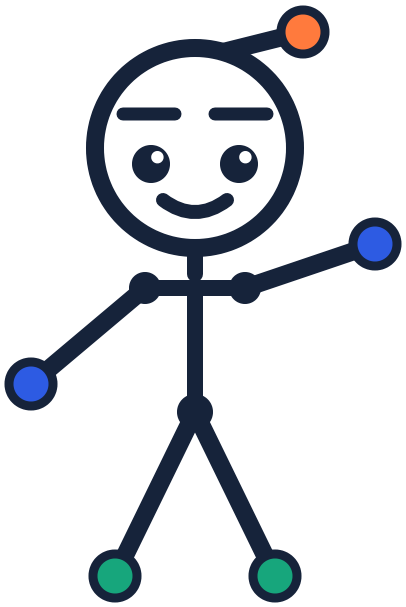
Young Innovators
FOR CHANGE
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TELL IT STRAIGHT · GRADE 4

Their Story First

Six weekly practices in telling a true story where your customer is the hero.



This booklet belongs to

Teacher

School year

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START HERE HOW THIS BOOKLET WORKS

The customer is the hero.

Six weeks. Two pages a week, plus up to ten minutes in the room.

What you will make

One true story, about one customer, that you can tell in 45 seconds. You build it on five cards in week 3. You check it in weeks 4 and 5, and tell it to someone new in week 6.

Your customer is a real person at school. If your class did The Venture Year, pick a person at school who tried your rough version in week 17. After Market Day, a real buyer works too. Not the made-up customer from week 14: a made-up person cannot be in a true story. For a week 17 person, your Now is what they said or did when they tried it.

No one at school tried it? Or no Venture Year? Then pick someone at school you made something for or helped. Say who they are, like "a second grader." Never write their name.

The boxes on the page

IN CLASS	What your class is also working on this week, in writing or in speaking and listening.
WARM-UP	Two minutes on your own, before the room gets busy.
IN THE ROOM	One short task, almost always with one partner. It says the minutes, the group size, and how long a turn is. A round is one turn each.
WHAT THEY SAW	A partner checks off what they saw or heard you do. An empty box is fine.
TALK ABOUT IT	A question to ask a grown-up you trust.
CHALLENGE ZONE	Harder, with more than one good answer. For when you want more.

Three promises this booklet makes

Nobody is compared with anybody. There are no scores.

Face the person. Turn your shoulders toward them. You never have to look in anyone's eyes.

If a task is hard, make the audience smaller. Do it with one partner first. Smaller is still doing it.

Five cards, one true story.

Every story in this booklet uses these five cards, in this order.

1	2	3	4	5
Someone	**Wants**	**But**	**So**	**Now**
Who the story is about.	What they were trying to do.	What got in the way. No But, no story: it is a list.	What happened next, or what was done.	How things are different. Say it in a few words.

Who goes on each card in this booklet

Someone is your customer. **So** is what you made or did. **Now** is how things are different for them.

A sale told only about the seller is often a list: I made it, I sold it. Told about your customer, it has a But, and the But is what makes it a story.

THE RULE FOR EVERY STORY YOU TELL

A story you tell is true. If a part did not happen, or you cannot show where it came from, take it out.

The six weeks

WEEK	TITLE	SITS BESIDE
1	**Who Is the Hero?**	W.4.3a
2	**Their But**	SL.4.1c
3	**Five Cards**	W.4.3e
4	**Say It, Hear It Back**	SL.4.2
5	**Only What You Know**	SL.4.3
6	**Tell Someone New**	SL.4.4

WEEK 1 TELL IT STRAIGHT

Who Is the Hero?

The same thing you made can be told about you or about your customer. This booklet tells it about the customer.

IN CLASS THIS WEEK
Writing a story: who it is about, what is going on, and events in order (W.4.3a)

WARM-UP · 2 MINUTES, ON YOUR OWN
Write one thing you have made or done for someone at school.

_____

WORDS TO KEEP

hero	The person a story follows. In this booklet, your customer.
customer	The person you made something for, or did something for.

Two tellings about the same bookmarks

MADE UP. PIP IS OUR MASCOT.

Telling A

Pip made twenty bookmarks with clips on them.

Pip set them out on a table by the library.

Pip sold each one for one dollar.

Telling B

A second grader wanted to finish her library book.

But she kept losing her place, because the corner of the page folded over.

So Pip made her a bookmark with a clip on it.

Now she can open her book right to her page.

Telling A is about Pip, one thing after another. Telling B is about the customer. Something gets in her way, and that makes it a story.

IN THE ROOM — **6 minutes · pairs · 30 seconds a turn · 2 rounds**

1. Partner A tells B, in 30 seconds, about something A made or did for someone at school. Tell it about yourself.
2. A tells it again in 30 seconds, about the person it was for: what they wanted, and what got in the way. If you do not know, say "I do not know."
3. B says which telling made them want to hear more.
4. Swap, so B tells it both ways.

What happened

Who is Telling A about?

Who is Telling B about?

Copy the whole But line from Telling B:

Which of your two tellings did your partner want to hear more of?

What your partner saw

Checked by your partner. Check only what you saw or heard. An empty box is fine.

- [ ] Told it once about what they did
- [ ] Told it again about the person it was for
- [ ] Named what that person wanted
- [ ] Finished each telling in 30 seconds or less

TALK ABOUT IT

Ask a grown-up at home or at school about something that made a problem go away for them. Who is the hero of their story?



STUCK? TRY THIS

Start the second telling with who they are, like "A second grader" or "My teacher."

★ CHALLENGE ZONE

Find a sign at school. Who is it about? Write one sentence about the person it is for.

WEEK 2 TELL IT STRAIGHT

Their But

The But is the problem your customer had. The best But comes from what they said or did.

IN CLASS THIS WEEK
Asking questions to clarify or follow up, and linking to what others said (SL.4.1c)

WARM-UP · 2 MINUTES, ON YOUR OWN
Write one small thing that gets in your way at school, like finding a pencil.

_____

WORDS TO KEEP

the But The card for what got in the way. Without it, a story is only a list.

Ask, do not guess

You cannot see inside your customer's head. If you can still ask them, ask: "What was hard before?" If not, write what you remember they said or did.

Ask before you write their words. If their But is private, pick a different customer. Never write their name.

Told, saw, or guessed?

MADE UP. PIP IS OUR MASCOT.

What Pip knows

She said, "I keep losing my place."

Pip saw the corner of her page folded over.

Three Buts Pip could use

a. But she kept losing her place.

b. But she did not like plain bookmarks.

c. But the corner of her page was folded over.

IN THE ROOM

8 minutes · pairs · 1 minute a turn · 1 round

1. Partner A asks B, "What small thing gets in your way at school, like finding a pencil?" No names.
2. A asks one more question: "Can you tell me about the last time it happened?"
3. A asks if it is okay to write it down. If B says no, A writes "My partner said no." That is fine.
4. If B says yes, A writes a few of B's words on A's page 2. Swap, so B asks A.

What happened

What gets in my partner's way, in their words:

Their answer to my second question:

One of these Buts is a guess. Which letter?

My customer's But. Write what they said was hard, or what they did that showed it:

What your partner saw

Checked by your partner. Check only what you saw or heard. An empty box is fine.

- [ ] Asked what gets in the way at school
- [ ] Asked one more question about it
- [ ] Asked before writing it down
- [ ] Wrote down the answer, not a guess

TALK ABOUT IT

Ask a grown-up at school what gets in their way on a busy day. Just listen. You do not need to write it down.



STUCK? TRY THIS

If they say "I do not know," ask about the last time something at school was hard to find.

★ CHALLENGE ZONE

Ask three classmates, "What small thing gets in your way at school?" Did any two give the same But?

Five Cards

Put your customer's story on the five cards. Someone is your customer. The So card is what you made or did.

IN CLASS THIS WEEK
Writing a story: ending with a conclusion that follows from what happened (W.4.3e)

WARM-UP · 2 MINUTES, ON YOUR OWN
Copy your customer's But from the last question on your week 2 page 2.

◂ YOU WILL NEED, FROM EARLIER IN THIS BOOKLET
- Week 2: the last question, your customer's But

WORDS TO KEEP

the five cards Someone, Wants, But, So, Now. Every story in this booklet uses them, in that order.

One card at a time

Every story in this booklet uses the same five cards, in the same order.

Your customer goes on Someone. What you made or did goes on So. The Now card is the ending: how things changed for them.

Write only a few words on each card. You will tell it, not read it.

Now is the hardest card

Now says what is different for your customer. Not for you.

Say only what you saw, or what they told you. Week 5 checks this.

IN THE ROOM **8 minutes · pairs · 1 minute a turn · 1 round**

1. Take about three minutes to fill in your five cards on page 2.
2. Tell your partner your story from the cards, in 45 seconds or less.
3. Your partner says which card they want to hear more about.
4. Swap.

What happened

1 Someone your customer, by who they are, not their name

2 Wants what they were trying to do

3 But what got in the way, from the last question on week 2

4 So what you made or did

5 Now how things are different for them

What your partner saw

Checked by your partner. Check only what you saw or heard. An empty box is fine.

- [ ] Told all five cards in order
- [ ] Said who the customer is, not their name
- [ ] Told what got in the way
- [ ] Ended on how things are different now

TALK ABOUT IT

Tell your five cards to a grown-up at home or at school. Ask which card they want to hear more about.



STUCK? TRY THIS

Stuck on Now? Ask: what can your customer do now that they could not do before?

★ CHALLENGE ZONE

Say five cards out loud for a time you fixed a problem for yourself. Who is the hero this time?

WEEK 4 TELL IT STRAIGHT

Say It, Hear It Back

If your listener can say your story back in one sentence, with your But in it, they got it.

IN CLASS THIS WEEK
Paraphrasing information presented out loud (SL.4.2)

WARM-UP · 2 MINUTES, ON YOUR OWN
Read your five cards to yourself. Circle the card you are least sure about, and write why.

◂ YOU WILL NEED, FROM EARLIER IN THIS BOOKLET
- Week 3: your five cards, on page 2

WORDS TO KEEP

say it back	Your listener tells your story in one sentence of their own.

The one-sentence test

After you tell it, your listener says it back in one sentence of their own.

Listen for the But. If their sentence has no But, your listener missed it.

Say the But slowly and clearly next time. Do not add anything that did not happen.

Two sentences about Pip's story

MADE UP. PIP IS OUR MASCOT.

a. A second grader wanted to finish her book, but she kept losing her place, so Pip made her a bookmark.

b. Pip made a bookmark with a clip.

IN THE ROOM — **9 minutes · pairs · 1 minute a turn · 2 rounds**

1. Tell your partner your story from your cards, in 45 seconds or less.
2. Your partner says it back in one sentence.
3. Fix one card on your week 3 page. If the But was missing, fix the But. If not, fix the card you circled.
4. Tell it again. Swap, so you each do two rounds.

What happened

My partner's one sentence, round 1:

Did it have my But?

What I changed before round 2:

Which sentence about Pip's story passes the test? Which letter?

What your partner saw

Checked by your partner. Check only what you saw or heard. An empty box is fine.

- [ ] Told the story in 45 seconds or less
- [ ] Let the partner finish the say-back
- [ ] Changed one card before round 2
- [ ] Told it again after the change

TALK ABOUT IT

Tell your story to a grown-up at home or at school. Ask them to say it back in one sentence.



STUCK? TRY THIS

Slow down at the But. It is the part your listener needs to say back.

★ CHALLENGE ZONE

Tell your story in 20 seconds. Did the But stay in?

WEEK 5 TELL IT STRAIGHT

Only What You Know

A true story uses only what you heard, saw, or did.

IN CLASS THIS WEEK
Finding the reasons a speaker gives, and how they know (SL.4.3)

WARM-UP · 2 MINUTES, ON YOUR OWN
Look at your Now card. Told, saw, or guessed? Write which.

_____

◂ YOU WILL NEED, FROM EARLIER IN THIS BOOKLET
- Week 3: your five cards, on page 2

WORDS TO KEEP

guess Something you think is true but did not hear, see, or do.

THE RULE FOR EVERY STORY YOU TELL

A story you tell is true. If a part did not happen, or you cannot show where it came from, take it out.

Pip's story, checked

MADE UP. PIP IS OUR MASCOT.

What Pip knows

1. A second grader said, "I want to finish my library book."

2. She said, "I keep losing my place."

3. Pip made her a bookmark with a clip.

4. Pip saw her open right to her page.

Pip's story

a. A second grader wanted to finish her library book.

b. But she kept losing her place.

c. She was sad about it every day.

d. So Pip made her a bookmark with a clip.

e. Now she reads every night.

f. Now she can open right to her page.

IN THE ROOM — **7 minutes · pairs · 1 minute a turn · 1 round**

1. Show your partner your week 3 cards. For each card, they ask, "How do you know?"
2. Answer with "They told me," "I saw it," "I did it," or "I am guessing."
3. Cross out each guess. If you know what really happened, write it above. Swap.

What happened

Two lines in Pip's story are guesses. Which two letters?

_____

Each guess I crossed out, and what I put instead:

_____

_____

_____

_____

What your partner saw

Checked by your partner. Check only what you saw or heard. An empty box is fine.

- ☐ Answered "How do you know?" for each card
- ☐ Said which cards were guesses
- ☐ Crossed out each guess
- ☐ Kept the parts they knew were true

💬 TALK ABOUT IT

Tell your story to a grown-up at home or at school. Ask them to stop you at any part that sounds like a guess.



STUCK? TRY THIS

Crossed out your Now? Ask your customer, "What happened after?" If you cannot ask, use only what you saw.

★ CHALLENGE ZONE

Ask your customer one question that turns a guess into something they told you. Ask before you write their answer.

_____

WEEK 6 TELL IT STRAIGHT

Tell Someone New

Tell your story to someone who has never heard it. Then answer "How do you know?"

IN CLASS THIS WEEK
Telling a story in order, with details, at a pace people can follow (SL.4.4)

WARM-UP · 2 MINUTES, ON YOUR OWN
Put a star by your But card on your week 3 page. Write your But here.

_____

◂ YOU WILL NEED, FROM EARLIER IN THIS BOOKLET
- Week 3: your five cards, with every fix written in

WORDS TO KEEP

listener The person hearing your story. This week, someone new.

Before you tell it

Start with Someone and Wants, so your listener knows who it is about.

Slow down at the But. End on Now, and stop. Keep your booklet open to your cards if you need them.

How do you know?

Your listener asks, "How do you know?" Say what they told you, what you saw, or what you did.

If you do not know, say "I do not know." That keeps the story true.

IN THE ROOM

10 minutes · groups of 3 · 75 seconds a turn · 1 round

1. Groups of three: a teller, a listener who has not heard the story, and a watcher. In a group of four, one listener says back the But and the other asks.
2. The teller tells their story in 45 seconds or less.
3. The listener says back the But, then asks, "How do you know?"
4. After each turn, the watcher checks off the teller's page 2. Everyone tells once.
5. When everyone has told, write your page 2.

Finding this hard? Tell it to one partner who has not heard it, who also checks off the boxes.

What happened

The But my listener said back:

My answer to "How do you know?":

One thing I would change next time:

What the watcher saw

Checked by the watcher. Check only what you saw or heard. An empty box is fine.

- [ ] Started with who the story is about
- [ ] Slowed down at the But
- [ ] Ended on how things are now
- [ ] Answered "How do you know?" or said they did not know

TALK ABOUT IT

Tell your story to a grown-up at home or at school. Ask them what the customer's But was.



STUCK? TRY THIS

If you lose your place, look at your cards and say the next card's name.

★ CHALLENGE ZONE

Tell the same story in 20 seconds, then in 60. What did you add, and was all of it true?

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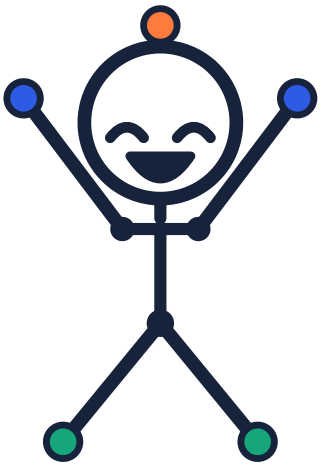
Grade 4 · Tell It Straight

Certificate of Completion

This is to certify that

_____

practiced telling a true story for six weeks, with a customer as the hero. They practiced asking what got in the way and putting a story on five cards. They also practiced checking it with a listener, taking out guesses, and telling it to someone new.



_____ _____

Teacher Date

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