

**From My Heart to Yours: Telling Our Own Stories**  
**Worksheet prepared by Sarah Agnew**  
**Preparing to tell our personal stories to an audience**

*Read the story aloud several times*

Listen to your voice: what emphasis, stress, intonation are you instinctively giving?

Is it helpful or not?

How can you change your emphasis, stress, intonation to be more helpful in conveying meaning?

Our voice relies on breath to be heard, but without other parts of the body being involved in speech production, we would have little strength in the projection of our voice.

Reading the story aloud a few times, over a number of days, your mind, your mouth, your body, get used to saying the words with voice and body and emotion. The better you know the story, the more you can meet people in the eye as you tell it.

*Pay attention to the details*

**Pace:** where do you need to speed up, slow down, or pause, to communicate meaning?

**Emphasis:** emphasise the wrong word and we confuse meaning.

rehearsing will help you become familiar with the rhythm of your story, and where emphasis is helpful.

**Emotion:** understand the emotions in your story, and feel them;

feel the emotion deeply in rehearsal, but try to pull back just a little when you tell it, to leave room for your audience to feel their emotions, too.

It might be helpful to name the emotions and note them on the script of your story.

**Body:** practice how you will stand, with a relaxed stance so that the breath and emotion can move freely.

Embrace eye contact, for there you will meet your audience.

Practice the gestures and movements you will use, so that they flow freely and with confidence and consistency in support of the story. If 'home' is on your right once, it must be on your right every time you point or move towards it.

**Audience:** visualise your audience as you rehearse. This will help you to understand what it is you want to tell these people, and to grow in confidence about standing among them to tell your story in the moment.

**Warm up:** shake your arms and feet, shrug your shoulders and let them down – this will help remove tension so that your breath and emotions flow freely.

A 'body roll', folding at your waist, hanging your arms, breathing in and out several times, then slowly on a long in breath unfolding back to standing straight with shoulders back, can help you centre yourself in your body, connect to your breath, and focus your mind on being present in this moment, before you tell the story.

### *Learning the story by heart*

Read the story over and over, then take it small portions at a time to tell without looking at the words. Gradually build up, adding each section together, until you can tell the story by heart.

As you rehearse, feel the story in your body and emotions.

Trust, not your mind's memory alone, but the memory of your muscles, your heart, the way you know the story of your first day at school, know this story as you have crafted it for an audience.

### *Reflect on your telling*

Did the telling go as you expected?

How did the listeners respond?

At what point were the listeners really involved with the development of the story?

What did you enjoy or appreciate most about the experience?

Were you able to go through the story without being lost or distracted?

If not, what can you learn for next time?

Be kind to yourself as you reflect, acknowledge what did not work well and learn, then move on.

What did you do in this telling that you had not rehearsed? Did it work well, or not?

What did you enjoy or appreciate about shaping your story and telling it?