

## **SBMA Storytelling Overview 2022-2023**

Sharing stories is a powerful way to bring to life diverse cultures, beliefs, and traditions from artworks created around the world. Across SBMA's galleries, stories (including myths and folktales) can be found in ancient sculptures, paper scrolls, and ceramic objects. This is a powerful way to communicate information, while meeting content standards in English-Language Arts and Social Studies. To read more about the positive impact of storytelling in early education, please see page two of this overview.

SBMA's Student Touring Docents are encouraged to incorporate stories into their student tours—particularly for elementary students in grades 2–6—as a way to enrich the student tour experience. This may take place in a number of ways. The recommended preparation is to tell 1 story during your student tour that relates to an art object on view in the galleries. The average length of a story is 3-5 minutes, but it can be longer. Docents are also welcome to tell more than one story during the tour, so long as the tour does not exceed the schedule allotted.

The docent office has a selection of books dedicated to myths and tales from around the world. Additionally, the shared "Storytelling Folder" includes stories that docents have prepared as part of the 2020 Storytelling Workshop.

Further resources include:

- Story Arts - Library of Stories  
<https://www.storyarts.org/library/index.html>  
<http://www.storyarts.org/library/nutshell/>
- Mythopedia  
<https://mythopedia.com/>
- Storybee  
<http://www.storybee.org/>
- Asian Art Museum, San Francisco - YouTube Playlist  
<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLEABD33EF498C7389>
- SBMA Storytelling Audio Recordings  
<https://www.sbma.net/learn/kidsfamilies/storytelling>

### **Recommended Books**

- Margaret Read MacDonald, The Storyteller's Start-Up Book  
[https://www.amazon.com/Storytellers-Start-Up-Book-Performing-Folktales/dp/087483305](https://www.amazon.com/Storytellers-Start-Up-Book-Performing-Folktales/dp/0874833051)

**The following is an excerpt from *Teaching Storytelling: A Position Statement from the Committee on Storytelling of the National Council of Teachers of English*, published at <http://www.ncte.org/>**

“Why Include Storytelling in School?”

*“Students who search their memories for details about an event as they are telling it orally will later find those details easier to capture in writing. Writing theorists value the rehearsal, or prewriting, stage of composing. Sitting in a circle and swapping personal or fictional tales is one of the best ways to help writers rehearse.*

*Listeners encounter both familiar and new language patterns through story. They learn new words or new contexts for already familiar words. Those who regularly hear stories, subconsciously acquire familiarity with narrative patterns and begin to predict upcoming events. Both beginning and experienced readers call on their understanding of patterns as they tackle unfamiliar texts. Then they recreate those patterns in both oral and written compositions. Learners who regularly tell stories become aware of how an audience affects a telling, and they carry that awareness into their writing.*

*Both tellers and listeners find a reflection of themselves in stories. Through the language of symbol, children and adults can act out through a story the fears and understandings not so easily expressed in everyday talk. Story characters represent the best and worst in humans. By exploring story territory orally, we explore ourselves—whether it be through ancient myths and folktales, literary short stories, modern picture books, or poems. Teachers who value a personal understanding of their students can learn much by noting what story a child chooses to tell and how that story is uniquely composed in the telling. Through this same process, teachers can learn a great deal about themselves.*

*Story is the best vehicle for passing on factual information. Historical figures and events linger in children's minds when communicated by way of a narrative. The ways of other cultures, both ancient and living, acquire honor in story. The facts about how plants and animals develop, how numbers work, or how government policy influences history—any topic, for that matter—can be incorporated into story form and made more memorable if the listener takes the story to heart.*

*Children at any level of schooling who do not feel as competent as their peers in reading or writing are often masterful at storytelling. The comfort zone of the oral tale can be the path by which they reach the written one. Tellers who become very familiar with even one tale, by retelling it often, learn that literature carries new meaning with each new encounter. Students working in pairs or in small storytelling groups learn to negotiate the meaning of a tale.”*