



# **Briefly Stated**

## **99 Words that Teach**

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**Presented by**

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## Briefly Stated: 99 Words that Teach Activity Descriptions

Here are abbreviated descriptions of the activities used during this session – plus a few extras! How might the activity you choose affect the learning outcome?

99 Word Story Activity	My Notes
<p><b>1. Group Teach</b> Small groups get their own unique story; all groups answer similar questions about their stories; share with whole group to teach the topic.</p>	
<p><b>2. Story Swap</b> Individuals get different stories; share one-on-one; trade to get your favorite example related to the topic; explain your choice.</p>	
<p><b>3. State Your Case</b> Individuals get different stories; share one-on-one to refine insights; make a group with people who have the same story; discuss; convince the whole group that your group's story is the best example of the topic.</p>	
<p><b>4. Find the Fake</b> Individuals get different stories; share one-on-one; try to decide which story is NOT a good example of the topic; vote as a whole group; discuss.</p>	
<p><b>5. The Last Word</b> Small groups get a story; discuss it and write an ending in your group; compare to the ending that was originally written by the author.</p>	
<p><b>6. Race to the Finish</b> Small groups; all groups get the same three stories without endings; compete with other groups to write the best ending that fits the topic.</p>	

## Activity Descriptions (continued)

<p><b>7. Domino Theory</b> Individuals get a card with the end of a story on the top and the beginning of a different story on the bottom. Match endings to beginnings like dominoes then discuss common themes of the stories.</p>	
<p><b>8. Half Baked</b> Read a story aloud but don't read the ending. Invite participants to predict the ending.</p>	
<p><b>9. Responsive Writing</b> Give people stories without title or ending and have small groups complete them. Alternatively, have groups write discussion questions for a story or write a story that gives an alternative point of view.</p>	
<p><b>10. Time Trap</b> Print stories on table tent cards. Encourage participants to read and discuss the stories before the workshop starts, at breaks, informally.</p>	
<p><b>11. Author, Author!</b> Write your own 99 Word Story with a partner; begin with a critical incident; follow the Effective Stories Check List; share stories with the whole group. Or, give people a "story seed" and five minutes to write; share stories.</p>	
<p><b>12. Adapt and Thrive</b> How might we modify these games for on-line learning, email use, newsletters, etc?</p>	

## Briefly Stated: 99 Words that Teach Effective Stories Check List

What are the best strategies to get your ideas across and increase the chance they will be acted upon? What makes short stories an effective medium for persuasion?

### Persuasive Speech and Writing

What do we usually do to “sell” our ideas?

(from *The Secret Language of Leadership* by Stephen Denning)

#### Traditional Approach:

Define Problem >> Analyze Problem >> Recommend Solution

The Danger: Boring people to death with facts, statistics, and your “superior” knowledge of the issues.

#### Leadership in Action

Get Attention >> Stimulate Desire >> Reinforce with Reasons

The Opportunity: Reaching people on an emotional level first for personal investment and lasting impact.

### Micro Stories

Why are short stories so effective in getting attention and stimulating desire?

(from *Made to Stick* by Chip & Dan Heath)

- Simple Determine the core idea, Learn to exclude, Think “proverb” not “sound bite”
- Unexpected Violate people’s expectations, Be counterintuitive, Use surprise, Add a twist, Generate interest and curiosity
- Concrete Describe actions, Include sensory information, Use imagery
- Credible Leave “space” for people to try the idea for themselves, Encourage questioning and testing
- Emotional Make people feel something, Help listeners connect to other people
- Story Catalogue and share ideas and experiences, Promote mental rehearsal of situations

## Briefly Stated: 99 Words that Teach Power Tips

Suggestions for writers of 99 Word Stories that are *Made to Stick*.  
(From the experience of Brian Remer)

### If you wanted to write something...

Short: Edit. It's usually easier to write a lot and cut than to write to fill in

Unusual: Begin with a bang – use an interesting title, hook, or grabber to start off. End with a punch – use an unexpected twist, moral, lesson, or “bookend” to wrap it up

Concrete: Be specific; name people and places

Credible: Use real situations but take creative license; look for irony, humor, surprise

Emotional: Use adjectives, action verbs, be colorful

Story: Make connections; associate your story with other ideas or issues

### References

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- Parkin, Margaret *Tales for Trainers*, Kogan Page, 1998.
- Pink, Dan *A Whole New Mind*, Riverhead Books, 2005.
- Surowiecki, James *The Wisdom of Crowds*, Doubleday, 2004.

### On the Web

- Terrence Gargiulo, MakingStories, <http://www.makingstories.net/>
- Cathy Hansen, A Storied Career, <http://www.astoriedcareer.com/>

## Briefly Stated: 99 Words that Teach Action Plan

Which activities using 99 Word Stories would you like to try in your work setting? How would you modify them for specific audiences or training content? What additional ways might you use 99 Word Stories? Meet with a partner and help each other build upon your ideas. Be prepared to share one idea with the group.

My Situation or Training Topic	99 Word Story Activity	Possible Modifications	Evaluation Process

**Briefly Stated: 99 Words that Teach  
The Great American Novel  
(In Exactly 99 Words!)**

Here's your chance to write a winning story in exactly 99 words.