



## **Cracker Storytelling Festival Study Guide**

### **Where did the name Cracker Storytelling Festival come from and what does it mean?**

Founded in 1989 as the Spirit of the Suwannee Harvest Storytelling Festival by Annette Bruce, in 1991 it became the Cracker Storytelling Festival to honor the pioneer spirit of the “Cracker” in Florida. In 1995 the festival moved to the Homeland Heritage Park and a whip cracking contest was added to the festival.

What’s so special about where we are today...Homeland Heritage Park. There is an attachment from the Heritage Park with this document.

### **What is Storytelling?**

Storytelling is the art of using words, gestures, facial expression, and body language to bring a story to life in the listener’s imagination. From the beginning of time, storytelling has been the way cultures have preserved and celebrated their memories, passed on their values and belief systems, entertained, instructed, and reported. Today storytelling is recognized as one of the most effective brain-compatible teaching strategies. It is accessible to children with diverse abilities and disabilities and is applicable to all “ways of knowing.” Storytelling continues to invite us all to “Enter the Theater of the Mind—the Imagination!”

Storytelling engages linguistic, logical, musical, spatial, interpersonal, intra-personal, and kinesthetic learners alike, at the same time strengthening essential foundation skills such as listening, visualization, vocabulary acquisition, and comprehension. Storytelling is a Power Tool for Literacy! Students will be entertained, challenged and stimulated through the use of voice, poetry, characterization and music.

Audience participation allows the student to join in and create the story along with the teller. Language is automatically translated into images and learning can occur with joy.

## Storytelling and Literacy

### *Benefits of storytelling and story listening.*

Storytelling relaxes the listener. When a story is told the listeners breathe deeply, open their minds and hearts, and are ready to learn.

Storytelling promotes problem solving and “insights.” Each story that is read or told is about characters experiencing adventures, making choices, and living with the consequences of those decisions.

Storytelling opens the imagination. The stories give the children “images” for their art projects, “story plots” for creative drama, and ideas for creative writing.

Storytelling transmits information. The listeners learn about new places, ideas, experiences, and concepts.

Storytelling is a joyful language experience.

Through storytelling children experience interactive and cooperative learning. The listeners bond together in a shared experience and the story becomes part of the classroom culture.

Storytelling explores other cultures. Through personal stories and folklore of countries other than our own, children learn about other cultures.

Storytelling nurtures listening skills, concentration, and focus.

Storytelling encourages empathy and caring about feelings of others.

Storytelling can teach that all people have many things in common.

Storytelling strengthens reading and writing skills. Telling stories increases the ability to recall information, to sequence the events of the story, to understand the parts of the story such as a beginning, middle, and an end. Stories introduce children to the concept of point of view.

## Getting the Most out of Your Visit

Before you come:

### ***Teachers, please read this to your students:***

At the Festival today, we're going to participate in storytelling performance by many different types of storytellers. "Participate" means that you'll be part of the program—as good listeners, using your imagination to "see" the characters, setting, and action. Sometimes, you may be invited to use your brains, voice, and hands to help bring a story to life. Storytelling is the *most fun* when the storyteller and the listeners work together to create the story—so let's make this a fun experience for everyone!

Ask students to listen carefully to the story so that afterwards they can answer simple, factual, non-subjective questions such as *who, what, where, or when*.

- What are the parts of a story? (characters, setting, problem solution, beginning, middle, end)
- What do you use when you listen to a story? (ears, eyes, brain, imagination)
- As you listen, use your imagination to make a "movie" of the story in your mind. Will all of you have the same movie? Why or why not?
- As you listen to the stories today, listen and watch to see if you can find patterns in the words or the actions. Why are patterns important in the stories?
- Try to predict what's going to happen next in the stories, but don't yell it out! Just listen and think and see if you're right!

Discuss the purpose of the field trip and tell your students that they will be learning about the history of their county in the 1800's through some of the stories they will hear. Talk about the cattle industry in Polk County and explain what the term "Cracker" means. Ask the students if they see cows anywhere near their homes and if they know how important the use of the horse was in the early history of Polk County.

***Teachers, please review this with your students and your chaperones:***

### **Listener Etiquette at the Cracker Storytelling Festival**

The storytellers at the Cracker Storytelling Festival are professionals and deserve the same consideration you would give any other performer. Please be a considerate listener and observe the following:

1. Our performers are on stage for 30 minutes. During that time, they tell several stories. Seating your group or leaving in the middle of one of these stories distracts the storyteller from his/her train of thought and distracts the rest of the audience from the story. If your group arrives after a story has begun, please listen from the sidelines until the story is finished, then quietly seat your group before the storyteller begins another. If your group needs to leave, please wait until the storyteller has finished the story, then quietly leave before he/she begins another.
2. Be quiet during the stories.
3. Turn your cell phones off or set on them on vibrate.
4. No flash photography or recordings are permitted during a storyteller's performance.

### **Ideas for After the festival:**

- Take the time to write or draw about the story that was most memorable to you. What made it memorable?
  - Choose one story you heard today and discuss with a partner how it relates to your own experiences, how it relates to something you have read or watched on TV.
  - Retell a story to family members, school staff, younger students, residents in nursing homes, or nearby preschools.
  - Write your own story using a story that you liked as a model.
  - How would you change the ending to one of the stories you heard?
  - Form a storytelling club at school, and produce a storytelling newsletter.
  - Have the class compose and send thank-you letters to the field trip site host, chaperones, school administrators and other persons that supported the field trip. Include favorite or special information learned during the field trip.
  - Create a short news report about what happened on the field trip. Publicize the trip via an article in your local newspaper, school bulletin board, trip presentation for parent's night, or class Web page.
  - Have the students retell their favorite story, write a story like the one they remembered the most, illustrate one of the characters they remember from the day, look up more information about one of the stories/ Describe some of their observations about how the storyteller used their voice, their body, props, etc. in the telling of their story.
  - Have the students discuss which story they think would be the easiest to learn and tell and why...the hardest to learn and tell and why.
  - Would the students like to go to the event next year? Why? Why not?
  - Have the students identify their own ethnicity...Irish, African American, Latino, European, Asian...and ask them to talk about their experiences at the festival at home. Ask them to talk to their parents about their own experiences with stories.
  - Ask the children what they were surprised to find out about storytelling.
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## Examples of Florida Benchmarks taught: **English Language Arts Standards » Reading: Literature » Grade 3**

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- **RL.3.2.** Recount stories, including fables, folktales, and myths from diverse cultures; determine the central message, lesson, or moral and explain how it is conveyed through key details in the text.
- **RL.3.3.** Describe characters in a story (e.g., their traits, motivations, or feelings) and explain how their actions contribute to the sequence of events.
- **RL.3.5.** Refer to parts of stories, dramas, and poems when writing or speaking about a text, using terms such as chapter, scene, and stanza; describe how each successive part builds on earlier sections.

### **Fluency**

- **RF.3.4** Read grade-level prose and poetry orally with accuracy, appropriate rate, and expression.

### **Writing: Grade 3**

- **W.3.3.** Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.
  - Establish a situation and introduce a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally.
  - Use dialogue and descriptions of actions, thoughts, and feelings to develop experiences and events or show the response of characters to situations.
  - Use temporal words and phrases to signal event order.
  - Provide a sense of closure.

### **Speaking and Listening**

**SL.3.2.** Determine the main ideas and supporting details of a text read aloud or information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

**SL.3.4.** Report on a topic or text, tell a story, or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details, speaking clearly at an understandable pace.

## Vocabulary:

**Characters:** The people or animals in a story.

**Cowboy Poet:** A storyteller who tells the story of the cowboy in the form of poetry.

**Cracker:** A term to describe pioneer settlers in Polk county and other parts of Florida. The term could have been derived from Georgia immigrants who cracked their own corn and were called “Crackers”. It may also have been derived from the Florida cow hunters and their whips. The loud cracking sound made by their whips earned them the nickname “Crackers”.

**Folktale:** A story from the oral tradition with no known author.

**Literary story:** A story that can be attributed to a specific author or authors.

A **fairy tale:** can be either a folktale or a literary tale and will include elements of fantasy or magic.

**Traditional tales:** Folktales told in the traditional manner of the culture from which they come, as close to the oral source as possible.

**Fables:** can be from either the literary or the folk tradition. Fables have morals—either explicit or implied. Example: Aesop’s Fables

**Historical tales:** are based on an actual historical event, such as the Revolutionary War, and accurately bring that event to life.

**Biographical tales:** tell about the life—or specific events in the life—of a real person. Often these tales are told in first-person.

**Motivation:** Why characters do what they do.

**Plot:** What happens in a story?

**Setting:** Where the story takes place.

**Visualize:** In your mind’s eye “see” the characters, setting, and action.

**Round Robin:** Event where all of the storytellers take turns telling a story.

**Venue:** Site for storytelling...example...Jack’s Oak is one venue and the church house is another venue.

**Youthful Voices:** Part of the Storytelling festival that promotes student storytelling. (Students must fill out an application to participate as a student teller. Contact Linda Chancey at 393-5610 to register a student. )

## **Storytellers**

1. Hank Mattson: *www.crackercowboypoet.com*
2. Katie Adams' Make Believe Theater: *www.katieadamstheater.com*
3. Carrie Sue Ayvar: *www.carriesueayvar.com*
4. Tamara Green: *www.tamaravgreen.com*
5. Kaye Byrnes: *www.kayebyrnes.com*
6. Mitchell O'Rear: *www.linkedin.com/pub/mitchell-o-rear/7/742/b17/*
7. Robin Schulte: *www.robinschulte.com*
8. Mark Koruschak
9. Cheryl Floyd
10. Van Samuels
11. Marc McKinney

## **Storytelling Organizations**

1. Florida Storytelling Association (FSA) <http://flstory.org>
2. National Storytellers Association (NSA)
3. National Storytellers Network (NSN) <http://www.storynet.org/>
4. International Storytelling Center <http://www.storytellingcenter.net/>
5. National Youth Storytelling Showcase <http://www.nationalyouthstorytellingshowcase.org>
6. Youth Storytelling.com <http://www.youthstorytelling.com>  
Home of Voices Across America Youth Storytelling and Voices of Illusion Storytelling Troupe