

# What is Storytelling?

Storytelling happens everywhere, all the time. Everyone tells stories... about the events of their daily lives, about the past and the future. Some stories are true, some might be true, some are unlikely to be true. Some are downright lies!

A story probably has the following in it

- at least two characters
- a setting
- an event or change
- and of course its beginning, middle and end.

Some storytellers tell the tale exactly as and how they heard it, and tell when and where they heard it. Some storytellers take the germ or skeleton of a dry old tale and breathe into it life and action, colour and adventure, incident and detail and elements taken from other stories, and maybe a twist at the end. Some storytellers string a series of incidents, characters and comments together into an amusing or exciting narrative, then stop with a 'shaggy dog' ending, or a cliff-hanger promise to tell more next time. Some give a historical account with each detail as exact and true as they can make it, others pile outrageous detail onto implausible premise with a disregard for consistency and internal logic that is only hidden from the listener by the speed and complexity of the storyteller's invention.

Though storytelling and drama share much, in drama the audience are in general passively watching actors who 'pretend' the audience are not there. In storytelling the teller is always aware of, and actively engaging with, the audience.

There has been a tremendous increase of interest in storytelling in Scotland over the past few years, with clubs and festivals being started all around the country. Festivals can be a taking out of storytelling to the public in various venues, a concentration of events in one venue, or a celebration of storytelling by children coming from their schools to a large location to tell to other children.

## *Some Types of Stories*

- **True** – stories from history or from personal experience or knowledge
- **Urban Myth** – stories asserted to be true, but known widely in varying versions
- **Myth** – stories about gods or demigods, about creations of life and places, natural events
- **Legend** – stories stated to be true about historical events / places / people
- **Circle** – stories with a circular pattern, ending as they began
- **Chain** – stories with a series of inter-related events
- **Fable** – stories designed to teach a moral point
- **Why** – stories that explain something – a characteristic / a name / an event / a habit or superstition
- **Who was right?** – stories that end with a question or debating point

### ***Some Types of Stories (continued)***

- **Jack** – stories about an apparent simpleton who is in fact the clever hero
- **Tall** – stories with bravado and exaggeration as the main element
- **Shaggy dog** – stories which are a series of amusing incidents or descriptions, ending with a deliberately laboured pun or other wordplay gagline
- **Nursery** – widely known stories typically told by adults to small children
- **Fairy** – stories that involve 'supernatural characters' – fairies, witches, giants, dwarves, dragons
- **Ghost and Scary** – stories about supernatural apparitions and fears
- **Traditional** – stories for which no author can be identified, they often exist in varying versions in many countries and languages
- **Authored** – stories made by an identified person

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