



Youth Action:

Project Story

Session plans and activities



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MAKE A DIFFERENCE

About Project Story

Project Story is a social action project for young people aged 5 to 14 years in schools or community groups. The aim is to help your group or class understand the importance of stories and access to stories for all young people, including those with a vision impairment or dyslexia. Your group can learn about CustomEyes® and then use their knowledge to take action and make a difference for their peers, by raising awareness and funds for our CustomEyes® service. The sessions and planning activities will take up to four hours, but this doesn't include the time needed to run your groups' chosen event.

Through project story, they have the opportunity to learn:

- About vision impairments and how they affect the lives of some children and young people
- How stories have shaped our lives
- How important it is to have access to stories and books
- How to work together as part of a team
- Planning skills
- That they can make a difference to other young people by sharing the CustomEyes® story



It is great, I can read Harry Potter books just like my friends. I can read to myself at bed time instead of my mum reading to me.

Young CustomEyes® user

How to use the pack

This pack has been designed to support social action and learning, in schools and youth groups. You can pick from a number of activities and there are session plans, that form the framework for your groups project planning. We've also added a few creative activities, just for fun. **The resources are in the Project Story Resource Pack.**

Project Story can be used to meet the requirements for the following programmes.

Citizenship and Enrichment programmes	Community action/volunteering and the role of charities in society.
Girlguiding UK	Take Action theme
The Scouts Association	Community Impact Badge
SMSC/PSHE	Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural education in schools
Social Action programmes	Charity support
The Pony Club	Fundraising Badge
Uniformed youth organisations The Boys' Brigade Girls' Brigade Jewish Lads' and Girls' Brigade Army Cadets Fire Cadets Sea Cadets Royal Air Force Air Cadets Volunteer Police Cadets St John Ambulance	Community/Social Action

Section 1. What's the issue?

The aim of this section is to give your group an understanding of why stories are important and how Guide Dogs' CustomEyes® service supports young people who are vision impaired, by taking standard print books and converting them into tailor-made large print versions.

It costs about £250 to produce a [CustomEyes®](#) book, but the price for readers, their families, or their school to buy them is only the book's recommended retail price. Without the service, they wouldn't be able to read the same books as their friends and could find it difficult to keep up with others in class.

Your group can help us open up the world of books and the joy of reading to young people with a vision impairment or dyslexia.

Why are stories important?

You can choose to do one or both activities.

Activity 1:

[Nonsense story icebreaker](#) – a 10-minute icebreaker aimed at youth groups.

Activity 2:

[Storytelling](#) – a 1-hour lesson on the history of storytelling. Curriculum links: English/History

Nonsense story

Aim: A quick icebreaker which will give your group a basic insight into the importance of storytelling.

Resources: Copies of the Nonsense Story List from the resource pack, pens.

Introduction

Have the group either sitting or standing in a circle. Give each young person a copy of the Nonsense Story List.

Explain that they will write one part of their story on the piece of paper, then fold the paper to cover their words and pass it onto the person on their left. You can give the group a topic such as stories about food, or sport etc. For older groups you can expand the activity to writing a whole sentence. Keep the pace quick so people don't overthink their answer.

- In the first box they all need to write who is the person in the story; it could be them, a teacher, a friend, a parent, a famous person, or a made-up name. Fold the paper over and pass their list onto the person on their left
- In the second box **what** are they doing.
- Fold and pass to the left.
- In the third box **how**.
- Fold and pass to the left.
- In the fourth box **where** are they
- Fold and pass to the left.
- In the fifth box **when**
- Fold and pass to the left.
- In the sixth box **why**
- Fold and pass to the person on the left, everyone then opens and reads the story they've ended up with, those that want to can read their story out loud.

Ask the group what emotions did they feel when they heard the stories, were they amused, disgusted, sad, etc? Explain that we can all create and tell stories that spark our imagination and emotions. Ask the group, do they think stories are important? Discuss their answers.

You can now move onto the Storytelling activity or start to talk about the importance of books for young people in the session ['Let's talk books'](#).

Storytelling

Time: One hour

Aim: To understand why we tell stories, the history of storytelling and how we have developed new ways to tell stories over time.

Resources: The history of storytelling timeline and cards which will need to be cut out from the resource pack.

Introduction

Explain to your group that storytelling originated as a method of bringing us together to share specific information. It could have been a way of learning something about the world around us, or a lifesaving lesson, stories are easier to remember than facts. For example, the story of Icarus, who flew too close to the sun, which is a memorable story which encourages us to understand our own limitations.

Discuss

How do we tell stories, ask your group to call out answers and put them on the board, how many different ways can they come up with?

Suggest technology and different types of stories, fact or fiction. Examples might be: TV, books, poems, audio books, newspapers, films, lessons, plays, radio, podcasts, music, song, dance, art, cartoons, photographs, games, assembly, conversation.

Group work

Use the history timeline and cards from the resource pack. Explain to your group we can chart the history of the different ways people have developed to tell stories. Ask your group to put the story sharing events (cards) in historical order, you could set this as a team activity, encourage your teams to discuss their answers.

Go through the answers as a group, were there any that surprised them?

Answers in order:

Oral storytelling – This came first as humans developed communication and language skills around 350,000 years ago.

Cave drawings – The earliest cave drawings that have been found date back to 30,000 years ago.

First printed story Gilgamesh – 700 BC – carved on stone pillars nearly 3,000 years ago.

Greek Plays – 550 BC about 2,500 years ago.

The oldest surviving printed book – A Buddhist book, Diamond Sutra, of religious teachings created in the year 868 using text carved into blocks of wood (like a potato stamp) over 1,000 years ago.

Bayeux Tapestry – depicting the story of the Norman invasion and the battle of Hastings 1066. It was created about ten years after the battle in 1076.

Braille – Braille is named after its creator, Louis Braille, a Frenchman who lost his sight because of a childhood accident. He invented Braille when he was 15 and at the age of 20 in 1829 he produced the first Braille book, almost 200 years ago.

First movie – The first movies ever made and shown were in 1895 by “The Lumière brothers” over 100 years ago.

First computer game story – Colossal Cave Adventure 1976.

Social media blogs – The first blogs were created in 1999.

Discuss

The future of storytelling, can they think of any new ways we might enjoy stories in the next 100 years?

Plenary

Read this story to the group. **On Saturday Alice’s mum wasn’t feeling well, so she asked her to go to the shop and pick up some things. She asked her to get milk for their breakfast, the newspaper, as there was an interesting story about her school in it and a packet of her favourite sweets. She reluctantly went out in the wind and rain to the shop and bought everything. When she got home her mum said that as she had been so good, she could choose a treat from the packet.**

Read the following facts. **Jo’s shopping list: bread, magazine, a bar of chocolate.**

Go around the room and ask your group to say what their favourite film is.

Now ask them to try and remember, the names of the people and what they bought from the shops? How successful were they, could they remember the names? Why do they think they remembered more from one person’s list than the other? Were they surprised with the result?

Explain this is one reason why stories are important and have evolved with us. People use the story method as a way of memorising long lists of things, they create a story from the items or words they need to remember.

Let's talk books

Time: 45 minutes

Aim: An activity to discover why some children and young people need large print books and an opportunity to look at the importance of books and reading.

Resources:

- Copies of the CustomEyes® Activity sheet from the resource pack
- Computer/tablet with access to the [eye condition simulator](#) PowerPoint, which you can download in advance.
- Books, you may want to ask your group to bring in their favourite book.
- [3-minute video](#): CustomEyes® member Lauren, reviews Blob by David Walliams

Outcome: Through discussion, your group will have talked about the importance of stories and reading, how having a vision impairment could affect a child's or young person's access to the exciting world of literature and how this could impact their education.

Discuss

Ask your young people what we mean by vision impairment, does anyone know? Have they ever heard that some people have eye conditions that affects their ability to see, which won't be made better by wearing glasses?

To show your group what we mean, take a look at the different eye conditions and how they can affect people's vision using the [eye condition simulator](#). Ask your group how this could affect a person's everyday activities, such as getting ready for school, college, work or going to the shop.

Ask your group what their favourite hobby is and how not being able to see very well might affect their ability to do the hobby.

Explain that people with vision impairments just want to be included and treated equally. Ask the young people to suggest adaptations/changes which may need to be made to their hobby to make it inclusive for young people with a vision impairment.

Group work

In smaller groups encourage your young people to talk about their favourite books (which they may have brought in); one minute each to say why they like them and what they mean to them.

Ask them to think about how they would feel if they couldn't read their book because of their eyesight. Can they come up with some creative ideas on how a young person with a vision impairment could access books? Some suggestions might be talking books, large print, Braille, magnifiers, and reading volunteers. Do they have any new ideas? Share as a whole group.

Give each group the CustomEyes® Activity sheet from the resource pack. This shows some of the different fonts and font sizes that children and young people with a vision impairment may need. Discuss in groups their thoughts after seeing these examples, how do they feel? Were they surprised by the cost (an average of £250 per book)? How would that compare with the cost of a games console, or the price of a book in standard font size?

Video

If you have access to YouTube, you may want to show our video of Lauren, a visually impaired young person, talking about CustomEyes®. Use the [link](#) or search for the video on YouTube by typing 'Lauren and CustomEyes'. Alternatively, ask the group to watch it at home with permission.

Next steps

Ask your group if they would like to do something to support CustomEyes® and young people with a vision impairment. If they say yes, let them know that the next step is for them to plan how they are going to help.

NB: You may wish to start [planning](#) right after this session.

To find out more about Guide Dogs

Set your group an online research task to find out about the different services Guide Dogs provides and how they help people.

Invite a Guide Dogs Speaker to visit your group and share their story. The speaker could be a guide dog owner, a person who is blind or partially sighted, a volunteer or a staff member - this will depend on the availability of our speakers, as well as what your group hope to get out of the talk.

Book your talk online at www.guidedogs.org.uk/speaker

Take a look at our other session plans on www.guidedogs.org.uk/learning

Creative activities - optional

Corner Bookmarks

Time: 20 to 30 minutes

You will need:

- The Corner Bookmark resource in the pack, which shows step by step instructions to create the corner bookmarks.
- A square piece of card or thick paper for each member of your group.
- Pens, pencil, children's scissors, extra pieces of card/paper and decorative extras for your group to personalise their bookmark

For help with the origami folds and decorative ideas visit You Tube and search "corner bookmark" tutorials.

Cave art activity

Time: 30 minutes

You will need:

- Roll of brown paper
- Charcoal and or black brown and red crayons or pastels
- Black, brown and red paint (optional)
- Non-latex small gloves (optional)
- Digital or printed examples of cave art

Encourage the group to look at the cave art images and try to work out how the effect was created. Get them to have a go on the roll of brown paper, using different techniques. You could use a large section of paper, enough to go on a wall and create a group mural.

Can they tell a story through their drawings?

Section 2. Plan your social action

Time: Two hours split over two sessions

Aim: The aim of this section is to give your group the skills to choose and plan an event or activity. They will identify the resources they need, to start their awareness raising and/or fundraising campaign.

Resources: Paper, pens, puzzle planner sheet from the resource pack - enough for one between four people.

Session one – Planning (1 hour)

Introduction

In this next activity, we want you to think about how you could fundraise for CustomEyes® and/or raise awareness about the importance of books for children and young people with a vision impairment?

Discuss

Encourage your group to discuss.

- What is fundraising? Collecting money for a good cause by holding events and collections
- What is raising awareness? Telling others about an issue, or need or cause by giving them information.

Start with the whole group together, put these headings on the board to help them:

Storytelling, books, fundraising, raise awareness, CustomEyes®.

Ask them to sit quietly for three minutes, to think of ideas for how they can help. Who could they talk to and how? Could they do a reading event, or a storytelling day or an assembly. These are just a few ideas.

Ask them to write down their preferred idea in one or two words. Get them all to stand up and move to one side of the room for fundraising and one side for raising awareness, then split them into smaller teams with similar ideas.

Download our [A-Z of Fundraising ideas](#) poster for fundraising ideas.

If your group would like to write to an author, or publisher to ask them to support CustomEyes®, we have [guidance](#) on who to write to and a letter template you can use in the resource pack. You may want to use the letter as a starting point for a bigger creative social action idea.

Group work

Ask them to use the puzzle planner sheet to come up with a plan for making a difference. They should start by writing all their names on their sheet.

As they solve each clue, they can write that section of their plan. If your teams need help with planning, there are prompts next to each answer.

Answers

1. **Aim** (picture of a target) – Ask the group what they chose to do for their event, was it raise awareness or raise funds?
2. **Ideas/objectives** (picture of a light bulb) – Ask the group what was it they wanted to

do, they need to choose one of their team's ideas? Such as: a readathon, book swap, campfire storytelling, book reading relay, poetry workshop/reading, book club or a play. What's your idea for a reading event?

3. **Equipment** (Picture of bag and books) – Ask the group what they will need for their event?
4. **List** (picture of a tick list) Ask what tasks need to be done before the event and who will do them?
5. **Safety** (Picture of a traffic cone and sign) Ask how can they make their event safe?

Summary

Explain to the teams that now they have completed their plan, in the next session they will be sharing their plan with the other teams.

Session two - Next steps (One hour)

Aim: To reach a fair decision as a group about which plan to use.

Resources: Plan template for teachers and leaders in the resource pack. Your teams' plans, voting resources if needed.

Introduction

Once your teams have completed their plans they need to listen to each other's ideas and pick one or two to do.

Activity

You could do this as a dragon's dens style pitch, or you could put them up on the wall for each person to view.

Discuss

Encourage your group to discuss the different plans and reach an agreement, you may wish to hold a vote and you may want to use more than one plan.

Summary

Now that your group have finalised their plans, they can start putting them into action. Agree a date to run your activity, work out what tasks they will need to do and who will complete them. Think about how you can evidence your groups hard work. What can they measure?

Explain to your group what they will be doing next time you meet.

Campaign for CustomEyes® by writing to authors or publishers

The aim of writing a letter to authors and publishers is to encourage them to support CustomEyes®, some are already doing this and it dramatically cuts the costs and waiting time for CustomEyes® readers, remember we said the average cost of producing a bespoke book is £250. Unfortunately, some need encouragement and by writing to tell them about your favourite book (that they publish) and the importance of CustomEyes® to young people with a vision impairment or dyslexia, hopefully they will support us.

You could use the letter as a creative way of raising awareness, or as a way of sharing your groups success after your event.

The following authors and publishers are already supporting us by providing manuscripts: **David Walliams, Michael Morpurgo and Hachette, Usborne, Simon & Schuster, OUP, Child's Play, Pearson.**

1. When you pick a book check the author/publisher isn't already supporting us.
2. Take a look at our template letter in the resources section, you can use it to get started.
3. When you write your letter, be mindful of the language you use and how you come across. This is about encouraging cooperation by using the knowledge you have gained to hopefully convince them to support the service.
4. Take your time to read it through.
5. Get someone to check your letters tone of voice before you send it.
6. Find the address and send it to them by post.
7. Let us know if they reply.

Section 3. Make a difference

Time: Use the timings in the plans.

Aim: Your group will use their plans to run their events.

Resources: Your plan and the equipment listed in your plan. If needed the 'I am raising money' forms and letter template from the resource pack.

You've planned what you are going to do, but before you set out follow these guidelines. Always keep yourself safe, if your group are under the age of 16 they can't:

- Fundraise without permission from parents/guardians
- Buy or sell raffle or lottery tickets
- Collect money door-to-door, in the street or ask strangers for sponsorship
- Run a fundraising event alone - there must be an adult (over 18 years old) present
- Sell alcohol

If you decide to use a venue check if it's insured, do you need public liability insurance? Guide Dogs cannot accept liability for any loss, damage or injury suffered by yourself or anyone else, as a result of taking part in an event. For more information on planning an event, visit our [Keeping It Legal page](#).

On the day make sure you do your risk check before you start and throughout the day make sure that everyone's okay. Remember to avoid conflict when you are out and about.

Good luck with your event!

Section 4. Review

How did you get on?

Time: 30 minutes

Resources: Review sheet

Introduction

Explain to your group that it's important after running any event to look at what went well and what didn't go so well, so that the next time they will be able to use their new skills successfully.

Use the review sheet in the resource pack to go through the following questions:

- Did your project go to plan?
- What have you learned?
- How has your project helped?
- How do you feel about your success?
- Would you change anything for next time?

Discuss each young person's next steps, they may want to do another group project, or look into volunteering.

Celebrate your success and share your group's story. Give them a big thank you from all of us at Guide Dogs.

Section 5. What's next

To get your group's certificates of social action we need to know how they got on, what they did and how they did it and we'll send you certificates. If they raised over £250 let us know and we'll also send them a thank you gift. Email learning@guidedogs.org.uk or call 0345 143 0192.

Pay in any fundraising from your event through the following options, to bank the funds, use the sponsor form in the resource pack, or contact Guide Dogs on **0345 143 0192**, or send a cheque to Guide Dogs, Hillfields, Burghfield Common, Reading RG7 3YG. Quote reference: YOUTHACTION

Thank you for supporting Guide Dogs

Further resources for schools and youth groups are on our website
www.guidedogs.org.uk/learning

