



# Gathering Stories



## What is the purpose of this activity?



Do you have to read a book or watch a TV show to find a great story – or could there be stories “hiding” in the people around you?

In this activity, you will go on a “treasure hunt” for a good story and use your own creativity to retell and share it with others.

## What will you need?



A place where you can sit comfortably and draw, and a table or flat surface to write against.



A piece of paper, and a pen or pencil.



A person in your household who will work with you on a creative activity.



## Step by step



**In this activity, you will start by sitting by yourself and thinking. Later you will sit with someone from your household or connect with someone over the phone, have a conversation with them, and write some notes about what they say. You can do all the steps in this activity immediately after each other, or take a break between each step, depending on what works best for you and the person you interview.**



**Close your eyes for a minute and think of a person from your household, your friends or community who might have a good story to tell you.**  
This might be:

- a story they have told you many times before, about something that happened to them.
- a traditional story from your community’s culture or history.
- a story of something they experienced before you were born, or something that happened when they were far away from you.
- a story of an experience they had from which they learned an important lesson.
- a story they think is funny, or that you think is funny.
- an experience you both shared and remember – their version might be different from yours!

  
**2**

### Write an invitation to that person to tell you the story.

In your invitation, describe or explain the story you would like for them to tell or ask them to surprise you with a story. If you want, you can explain why you are interested in a specific story.



Explain to them that you will be writing down and/or retelling their story in creative ways for this activity. You should also write that you would like to share the story with others, so the person should tell a story that they are comfortable with being shared. In your invitation, suggest a time and place for you to connect to hear their story.

**3**

### Deliver or send your invitation to the person.

For example, you can deliver it as a written invitation, or by reading or explaining your invitation aloud to the person you chose.

**4**

### At the time and place you have agreed to, sit or connect with that person, and listen as they share their story. Write notes or drawings about the story as they tell it.

Try to listen without interrupting but ask them follow-up questions to encourage them to tell you more or to share important details. Remember to thank them for sharing their story! If they permit it, you can also take a photo of them while they share the story.

**5**

**After the interview, write down their story.** Find creative ways to express the special details of their story and include quotes from them and emphasize surprising moments.

**6**

**Share the story with the person.** You may want to share your written story or perform a storytelling for them and/or for others in your family by reading it aloud.



## Create more

- Add to and revise your written story, including important details you remember. Add drawings and illustrations. You can also recreate the story as a cartoon or turn it into a theatre play.
- Organize a storytelling event with others in your household or friends over the phone. You can make an audio or video recording of your event.
- Create a fictional story based on the real-life story you gathered. Imagine a different ending, different people and that it happens in a completely new place!



## Share

### → Online:

Send a photo of your story and anything else that you created with the chat group.

Look for more messages from the chat group to see what other adolescents have created.

Participate in the conversation!

### → Everyone (Online and Offline):

Keep your story somewhere where you can read it again.

Explain why you chose to “gather” this story to the person who shared the story. Share more about why you enjoy it, find it interesting or important.

Invite others in your household to gather stories from each other, or from you. Hold a storytelling event or save your stories in a notebook so you can collect them all over time and remember them.



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# Guide for parents and caregivers

## 1

### Before your adolescent starts this activity

- Read the activity guide for Gathering Stories so you understand the steps and what adolescents are asked to do.
- Help your adolescent to find a quiet place where they can write without interruption or without anyone watching what they are doing before and after they speak with someone else to hear their story.
- Once your adolescent has identified someone in your household whom they hope will share a story, help them to plan with that person. Explain the purpose of the activity to that person and encourage them to support and participate by sharing their story.
- Offer to be the person your adolescent will interview, but do not push them to work with you. Help them to think of others in your family with interesting stories to share, too.

#### Ask your adolescent how they would like to work on this activity:

- *Would you like to work on the different steps this activity alone, or would you prefer to try it together with me, or with anyone else in our household, in addition to the person you will interview?*

Accept and support their answers to these questions. Once they have told you their preferences do not push them to try the activity another way.

## 2

### While your adolescent is working on this activity

- Depending on what they prefer, give them time and space to work on the activity in a quiet space.

#### If they are confused about how to do the activity, and want your help:

- Read the activity guide and try to explain the directions in your own words.
- Remind them that there is not a “right” or “wrong” way to do the activity, and that they should not worry about whether they gather or rewrite a “good” story. The purpose of the activity is to help them to relax, enjoy talking with others in your household, and practice writing and telling stories.
- Encourage them to try the activity again, or as many times as they wish. Help them think of new ideas for stories they might “gather” from different people in your household.

- Suggest a few examples of stories they might gather. However, do not push your adolescent to focus on the stories you suggested as examples.

#### If they need more encouragement or inspiration, ask:

- *What stories do people in our household tell over and over?*
- *What stories do people in our household have told that amazed or surprised you?*
- *What is the funniest story you ever heard anyone in our household tell?*
- *What would you like to ask someone in our household about a time before you were born, before you can remember or while they were away?*

## 3

### After your adolescent is done with the activity

- Help them to find a place and time to share their story with the person they interviewed. Let them decide together if they want others to read or hear the story and support their wishes.
- Ask if your adolescent wants to share their story with you. If they do, share encouraging words about what they created. Never correct them or disagree with how they told the story.
- Invite them to tell you more about their story:
  - Ask them to tell you more about why they chose this story to hear, and then rewrite or retell.
  - Ask them to explain why the story is interesting, enjoyable or important.
  - Ask them to tell you more about why they rewrote or retold the story as they did, and the creative choices they made.
- If you or other people in your household participate by gathering stories from each other, share the stories you gathered, and discuss your own experiences. You could discuss:
  - Similarities in your favorite stories and how you retold them.
  - What lessons you may feel you have learned from the stories.
- If they are participating in a discussion with a facilitator and other adolescents using their mobile device:
  - Remind and encourage them to share their story. However, do not force them to share if they do not wish to.
  - Encourage them to participate in the conversation with the facilitator and the other adolescents.



# Facilitator guide

## Activity Purpose

In this activity, adolescents will “gather” a story by talking to someone from their household, a friend or community member. They will use their own creativity to retell and share the story with others. They will practice their competencies for identity and self-esteem; communication and expression; empathy and respect.



## 1 Preparing adolescents and families

- A few days in advance, announce that adolescents will receive a guide for this activity. Encourage adolescents to have fun and give it a try!
- Explain that the activity will give adolescents a chance to gather a story from someone and rewrite or retell it in a creative way. Remind them that the activity is meant to help them to gather special stories, and to listen to and connect with others.
- Remind parents and caregivers that they can support their adolescents by reviewing the adolescents’ activity guide and the guidelines they receive, too.
- Explain that adolescents will need a piece of paper and a pen or pencil, and a surface to write against. They will also need someone who is willing to participate in an interview with the adolescent and share a story.
- Inform them of the date by which they should finish the activity, and how they should share what they created.



## 2 When you share the activity guide:

- Repeat the information above, so adolescents (and parents/caregivers) understand how to participate in the activity, and what to do next.
- Explain to adolescents (and parents/caregivers) how they can communicate with you to ask any questions they may have.
- Send encouraging messages to remind adolescents (and parents/caregivers) that you hope they are enjoying the activity and look forward to hearing about their experiences.



## 3 After the activity:

- Remind adolescents to share their written story and anything else they created. Explain how they can share these with you.
- As some adolescents begin to share their stories, send encouraging reminders to others to do the same.
- Share examples of the first stories you receive with positive comments, as encouragement for other adolescents to share their stories, too.
- Invite adolescents to respond to the following questions, one at a time.
  - *What did you enjoy or find interesting or important about this story? What was it like to hear this story again, or to hear it for the first time?*
  - *Did you share your story with anyone else, besides the person you interviewed? Did you learn anything new about each other? Tell us more!*
  - *What story did you enjoy that was posted in the chat group? Tell the person who made it what you liked about it!*
  - *Reading the stories that others shared, did anyone gather a similar story to yours?*
  - *Get creative! How could you create another diagram, drawing, photo collage, or video to capture another person’s true story? Share what you create!*

Allow some time (possibly a day or so) between each question so adolescents have time to respond.

- Send a closing message thanking them for participating. Congratulate them on their posts and creative work. If you will be sharing their posts and creative works in another way, inform them of this and ask for their permission to do so. Let them know if they should expect another activity.