



Collaborative Family Stories



Writing together is a gift of shared time, an opportunity to slow down and enjoy each other's company. Be creative and adventurous in your writing while spending time with those you care about by writing a collaborative story!

A collaborative story is a way to get everyone involved in the creative writing process. The purpose is to let each individual tell a piece of the story, allowing everyone to add their own voice and ideas to a piece of writing that represents the whole group.

Before you start

It might help to have some clear guidelines for everyone involved to agree to and follow. Here are some ideas to consider:

- The story needs to make sense. (Mostly. It can be silly, of course!)
- Stories are best with characters, a setting, a problem, and a solution.
- Action and adventure are always entertaining.
- This is supposed to be fun. Use your imagination and get creative.
- There's no need to worry about spelling or punctuation. This is a rough draft. If you decide to share it later, you can revise and edit it.

Use the spaces below to set the guidelines you agree to follow when crafting your story:

Getting started:

- Discuss how the writing is being recorded (by hand on a single sheet of paper, on the computer, in a notebook). Make note of it below:

- Set an "author order"—who gets to go first, second, third, etc. Follow the same pattern from beginning to end. (Note it on the table below.)



- Agree on who is doing the actual writing. Younger participants may find it easier to dictate their contribution. Use the table below to keep track of your participating writers' order and who will be transcribing (writing or typing) that section.



Order	Name of Writer	Name of Transcriber
First		
Second		
Third		
Fourth		
Fifth		

- Agree on how much each writer is allowed to contribute before needing to pass it on to the next person. For example, a sentence or a paragraph might be options. Our group agrees that each writer will write the following amount for each turn:

- If you need inspiration for a good opening line, consider borrowing or altering one of these [classic opening lines in literature](#) or one of these [memorable opening lines from children's books](#).

Other ideas to consider:

Are there others who might like to participate but are not physically present? Consider writing a virtual collaborative story. You could set up a call or video session, then share a document and allow each writer to contribute all at one time. Another option could be to write via email.

Writers can contribute not only through words, but also through illustrations! When finished, you might consider laying the story out on separate pages and allowing writers to add illustrations to the completed story.

If you complete one story, try another. You might even have more than one story going at a time!

Share your completed work! Read the completed piece out loud and celebrate what you've accomplished together. You might even consider turning your completed story into a gift for another family member or friend.

