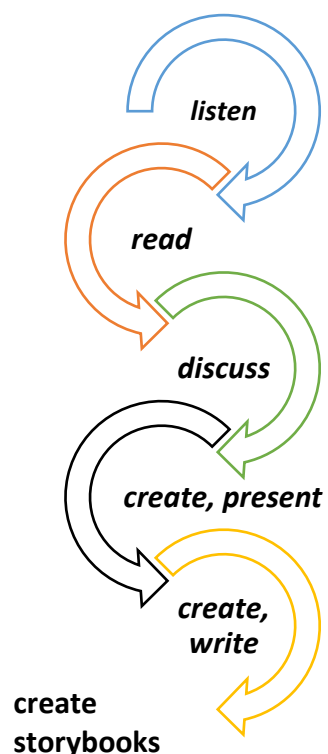
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Introduction to storybook development

Storybook development can take place over longer or shorter periods, but at least two days are needed for this process. With more time available, teachers and librarians can facilitate a storybook-making project using a few lessons per week over a term, and including a range of literacy and language activities that are linked to the curriculum.

Language and literacy competencies in story development process:

- *Listen to stories and speak about them.*
- *Read storybooks, view pictures.*
- *Discuss stories and storybooks. Discuss story elements.*
- *Create stories from pictures, and present ideas.*
- *Create and write story ideas in sentences.*
- *Write a complete story (writing process).*
- *Create a storybook with illustrations on paper.*
- *Create a digital storybook with illustrations.*



The process of storybook development presented in this Guide is flexible. You can adapt the process to suit your children and the type of project or workshop. You can decide on how long to spend on each stage of the process, and how many activities to plan for that stage.

Storybook development is a great project for a holiday workshop, for example, at a library or community centre. Holiday workshops don't need to be linked to the curriculum, and children can focus on exploring and making sense of their life experiences through art-making and storytelling. The whole process can be completed within five days.

Resources you will need

You will need the following resources for the activities in a storybook development process:

- **Story starters:** a 'story starter' is anything that stimulates ideas for a story. See pages 9 to 13 of this Guide for story starter activities.
 - **storybooks** – printed storybooks and digital storybooks, for example, PDF files of storybooks for projection on a white wall, and storybooks loaded on tablets. Sets of storybooks printed or downloaded for children to read in groups. (This Guide refers to open licence, freely available, storybooks published on www.africanstorybook.org. The African Storybook Reader App has a Library for the user to fill with storybooks for reading offline on tablets and mobile phones. See pages 7-8 for ideas and suggestions about selecting storybooks.)
 - **pictures** – should be interesting and with enough detail that it is possible to think of a story from things or people or a place shown in the picture. For example, illustrations from open licence storybooks, open licence pictures printed from a website, interesting photographs from a newspaper or magazine. Laminate the pictures, or glue the pictures on cardboard and keep in plastic sleeves.
 - **objects** – interesting objects, for example, old coins, unusual shells, an old suitcase, a clay pot, a coat button, a metal pencil box, a hat for cold weather, an empty wooden jewellery box, a piece of printed cloth, a toy car, etc. (Look at 2nd-hand stores and junk shops for possible objects.)
- **Art materials:** for creating story illustrations, for example, pencil crayons, wax crayons, koki pens (felt tip pens) pastels, paints, inks, paintbrushes, sharpeners and erasers. And boxes or bags to keep the materials. The art materials will depend on your budget, but try to buy the best quality that you can afford as they will last longer and create better results. See the next page for more ideas for art materials.
- **Drawing books and/or white paper:** to make the stories and pictures into. Ideally, each child will make their own storybook, but it is possible for a small group of children to work together to create one storybook (they will need the help of a group facilitator). Ideally, drawing books should be A3 format, but you could use A4 format – especially with older children. (See page 6 of this Guide for more about drawing books and formats.)
- **Lined paper:** for planning the story and writing out the story (at least two drafts).
- **Optional:** tablets and/or phones with African Storybook Reader and Story Maker Apps.

If you are planning a holiday workshop, you will probably need to organise tea and lunch for the children. Depending on the length of the workshop and time spent on each stage of the process, you will also need to plan breaks and games. In **Extra Resources** are ideas for *Games to play with children* (page 20).

Writing stories about our experiences and memories can evoke strong feelings, especially in book-making that focuses on children's narratives about personal experiences. *Memories and difficult stories* (page 21) shares some guidelines to support educators when children's stories reflect their experiences of sadness, loss or trauma.

Art materials



- Pencil crayons
- Wax crayons
- Oil pastels
- Koki pens (fibre tip pens)
- Fineliner pens
- Marker (jumbo) pens
- Highlighters
- Lead pencils
- Ballpoint pens
- Sharpeners, rulers, rubbers
- Water-based paints and paint brushes (and plastic containers for water and mixing paints, and newspaper)
- Food colouring or inks (these should be diluted before children use them)

- Pencil cases or bags for storing art materials (e.g. 1 large pencil bag for a group of 4 children, with: 12 pencils, 12 crayons, 12 koki pens, pencils, ruler, rubber, sharpener)
 - Drawing books and/or white paper



The space for pictures in African Storybook storybooks is a square space. Try to make sure that all of the children's pictures fit within a square shape, otherwise part of the picture will be cut off in the published book.

The drawing books on the right have been measured and cut square.

If children use square drawing books, make sure that they don't write on the same page as a picture, or write on the back of a picture page. Alternate one page for the drawing, and one page for writing.



In the example below, a drawing on an A4 page is glued on to the page of an A3 drawing book. The A4 page is placed within a square area measured on the page of the drawing book. In this way, children can work on loose paper to start with, rather than directly in drawing books. The original drawing on the A4 page can be expanded within the A3 square space. This approach gives more flexibility for selecting and creating pictures for the final storybook.



In this example, each page of the story is written on lined paper and glued next to the picture space.

This is a page of an A3 drawing book (landscape format)

Selecting storybooks

The choice of storybooks for your project or workshop is important as the stories must support the activities. Try to use print *and* digital technologies for sharing storybooks, for example: printed on paper, on the African Storybook Reader App, and projected on a screen or white wall.

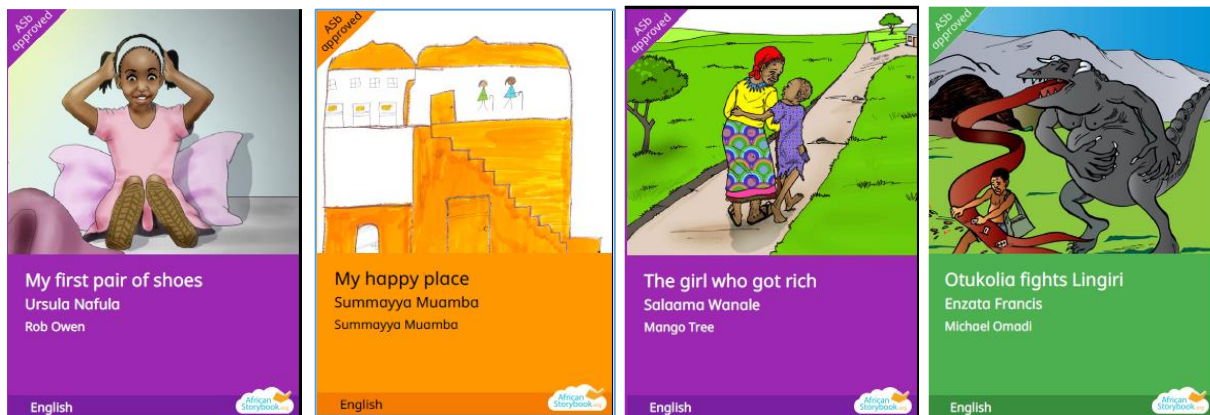
Look for storybooks that:

- Children will find interesting and enjoyable,
- Have characters, happenings (events) and details that children can relate to,
- Reflect the languages of children,
- Are at the right levels for the children's reading levels,
- Are appropriate for the age range and context of the children,
- Have grammatical writing, correct spelling and punctuation, and good use of language,
- Have good pictures that link well to the written story.

Before and during a storybook development process, try to give children a variety of storybooks to read, to listen to and view. This will expose them to different types of characters and the other elements that are important in a story. It will help them to develop a vocabulary for discussing stories and expressing their opinions.

One way to create a story is to start with a single element and build on that idea. For example, think of an object or a place, or an event. From one or two elements, ideas can be expanded and connected into a complete story. In order to introduce the main elements of a storybook, you should select storybooks that provide strong examples of these elements.

On the next page are suggested storybook titles to search for on the African Storybook website. Storybooks are available online for reading, and for downloading for print and projection. Use the African Storybook Reader App to save storybooks on a phone or tablet, for reading offline. All of the storybooks are available in English, and indigenous African languages.



Find at: www.africanstorybook.org

Stories about a child as the main character

- Kalabushe the talkative
- Khalai talks to plants
- Girl who got rich
- Fana and her animals
- Emeka and the old man
- Monkey and twin brothers
- Petros and his dog

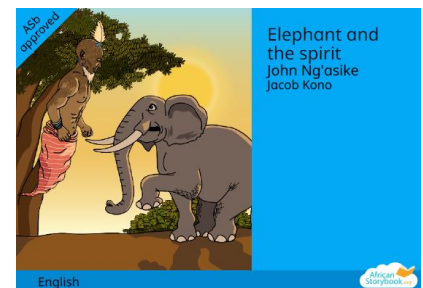
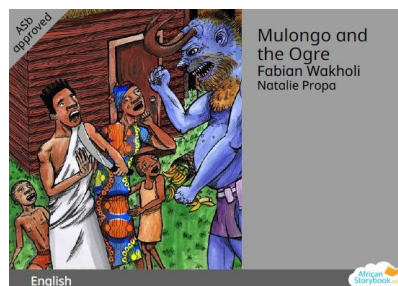
Stories with an important object / place / event

- Akai's special mat*
- An egg for bridewealth*
- My first pair of shoes*
- Thabani's spear*
- My red ball*
- Chess and family roles*
- Azizi the doll*
- Abel and his sister's doll*
- Beloved daughter*
- My happy place*
- Soccer star*
- Africa unity race*
- Tamara starts school*
- Kidnapped!*
- Hyena, Hare and their basins
- Ms Phone
- Father's inheritance
- Drum
- Drought and the river of blessings
- Monkey and the drought

*Titles with * also have child main characters*

Storybooks with imaginary (magical) characters

- Old woman in a bottle
- Mulongo and the ogre
- Otukolia fights Lingiri
- Elephant and the spirit
- Creature with two
- Boy who nobody loved
- Magic baby



Good stories for children are:

- Enjoyable stories. Interesting stories. Exciting stories. Funny stories. 'Page-turning' stories, where the reader wants to turn the page to know what will happen next, or to find an answer or solution.
- Stories that are written with a child's world in the mind of the writer, and which are appropriate for children. (Understanding that a child's ideas, joys, hopes and fears can be very different to an adult's – and should also be respected.)
- Not necessarily 'real' or realistic stories, but meaningful stories with well-connected ideas, and details that will interest children.
- Stories with a variety of words and sounds – new and familiar vocabulary.
- Stories that play with language and sound – rhyme, rhythm, repetition.
- Stories with suspense, excitement, danger (risks *within the safety* of the story).
- Stories that are well written, without mistakes in grammar, punctuation or vocabulary. (The written story should model good literacy practices.)
- Good storybooks have appropriate pictures that support the meaning of the written text. Good pictures also add additional meaning and detail to the written story.

Storybook development process

Start with a good story or storybook

These activities focus on listening to, reading and discussing stories and storybooks. Children should have opportunities to listen to oral stories and to storybooks read aloud, as well as opportunities for individual and pair reading.

Children should hear and read many different storybooks, and be able to express their understanding of story content and their opinions as readers. Being a good writer starts with being a good reader.

Activities:

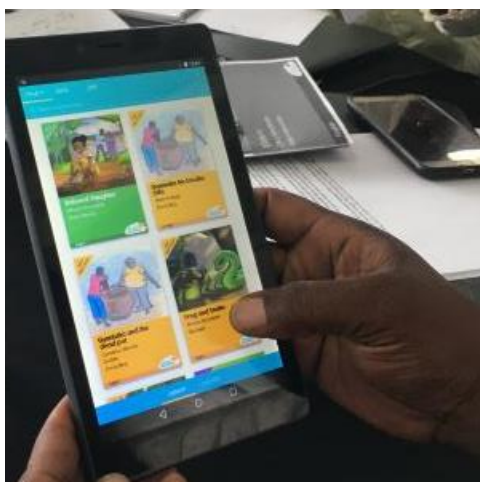
- The story or storybook that you select to begin the process should have characters and/or events or other details that grab the attention of children. Practice reading the storybook aloud, to make sure that you can read it at a good pace and bring the story to life with the character's voices.
- You can share a storybook with children by projecting the storybook on a screen or white wall. In the photograph below, the facilitator is reading a projected storybook out loud while children follow the words on the screen. If you are working with a group of 15 or fewer children, you can hold up an A4-size printed storybook and read from the pages. A tablet that is A4 size will also be big enough to read aloud to a group of 15 or less. Remember to move around the group to make sure that everyone sees the pictures.
- Begin the reading session by introducing the storybook you have chosen to read aloud (and why you chose it). Introduce the storybook cover and picture, with the title, author and artist name.



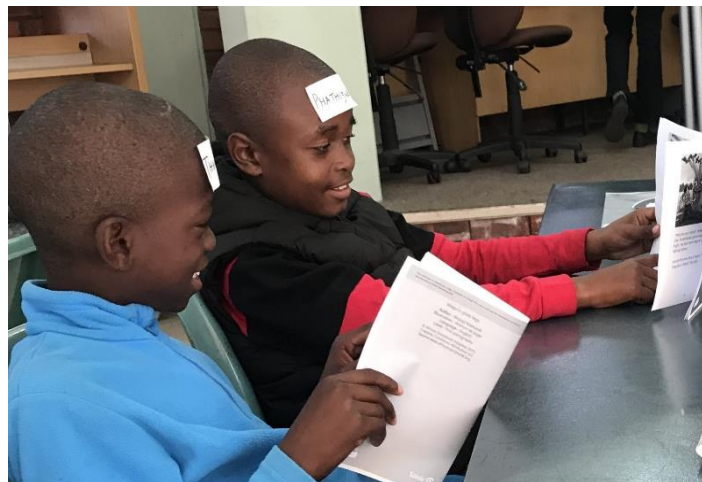
- As you are reading, point to the pictures so that children make the links between the words and pictures (as the teacher is doing in the photograph on the right).
- Ask for responses to the storybook you read:
 - **Who** were the characters, and what did they do in the story?
 - **Where** did the story take place?
 - **What** happened?
 - **How** did it end?
 - Was it a good ending? Why or why not?
 - Is it a good story – why or why not?



- For individual and small group reading and discussion, use three to five storybooks per group. (Each group has the same set of storybook titles, to facilitate class sharing and discussion.)
 - You will need printed and/or digital copies of storybooks. The children can download storybooks onto tablets (or mobile phones) using the African Storybook Reader App (and save the storybooks in the Library with the App, to read offline). You can combine print and digital storybooks, depending on time and resources.
 - Ask children to read the storybooks in small groups, talk about the stories and then decide on their groups' favourite story/ies and characters (and why they like them).
 - Each group should decide on their 'Top 3' storybooks – and then the groups compare their selections. Which storybook(s) did all or most of the groups rate in their Top 3? Help children to think about and talk about the different elements of stories, and to explore their responses to stories.



Storybooks on the Reader App



Storybooks printed on A4 paper (PDF from website)

Storybook development process

Story starter: with a story picture

The idea behind these activities is to use a single picture from a storybook to stimulate children's imaginations (and words) for their own new stories. The pictures you select should be interesting and have some details which could inspire curiosity and creativity (the pictures should not be from familiar stories). If you laminate the pictures or put them in plastic sleeves, they will last longer.

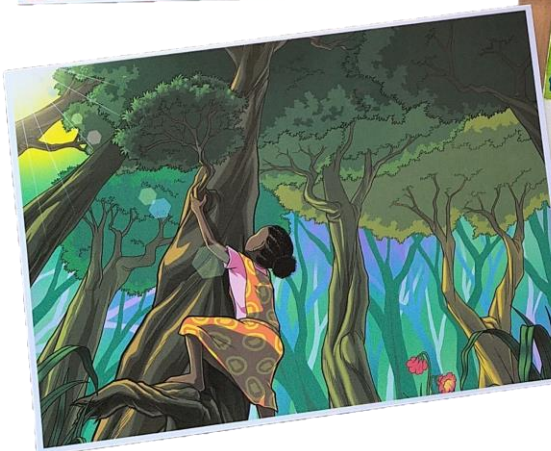
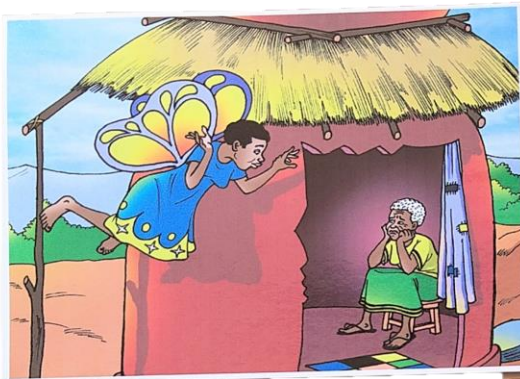
Activities:

- Demonstrate the use of a picture story starter to stimulate ideas. Ask questions about a picture that you have selected for this activity: **what, who, when, how, why, what next?** (Some examples are given below.)
- Then ask children to work in small groups – with 1 picture per group – to think of story ideas based on what they observe in the picture. *They are not actually writing the whole story*, they just need to come up with a basic story outline (or 'story pitch'). They could record the group's ideas on a mindmap or in a list of points.
- Ask for someone from each group to present the story outline to the larger group.
- Get the whole group's responses to the story ideas. Make a note of story ideas that could be developed into stories later in the process.

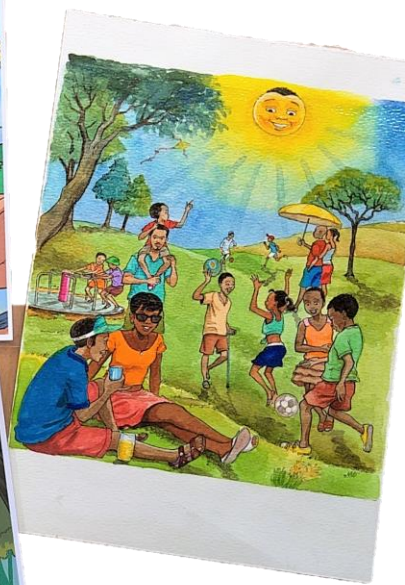
What kind of creature is this with wings? What is it doing there?

Who is sitting inside? What is she feeling? (How do you know?)

What happens next?



Who are the two people sitting on the grass (bottom left)? What are they talking about? How are they feeling? How do you know? What do you notice about the sun?



Where is this forest? Who is climbing the tree? Why do you think she is climbing the tree? How did she get there? Who or what is at the top of the tree? What happens next?

Storybook development process

Story starter: with elements of a story

The goal of these activities is for children to think of and create at least one element – in pictures and words – that could be part of a story and used to develop a storybook. For example:

- An **object** (or objects) that is important to the child; or an object you bring.
- A **place** that is significant to the child; or a place described in a story, or in a picture.
- A significant **event** that happened – or will happen – in the child’s life, for example, an event at school, in the family, community, village, etc. Or an event in a story, or represented in a picture.
- An unusual or interesting person or **character** (or characters).

Later in the story development process, children could use pictures and sentences from these activities and connect them to make up their storybooks.

Activities:

- Read a projected storybook out loud, or from a storybook that learners have copies of. The story you select must have a particular character / object / place / event that is a strong feature and has important meaning in the story.
- Talk about one or more **elements in the storybook** you read aloud. Ask questions about the story and story elements to help children understand that most storybooks have the following main elements: *interesting characters in a place, with an event or happening, often with important object(s) – all linked together in a continuous story with other details* to make it interesting and enjoyable.
- Ask children to think of or remember **their own important place or object or event or interesting character**. Start with one element: create a picture and write 2-3 sentences about that element (place, object, character, etc). For example, draw a place that you like to visit, and then write why you like to go there. To use this method to create a storybook, children should create at least two (connected) elements at this stage. Encourage children to think of a link between the elements they draw (it can be a real or imagined link). For example, a connection between a place and an event that could be developed into a story.
- Show **a real object** and tell a story about it. Examples of objects: an old pair of red boots, a locked suitcase, a clay pipe, a metal button from a coat, a carved wooden box, a straw hat, a pair of gloves, a sheet of music, a drum, a calabash, an old camera, a bunch of keys. Bring and share interesting objects – ask children to choose an object and imagine a story. For example, looking at a handful of interesting shells there might be a story about a shipwreck and survivors; or a beach holiday; or a sea creature. Ask questions about the object to inspire ideas, for example, Where do you think this is from? Who wore it / Who used it? When did they wear it / use it? Where did this happen? Who else was involved? How did this get here? What else can we think of?
- Share **pictures or photographs** of interesting places and structures, and ask questions in order to stimulate ideas about story settings.

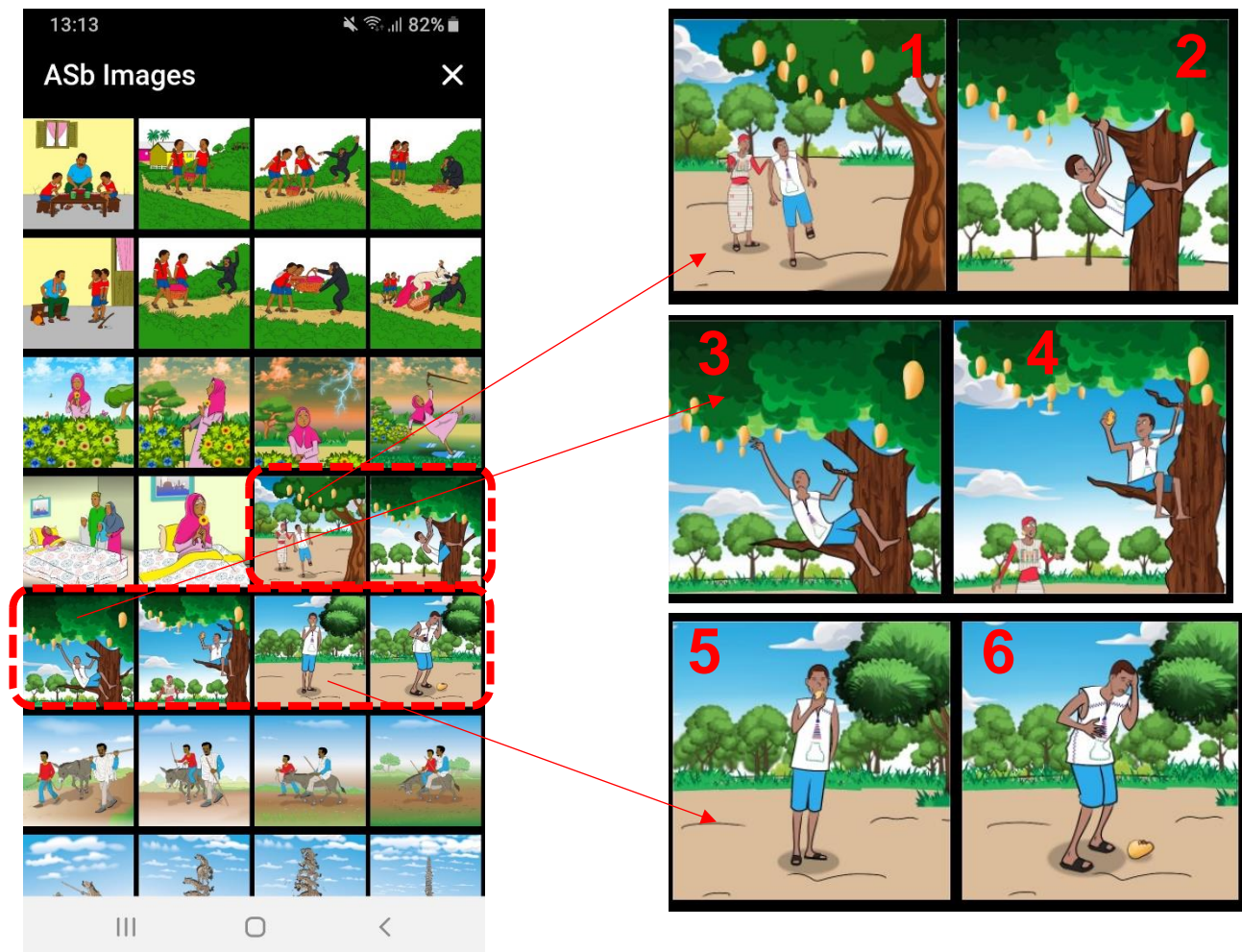
Storybook development process

Story starter: with pictures on the Maker App

There are 250 story pictures that are loaded on the African Storybook Maker App, mostly sets of 4 to 8 pictures from storybooks that are published on the African Storybook website. Children can use pictures on the African Storybook Maker App as a starter to developing their own story ideas and storybooks – without necessarily using the App pictures in their final storybooks.

A complete storybook can be created using the pictures from the App (although most of such stories will be short and simple), or children can refer to the App pictures to create their own drawings. Or, a combination: children create some of their own pictures to use along with App pictures.

In the picture collection on the Maker App, usually all the related pictures are grouped together within one or two rows of pictures. Below, 6 pictures are selected – about a ripe mango and a boy who didn't listen. The pictures could make a short storybook of 6 pages (with words and a picture on each page), or 12 pages with a picture for every second page of the storybook.



Here are more examples and ideas from the picture collection on the Maker App:

The 4 pictures in white circles of a group of children (see also white circles below) could be used for an 8-page storybook with a picture on every second page.



These 5 pictures can be used for a story about a car accident.

The storybook could be expanded with pictures drawn by children (for an 8 or 12-page book).

These 4 pictures of wild animals could be connected in a storybook.

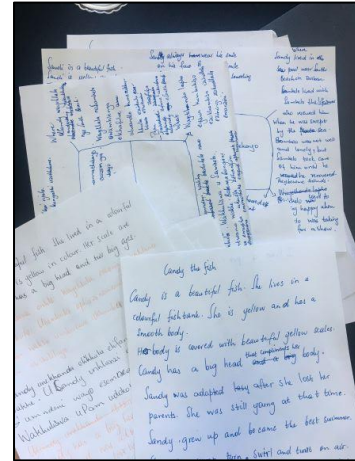
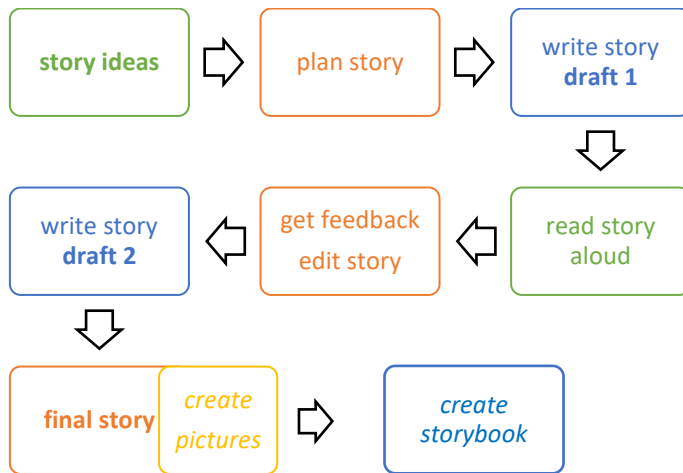
These 4 pictures grouped in a square can be used together to create a story. The storybook will need more elements and pictures added to be an interesting story.

These 5 pictures of a kitchen setting could be used to create a story about dad's bad cooking!

Storybook development process

Story writing process

A story writing process is like any other **process**: it's a series of steps or activities. When written out, a simple story for a 6-page storybook should be at least 80 to 150 words altogether (or at least 11 to 25 words per page). If there is time, children can create longer stories and storybooks with 8 to 12 pages (and even longer), up to about 40 words per page.



- **Ideas and planning:** depending on the story starters that you used, children may already have thought about most of their story, and now can write it out. Or, writers might still be planning and connecting the elements of their story, for example, using a mindmap.
- **Draft 1:** after writing the whole story, it is time to check and edit – each writer should check their own work, and also work in pairs. They should check the spelling, punctuation, grammar and use of vocabulary. Reading the story out loud to another learner can help writers to correct their own writing and get feedback. You should also work with children to give feedback on their writing, and to support corrections.
- **Draft 2:** children write a second draft of their stories. They should read their story aloud again, and make more edits and corrections. This second draft should be broken up into paragraphs – with 1 or 2 paragraphs for each page of the book (paragraphs can be from 2 to 4 sentences long).
- **Final story:** aim for stories that will make storybooks that are at least 6 pages long, but ideally 8 or 12 pages as this will allow for better story development.
- Writers then decide how they will illustrate each page of their storybook:
 - Which **pictures** can they use or adapt from the story starters?
 - Should they change something in the written story in order to fit better with a picture that they have already created?
 - What new pictures should they create? How?
- Finally, the story and the pictures are put together to **create an illustrated storybook**.

STORY WRITING PROCESS



- CREATE AND PLAN STORY
(events, characters, places)
- *Story starters
 - *Discuss and brainstorm.
 - *Roleplay.
 - *Use a mind map.
 - *Write sentences.

WRITE FIRST DRAFT OF STORY

- *Write out the story.
- *Then read the whole story carefully to check it makes sense.
- *Read and check each sentence.
- *Make changes and corrections.



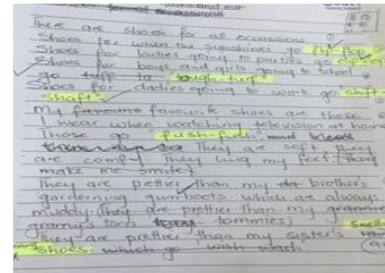
READ STORY OUT LOUD

- *Read story to yourself and also to another person.
- *Get feedback.
- *Get help with editing.
- *Ask someone to read your story out loud to you.

Write out at least 2 drafts of the story. 3 drafts will make a better storybook! Good writing is a process that takes time.

EDIT STORY TO IMPROVE WRITING

- *Use feedback to improve story.
- *Check: grammar, punctuation, vocabulary, spelling.
- *Make changes and corrections.



WRITE OUT SECOND DRAFT

- *Sentences should be organised into paragraphs.
- *Decide how many pages for your storybook. (Aim for 1 or 2 paragraphs per page.)
- *Work on translation, if required.
- *Write out again neatly.

Typing and printing the story text could be the final writing stage, if you have the computer resources.

Storybook development process

Create a storybook

Once children have finalised the written version of their story they are ready to create their storybooks. They will also complete their pictures – created from story starters – and/or create new pictures for their finalised stories.

Help children to create their storybooks using sheets of A4 paper (that can be stapled together as pages of book); or preferably, to create their storybooks in drawing books. You can use the African Storybook Maker App to create and publish the storybooks on a phone or tablet, and on the African Storybook website.

In both examples below, the story words for each page were written neatly on lined paper and then glued into a drawing book next to the picture for that page. In the example on the left, the drawing was done directly on the drawing book page. In the example on the right, the child drew pictures on A4 white paper and then glued each A4 page into the square space that was measured in the drawing book. She then added to the A4 picture to fill the square space.



In the example below, the drawing book was cut square. Each page has a picture on it, or words on it. The child has written the title of storybook on the first page, the next page is the first picture of the storybook. (See page 6 of this Guide for more ideas for using drawing books.)

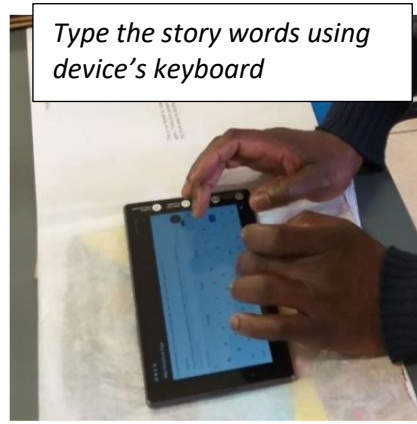


Storybook development process

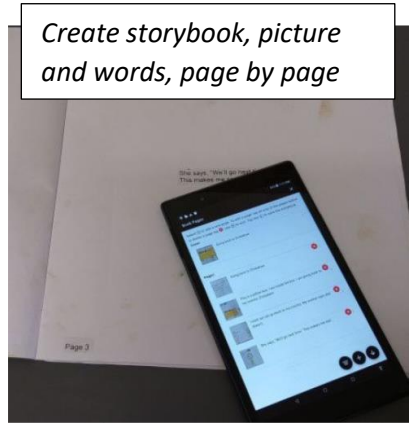
Create a storybook with the Maker App



Take a photo of a drawing using device's camera



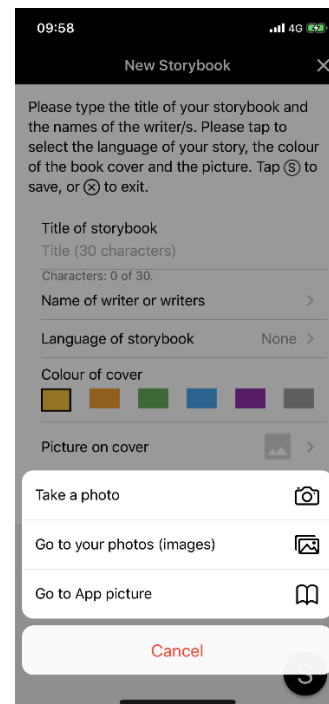
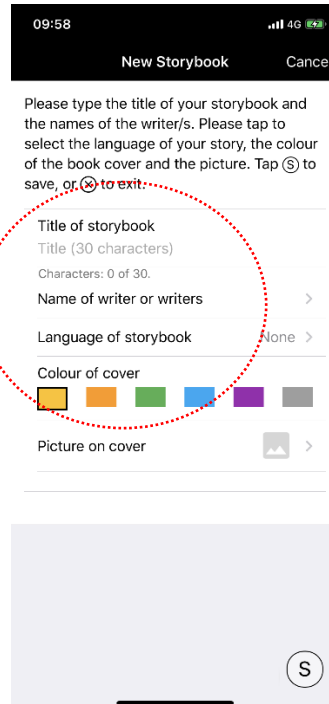
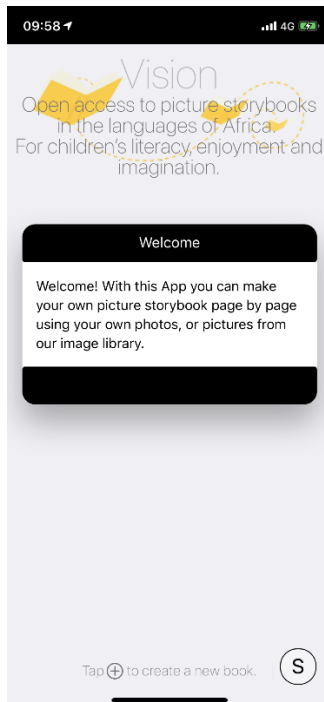
Type the story words using device's keyboard



Create storybook, picture and words, page by page

The photographs above show the three main steps in the **process of creating a storybook on the Maker App** (using photos of children's artwork). Each page is created on the Maker App by uploading a picture – a photograph of a child's painting – and by typing the story words for that page. Each page must be saved until the whole storybook is complete. Then the storybook can be published on the phone or tablet, and online (on the African Storybook website).

When you begin a new storybook, **type the title of the storybook**, and the **names of the writer/s**. Then, **select the language** of the storybook, the **colour** of the book cover, and a **picture** for the storybook cover. Read the information on the three screens below:



Storybook creators can illustrate their storybooks with their own pictures. They can:

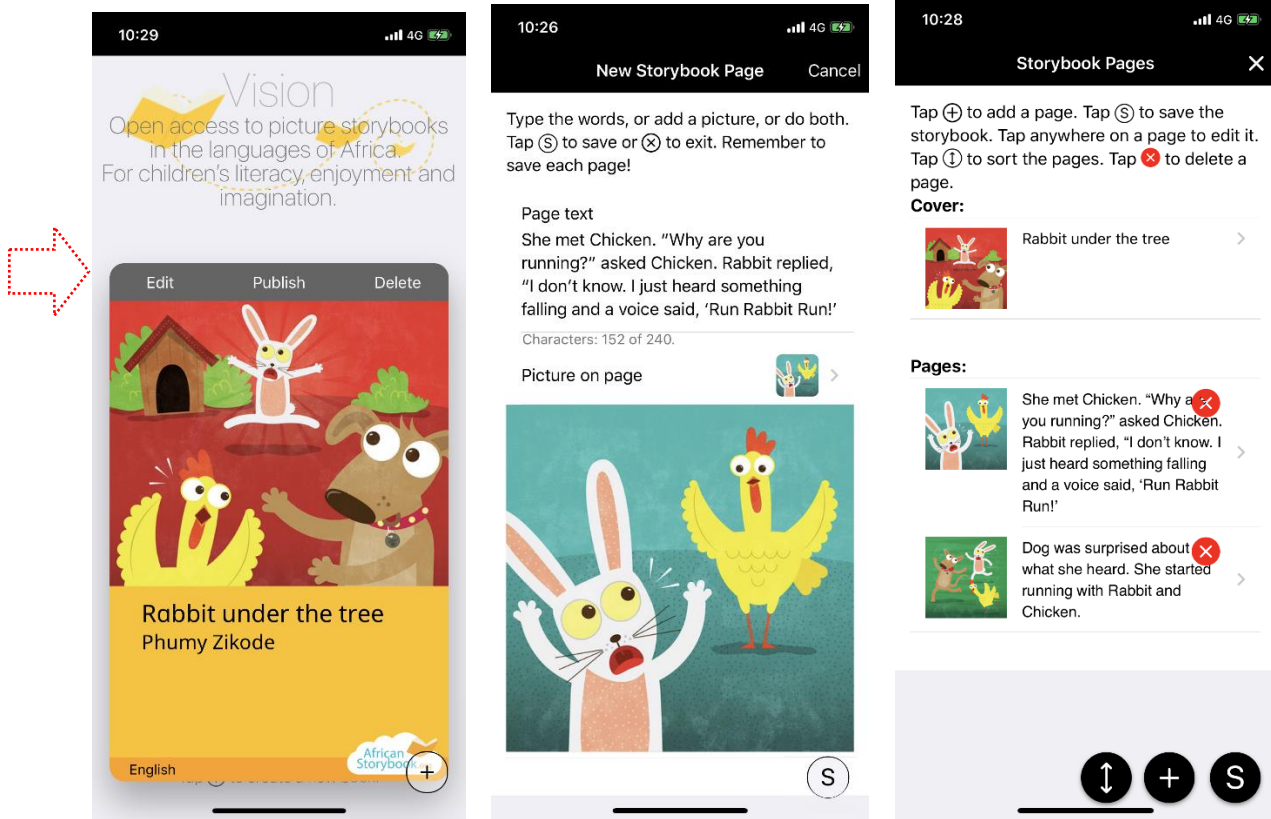
- **Use photographs** already saved on the cellphone or tablet – in the photo gallery or image library on the device.
- **Take photographs** of pictures (for example, photographs of children’s drawings or paintings). *It is a good idea to take all the photographs for a story before using them in the storybook* (so that they are stored in the photo gallery or image library on the device).
- Also **use pictures** from the Maker App picture library. (See pages 13-14 of this Guide.)

After the storybook cover has been created, each page of the storybook is created in a similar way. **Type the words for a page**, or **add a picture for a page** – or both words and picture. Each page has space for a picture and up to 50 words. See the next three screens.

Storybook cover:

Storybook page:

View of cover and multiple pages:



The storybook can be published on the phone or tablet by tapping the **Publish** button above the storybook cover (see arrow with the screen on the far left). The storybook can be published on the African Storybook website if the device is connected to the internet. From the website, the storybook is available for reading, and for downloading as a PDF for printing or projecting.

And finally, whether it is created on paper or on mobile phone, don’t forget to celebrate each child’s achievement of creating an illustrated storybook! Each child (or pair or small group) should read aloud and present their storybook to the whole group.

Extra Resources

Games to play with children

Balls and names

Stand in a circle. Throw a ball or bean bag or small soft ball to someone else in the circle. As you throw call out the name of the person, to whom you are throwing. They then throw the ball on to someone else while saying their name aloud and so on. Introduce more balls as the game goes on. There is much laughter as balls are dropped. Participants start mostly with soft voices, quiet voices, but they do get louder and bolder. The game encourages the children to vocalise which creates a sense of self power and sets them up to speak out later as we work with narrating stories.

Shake Shake Banana

This is an adaptation of the game 'Simon Says'.

Play in a circle. The leader says. "When I say the word *orange* touch your head. When I say *apple* touch your toes. When I say *Shake shake banana* put both hands on your waist and shake your hips." The leader then calls out "Apples" etc. At first do the same action as you call out, but as you go on call out one word and do the action for another. Children will get confused and there will be much laughter. Keep the atmosphere light and non-competitive. Use fruit that children will know. This is a crazy game which sets a fun and playful tone.

'Balls and names' and 'Shake Shake Banana' two games are particularly good for the start of a workshop, they are fun, they involve body and voice, don't need much explanation – which can take time – and can be played with different ages.

Where is the ball?

Stand close together in a circle with hands behind. One person stands in the middle of the circle. Pass a small object such as a cloth ball around the circle behind you – hide it from the person in the middle by standing very close together. The person in the middle must try to guess who has the ball. If they point at someone in the circle the person must show their hands and if they have the ball they become 'IT' in the centre.

Source: *Book-making with children from Sophiatown Community Counselling 'Families on the move' programme*, by Glynis Clacherty.

Memories and difficult stories

Dr Glynis Clacherty is a research professional who works with extremely vulnerable children. She advises that we should not “be afraid of asking children to write stories and make books that connect with their inner narratives”. Below are some guidelines – from a report written by Glynis – to support educators when children’s stories reflect their experiences of difficult emotions.

Extract from Glynis’s report: *Book-making with children from Sophiatown Community Counselling ‘Families on the move’ programme*

It is possible ... to explore difficult events if one applies a set of (widely accepted) safeguards. These are described below.

- Children (and adults) create psychological defences if they have experienced trauma or grief or loss. These defences allow children to carry on with everyday life.
- We can trust children to maintain these defences IF we do not push them to tell a story or probe details of part of a story they tell. We must accept just what they choose to tell.
- It is important to create an environment where this choice of what to tell is completely acceptable. I always tell children before we start working together that whatever story they choose to tell, that is fine – it is their choice. I sometimes even get young children to practice telling me that they don’t want to tell a story because it makes them sad – this legitimates that it is their choice.
- If a child does begin to feel sad or even cry, don’t be afraid or tell them to stop crying. You do need to acknowledge the sadness by placing a hand on their arm, passing a tissue or a drink of water, saying “I can see this story makes you sad.” Then sit in silence for a little while as part of the acknowledgement.
- Do not tell them that things will be better – they may not! Mostly this kind of statement just makes us as adults feel better but it actually reduces the enormity of the issue for the child to something trifling.
- If other children are with you say “This story makes Jenna very sad” so you are acknowledging that seeing their friend sad could make them sad too. If it seems appropriate you can ask the other children “Can we say something to Jenna to make her feel better, what about telling her the things she is so good at?” Let them do this then move quietly and slowly on to the next activity.
- Play a game after some time – games that make children feel safe are good at this point. (See the previous page.)
- Watch the child for signs of ongoing distress. If the child is particularly distressed you do need to follow up. The first place is the teacher, but if you are running workshops with children who you know may be vulnerable, you should know a local social worker or NGO to refer children to. (For example, *Childline* and *Child Welfare* are national organisations.)

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We welcome feedback about your experiences using this Guide.

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