

Storytelling Games

Sometimes you simply need to banish the editor or critic in your mind before you can even begin to create a story. Word of advice: do NOT adopt a commanding voice, issuing forth a thunderous "BEGONE!" to your inner critic. That will just serve to bring the critic front and center to your thoughts. Sort of like saying "Don't think of a donut." Of course, you immediately think of a donut. The object is to focus your thoughts on having fun, leaving your inner critic no other choice but to sit down and be quiet.

The easiest approach is just allow yourself to get silly. Seriously silly. As in games designed to create the All Time Stupidest Story in the World. Here is one game to help you do just that.

Three Cards

First, create three stacks of flash cards using pieces of paper or index cards, each with word prompts on one side, and blank on the other.

The first group of cards will include descriptors.

Here are some examples

A Gaggle of Confused...

A Totally Obnoxious...

Three Attractive but Rude...

Two Smug and Official...

Then create the second group. These will be your subjects.

Start with animal subjects; that steers the story into a folk or fairy tale genre and allows you to be more creative.

Buzzard(s)

Raccoon(s)

Moose

Chicken(s)

Next create the third group: actions.

Built a House

Knocked on the Window and Peered Inside

Threw a Huge Dinner Party

Drove a Car into a Corn Field

Shuffle each deck of flash cards and place them face down. Pick the top card of each stack so that you will have one descriptor, one subject and one action card. You might end up with something like this:

A Gaggle of Confused Raccoons Threw A Huge Dinner Party.

or

A Totally Obnoxious Buzzard Knocked on the Window and Peered Inside.

Then, simply tell the next three lines. Don't try to end the story or make it into a full story.

Example:

A Gaggle of Confused Raccoons Threw A Huge Dinner Party. The first raccoon ate all the appetizers. Another raccoon danced on the table.

or

A Totally Obnoxious Buzzard Knocked on the Window and Peered Inside. He thought his friend the canary lived there. But it was the moose's house instead.

Then drop your story right there. Move on to the next three flash cards. The idea is to get used to starting stories with no expectations at all, and no demand to finish them. The more often you repeat this exercise the more easily it will be to throw out silly and ever more creative progressions to the original sentence. So you might end up with:

A Gaggle of Confused Raccoons Threw A Huge Dinner Party. Martha Stewart did not approve. But another guest, George Washington, loved it.

or

A Totally Obnoxious Buzzard Knocked on the Window and Peered Inside. It was a treehouse, and he was floating by in a hot air balloon. A family of ravens watched, and one of them spoke to the buzzard.

After you've loosened up a bit, and if you feel you'd like to go further with the story, go for it! If not, that's OK too. The point is to quiet the critic who expects great things of a story before you've even begun. The Stupidest Story in the World gives you the freedom to, well, get goofy. By the way, this is a great bedtime story game to play with kids. You might be amazed where it goes!