

Hong Kong Stories 香港故事

Student Story Slam 2019

COMPETITION DETAILS

Stories must be true stories told by the person they happened to, and should be under 5 minutes.

The stories must relate to the theme: *The Good, the Bad, and the Awkward*.

There will be two categories: junior (ages 11-14) and senior (15-18). There can be up to 3 entries per category from each school.

Stories can be entered by sending an audio recording attached to an email to storieshongkong@gmail.com by Friday, October 4th.

- The file name for the recording should be “student name_school name/initials_jr or sr”. (e.g. “sallychan_ABCSS”_jr”)
- Files must be in MP3 or AIFF format.
- The subject of the email should be “2019 Student Story Slam Entry.”
- The body of the email should contain the student’s name and age, the title of the story, the full name of the school, and the name, email and phone number of the teacher contact.

Finalists will be chosen and informed by 11th October. Feedback will be sent to all the storytellers who enter.

Finalists will perform on Friday, 25th October from 4:45 - 6:45pm at City Hall in the recital hall on the 8th floor. Finalists and their teacher contact will be invited to the event free of charge. Tickets will be available for family and friends who wish to attend (\$80/adult, \$40/student). Details on how to purchase tickets will be made available at a later date.

Judging Criteria

Judges will base their scores on the following criteria:

- the storyteller keeps to the time limit
- the story is relevant to the theme
- the story is clear, well-structured and engaging
- the story is clearly a story, not a stand up comedy routine, a recitation or a loose collection of anecdotes

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Teaching Tips

BUILDING A GOOD STORY

A five-minute personal story is the description of a particular moment, not a retelling of your whole life.

Your story does not need a moral but it should have some kind of growth or change in it. It should describe a memorable experience that changed you or made you see the world differently.

Stories do not need to be funny, or tragic or describe a major life change. They can be about small things that make us human. A meaningful encounter with a friend or stranger on the school bus. A time when you went out of your way to make someone feel included.

Pre-writing Ideas

- Brainstorm a wide range of emotions with students and list them on the board. Then have students pick 2 or 3 emotions and write one or two sentences about an experience they had related to those emotions.
- Similarly, brainstorm a list of “firsts” or key moments in childhood (e.g. first day of school, first loose tooth, learning to ride a bike, arrival of a sibling). Again, give students a short time to pick a couple of prompts and write one or two sentences about their own experiences with these kinds of moments.
- Tell students to imagine the fire alarm in their home has just gone off and they need to leave quickly, but they have time to grab one item. Ask them to write down what they would grab and then write 2 or 3 lines why.

After generating 2 or 3 ideas, have students share them with a partner and then pick the one that the partner is most curious about.

Structuring the story

One way to think about organising your ideas is to arrange your notes as demonstrated below. The size of the boxes is a hint as to how much detail each section should have.

Opening (Essential background information: Who? When? Where?)

Events (Key actions)

- make clear the main problem and describe how it got solved
- dialogue is good
- giving details about what you could see, smell, hear, taste and touch is helpful

Conclusion & Reflection (What did you learn? / How was your life or point of view different?)

Getting the Right Words – Editing

A story must have a beginning, a middle and an end, but they don't have to be in that order! All the parts of the story are equally important. Once you are sure that you have the necessary details, you can play around with the structure.

Don't start with 'this is a story about..', just jump in. Stories can begin in medias res - in the middle of the action, and then you can backtrack slightly and give a couple of background details.

Show the audience through word pictures, don't tell them. Look at the example below:

Telling: *The dog was above me and growled and showed his teeth.*

Showing: *The huge dog loomed above me snarling and snapping with saliva dripping from his jaws.*

Keep the number of characters to a minimum. It's okay to just tell us about one or two people at an event, rather than giving a list of everyone who was there.

Don't refer to your characters as the first guy, the other guy - this is confusing for the listeners! Name your characters so the story is easier to follow.

Avoid descriptions or complications that do not move the story along. The first draft of your story might include a ton of extra information that you decide to cut or edit later in the interests of the story and/or your central message/idea.

Remember the audience is not made up of one type of person. Avoid generalisations that will annoy your audience such as '*girls love doing their nails, so of course she bought nail polish...*'. Try instead changing it to '*she was a girl who loved doing her nails, so of course she bought nail polish...*' Good story-tellers avoid or even challenge stereotypes!

Don't use this as an opportunity to complain or make the audience feel sorry for you pity from the audience. A pity story is not a story your audience wants to listen to.

Telling Your Story Out Loud

You must practise telling your story aloud to get used to the sound of your own voice and make decisions on how you want to speak each section.

Build pauses into the story to help the audience stay with you or to emphasise an important moment. If you say something that changes the direction of the story, give a pause to let it sink in.

Don't just tell it at one pace. Some parts may sound better if you slow down or speed up or change the volume of your voice. You can experiment as you practice it.

Practise your story in front of a few people to see what kind of reaction you get.

To see what your audience is experiencing, you can also practise in front of a mirror or record yourself and play it back. That will help you decide when to change the pace or add a pause.

Don't expect laughs if you put jokes in. The audience might not find things as funny as you do.

Have fun. It helps if you smile during the delivery (the happy parts!), or if you look like you passionately believe in what you are saying. If you are sincere, your audience will believe in your story.

INSPIRATION

Below are some samples of stories and links to help you get started with your storytelling.

Hong Kong Stories - Podcast Links

Denis - about his first dog, Gina - about her experience in America

<https://soundcloud.com/hong-kong-stories/podcast-13-june-2018-dennis-grace-gina-hotmail>

Rachel - School lunch - relationship with grandma - Yuri - his dad passing away

<https://soundcloud.com/hong-kong-stories/podcast-30-may-2018-rachel-school-lunch-yuri-going-home>

Austin - family life as an immigrant

<https://soundcloud.com/hong-kong-stories/podcast-2-may-2018-austin-tradition>

Erica - about a special trip when she was a child

<https://soundcloud.com/hong-kong-stories/podcast-14-february-2018-erica-almost-in-the-lap-of-luxury>

Kristen - School competition <https://soundcloud.com/hong-kong-stories/kristen-2016-hk-lit-fest-podcast>

Rachel - relationship with siblings <https://soundcloud.com/hong-kong-stories/rachel-october-2016-bad-habits>

Story Slam Competitors from The Moth (USA):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ILNTSjlZ0z8&feature=youtu.be>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gs2jN7e5gYw>