

Kamishibai Storytelling

Target Grades: 2-3

State Standards of Learning

English 2.1, 2.7,

English 3.5

Overview

Students collectively produce a *kamishibai* story based on a classic Japanese folktale. After illustrating parts of the story, they gather to perform it.

Essential Questions

What are some of the common elements in fairy and folktales around the world?

How do Japanese tales compare with the stories we know?

Objectives

- Students will recognize the elements of folk and fairytales in Japanese stories.
- They will read closely for details in order to illustrate the story part they are assigned.
- They will participate in a dramatic reading of the *kamishibai* story.

Management:

- 45 minutes
- Indoor or outdoor activity (*kamishibai* is traditionally a form of street entertainment)
- Large group collaboration

Materials

- Copy of the picture book story *Kamishibai Man* by Allen Say
- *Kamishibai* stage (optional)
- *Hyōshigi* (wood blocks used as clappers)
- Poster boards
- Color markers, including black
- Japanese printed papers (optional) for screen

Preparation

Read the Background on *Kamishibai* resource page (RP #2).

If you are using a *kamishibai* stage, cut the poster boards to fit inside (10 ½" x 14 ½").

Type up the text of a Japanese folktale (e.g., Inch Boy or Peach Boy), or find a version online. Print 2 copies.

Cut apart one copy of the story into as many sections as you have students (or have two children illustrate each story part). Number each part. Put the uncut version aside.

Activity

1. Read aloud *Kamishibai Man*. Talk about the history of this once-popular street art.
2. Explain that the class will produce and perform a *kamishibai* together based on a Japanese folktale.
3. Give a quick summary of the story so students will understand where their part of the story fits in. Ask them to compare the Japanese tale with stories they know. How are the stories the same? How are they different? What are the common elements of a fairy or folktale?
4. Distribute the story parts, story boards and markers. Have students read their part to themselves, then choose the most important idea or action to illustrate.
5. Give them 10 minutes to pencil-sketch and then color in their boards with markers. Remind them to write their names and the number of their story part on the back of the card.

6. Gather for a performance of your class *kamishibai*. Collect the story cards. Stack them in numerical order and insert them in the stage. Collect the story parts and put them in numerical order as well.
7. Ask one child to bang the *hyōshigi*, announcing that it is story time.
8. Ask another to manipulate the story cards, pulling them through the stage one by one while a third student reads aloud from the uncut copy of the story. The job of storytelling can be shared by several readers.

Variations

1. Divide the class in half. Have one group create a *kamishibai* based on a Japanese story, and the other on an American folktale. After the two performances, compare and contrast the stories.
2. Have older children research a story from another country. Have them retell the story in their own words using *kamishibai* cards as props.
3. *Kamishibai* storytellers were really candy vendors. Bring treats the children can pass out to the audience before performing their stories.
4. Suggest that children might want to create a *kamishibai* as a creative book report project.