



Build a Story



Objectives

Students will

- practice and improve listening and public speaking skills.
- build cohort, sense of belonging and responsibility.
- practice and improve creative thinking and ability to think on one's feet.
- practice and improve skills of self-expression.



Materials

- none



Time

- 20 – 40 minutes

FYI

Early on in students' experiences with this game, it will help to call their attention to creating a discernible beginning, middle, and end of the story, as well as bringing the story to

a successful conclusion. (Early on, "successful" means coherent. Later on, "successful" means compelling, humorous, and thought-provoking.)

Procedure

- Invite students to stand in a line.
- Explain to the group that they are going to be composing a story together. Tell them that you are the "conductor" and will be pointing to different people to continue telling the story.
- Have students brainstorm a topic for the story based on their interests, or suggest topic for the story. For example:

- *What is the most interesting animal in the world?*
- *What is the worst gift you've ever received?*

- Start the game by pointing to a student to begin the story. After a short time, point to another student to continue the story, while the current speaker immediately stops. Then point to other students and encourage them to continue telling the story seamlessly, never hesitating, repeating or straying too drastically from the main focus of the story. You can also point to students in mid-sentence or even mid-word to continue telling the story.
- At the conclusion of the game, suggest reflective questions.

- *What was this experience like for you?*
- *When did it work really well?*
- *When did you struggle?*
- *What leads to success in this game?*

- If you decide to play the game again, invite volunteers to be the "conductor" as students tell the story.



Talk About It



Objectives

Students will

- practice and improve listening and public speaking skills.
- develop a sense of responsibility to the cohort.
- learn to take advantage of opportunities for self-expression and creativity.



Materials

- none



Time

- 30 minutes

FYI

In Phase 1, “Talk About It” discussions contribute to cohort development by providing an intentional process of sharing personal stories and insights that may not be shared often in the course of a school day, even by close friends. Though informal and undirected, these exchanges form a basis for more focused discussion and action later in the curriculum.

The activity is meant to have students:

- stretch their capacity for non-judgmental listening.
- tolerate many ideas and opinions at once.
- express themselves in a setting where many perspectives are being heard.

Procedure

- Begin the discussion by sharing a story—a significant experience that happened to you this week.
- Invite volunteers to share their stories. As students take turns talking, encourage the group to listen and not comment on their peers’ experiences. Do not ask anyone to share a personal story until they are comfortable with the activity and feel “safe” in the discussion circle.
- Afterward, have students reflect on the activity by asking questions, such as the ones listed in the box.

- *What are you thinking about?*
- *Did the activity spark a new idea?*
- *Do you have a concern or lingering question?*