PAGE Project for advancing cognitive accessibility in publishing

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Cultural Activities Toolkit

Accessible literary and cultural activities

Principles, methods and 10 practical activity cards

Deliverable D4.2

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Abstract

The PAGE Cultural Activities Toolkit is a practical resource for people who organise literary and cultural activities for and together with young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

It connects accessible literature with opportunities to read, discuss, interpret and to create. It offers guidance on preparing accessible activities, communicating clearly and supporting participation without taking over. Its practical section contains ten activity cards that can be adapted to different groups, settings and cultural contexts.

The Toolkit draws on PAGE research, partner experience and established practice in Easy Language, accessibility and inclusive cultural work. The activities are starting points, not fixed programmes. Their shared purpose is to help people choose, respond, create and take part in cultural life focused on literature.

How to use this Toolkit

You do not need to read the Toolkit from beginning to end. Start with the part that is most useful for your work and return to the shared principles when you need them. The Toolkit is not a script. Use professional judgement, listen to participants and adapt the activities to the participants, literature, place and your purpose of the activity.

The content of this Toolkit in brief is:

Part I – Foundations
Chapters 1–3 introduce the Toolkit, present the main PAGE research findings and set out the principles for accessible literary activities.

Part II – Prepare and facilitate
Chapters 4–6 cover planning, the setting and clear written and spoken communication.

Part III – Methods
Chapters 7–9 focus on storytelling, book clubs and creative writing workshops.

Part IV – Practical literary activities
Chapter 10 contains ten activity cards that you can use, adapt or combine.

Part I – Foundations

Chapter 1: About this Toolkit

This Toolkit helps professionals and organisations create literary activities in which young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities can take part as readers, interpreters and co-creators.

Accessible books are an important starting point, but access to literature is more than access to a book. Readers also need opportunities to discover literature that interests them, read in ways that work for them, exchange ideas and create work of their own.

What Is the PAGE Toolkit?

PAGE – Project for Advancing Cognitive Accessibility in Publishing – works to make literature and participation in literary culture more accessible to young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. This Toolkit focuses on cultural activities connected with literature, reading and writing. Methods are designed to support reading and writing competences through meaningful literary participation, while keeping cultural experience, choice and authorship central.

Participation in cultural life is a human right. Article 30 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities recognises the right of persons with disabilities to take part in cultural life on an equal basis with others.

The Toolkit offers:

- principles for accessible and respectful participation;
- practical guidance for planning and facilitating activities;
- methods for storytelling, book clubs and creative writing workshops;
- ten activity cards;
- questions and checklists for reflection and improvement.

The Toolkit is based on PAGE research, partner experience and established practice in Easy Language, accessibility and inclusive cultural work. Choose what is useful, adapt it to your context and develop it together with participants.

About the Sources and Base of Practice

The Toolkit brings together several forms of knowledge. It is grounded in PAGE project requirements and research, established guidance on Easy Language and accessibility, documented inclusive literary and cultural practice, and the professional experience of PAGE partners.

The practical guidance also reflects knowledge developed through direct work with readers, writers, authors, validators and participants with intellectual and developmental disabilities. This includes experience in facilitating reading groups and creative workshops, producing and validating Easy Language texts, supporting self-advocacy and participation, and developing accessible cultural activities.

In the last section of the Toolkit, you will find a list of sources. These sources do not all represent the same kind of evidence. Research findings, professional guidance, documented practice and practitioner experience each have contributed in different ways.

Who Should Use the Toolkit?

The Toolkit is written for people who organise, facilitate or support literary and cultural activities. This includes educators, trainers, book-club and reading-group facilitators, librarians, cultural workers, writers, illustrators, publishers, support persons and organisations working in culture, education or disability inclusion.

You do not need to be an expert in every area. What matters is careful preparation, clear communication, attention to participants and a willingness to adapt when something is not working.

Target Group for Activities

The activities are designed for young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities who can engage with, understand and appreciate stories in Easy Language, independently or with support, and communicate their responses, preferences and needs about literature. This has been the target group for the PAGE Project. Participants may communicate through speech, writing, AAC (augmentative and alternative communication) or other familiar ways of expressing themselves. Needing communication support does not exclude them from this target group. Note that some of the proposed activities in the Toolkit may also be useful with other groups. If so, remember to adapt and test for that context.

Participants are not one uniform group. They have different reading experience, interests, communication preferences and support needs. They may read at different speeds and prefer different ways of joining a discussion or creative activity.

Difficulty with reading does not mean lack of interest in literature. Plan accessibility by offering clear information, flexible formats and more than one way to take part. Individual support should still be available when a participant needs it, without taking over their choices, interpretation or authorship.

Key Roles and Terms

Roles describe what a person is doing in a particular activity. The same person may move between roles, and each role should remain a matter of choice.

In the Toolkit we use the words for the different roles in an activity as follows:

- **Participant:** a person taking part in the cultural or literary activity.
- **Reader, writer or author:** description of a participant's precise role.
- **Co-creator:** a participant who contributes creatively to content or literary output.
- **Co-designer:** a participant who helps shape the activity, choices, process or next steps.
- **Facilitator:** a person preparing and facilitating the activity. The facilitator creates conditions for participation and guides the process without providing the 'right' interpretation or deciding for participants.
- **Support person:** a person enabling participation without deciding or creating on the participant's behalf. Support may include practical help, reading or writing support, or help with communication.
- **Validator:** a person with own experience of barriers to reading and understanding who takes part in a structured check of the understandability of Easy Language texts during their preparation. Validators should be prepared and supported for this role and follow the agreed validation process.

Note that a participant does not automatically become a validator. Choosing books, reviewing an activity, co-designing a process, giving general reader feedback or checking a venue, digital tool or cultural event are different roles. Use the term validator only for the specific Easy Language validation role defined above.

Chapter 2: What we Learned from PAGE Research

PAGE research explored reading, cultural participation, barriers and preferences among young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. It brought together contributions from 56 young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, 103 parents and 19 publishers across the five pilot countries.

The findings show varied interests, preferences and support needs rather than one typical reader. Accessible cultural activities need enough structure to be understandable and enough flexibility for meaningful choice.

Interest in Books and Stories

Among the young adults who took part, 84% said they liked stories and 85% said they would read more if books were available in Easy Language. Difficulty with reading can easily be mistaken for lack of interest, even when a person enjoys stories, characters and ideas.

For facilitators, this means starting from interest rather than independent reading ability. Ask what would make a story accessible and worth reading for the person.

Support to Participate

Clear information in advance, knowing what will happen, familiar people, manageable group sizes and respectful interaction can make it easier to join and stay involved.

Practical conditions also matter. An interesting activity may still be inaccessible if it is difficult to get to, too expensive, poorly signposted, or held when transport is unavailable. Noise, strong light, distractions and previous negative experiences can create further barriers.

Accessibility therefore begins when planning the activity. The invitation, journey, welcome, space and way people are treated have an impact on participation.

Different Interests and Ways of Taking Part

Participants mentioned different genres and themes. No single kind of book or activity suited everyone. 75% said they would like to write a story themselves or with a friend, while 48% said they liked talking about books they had read.

Literary participation should not depend on speaking in a group. A participant may prefer to discuss, write, draw, choose an image, change part of a story, listen or respond in another way. Participants also suggested meeting an author or illustrator, visiting a library or bookshop, writing with friends and illustrating an existing story. These ideas helped shape the activities in this Toolkit.

Planning Literary Activities

When you are planning literary activities, remember this:

- offer accessible literature with adult themes and meaningful choices;
- explain clearly what the activity is, where it takes place and what will happen;
- provide more than one way to take part, especially when discussion or reading aloud is involved;
- let participants influence texts, activities and next steps, not only comment at the end;
- ask what helped, what created barriers and what should change next time.

Accessibility should open more ways into literature, not narrow them. Good facilitation makes possibilities visible and leaves room for the participants to choose.

Chapter 3: Principles for Accessible Cultural Activities

Accessible literary activities treat participants as adults with their own interests, experiences and ways of taking part. Accessibility is not only about making language easier. It also creates conditions for choice, interpretation, authorship and support without taking over.

The principles in this chapter apply throughout the Toolkit, when choosing a book, planning a session, supporting discussion or adapting an Activity Card.

Respect Adult Identity

Young adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities should have access to literature, themes and cultural experiences that respect their age and interests. Accessible language does not require a childish content. Participants may be interested in relationships, humour, crime, fantasy, poetry, work, independence, family, conflict, sexuality or everyday life. A reader may prefer a detective story, romance or poem even when they need support to access it. Choose texts because they are meaningful and engaging, not because they appear ‘simple enough’ for a diagnosis.

If a text is difficult, first consider a shorter section, more time, a clear explanation or reading together. Do not automatically replace adult literature with material for children.

Take participants’ responses seriously. Silence, slow reading, difficulty writing or an unfamiliar way of expressing an idea does not mean a person has nothing to contribute.

Offer Choice and Influence

Choice is strongest when it shapes the activity from the beginning.

Participants can influence:

- the books and themes explored,
- how much is read,
- how they take part,
- which creative activity they try,
- whether they share their work
- and what the group does next.

Offer concrete options when helpful, while leaving room for another suggestion. Make participants’ influence visible by acknowledging when their decisions change the activity or next meeting.

Not taking part in one element is also a valid choice. A person may listen rather than speak, continue reading rather than complete a creative task, or keep their work private.

Support Without Taking Over

Support should make participation possible while protecting the participant's meaning, decisions and authorship. A facilitator or support person may help someone to find a page, understand an instruction, organise an idea, record dictated words or use a familiar communication tool. They should not answer a literary question, decide what the participant thinks or improve a creative idea without permission.

Ask what support is helpful. Questions such as:

- Would you like some help?
- How would you like me to support you?

Questions like these can prevent support from becoming control.

When recording someone's words, read them back or check that you understood correctly. Present any proposed change as a suggestion and leave the decision with the participant.

Fair participation does not mean identical support. It means that each person has a genuine opportunity to take part.

Make Participation Accessible and Voluntary

Participants should know what will happen, what is expected and what choices they have. Make it clear that they can ask for help, an explanation, take a break, pass, change their mind or leave when needed.

Reading aloud, acting, speaking to the group or sharing personal experiences should never be required as proof of participation. Reading activities are not examinations, and a reader's opinion, feeling or interpretation does not need to match the facilitator´s.

When something is not working, examine the activity. The language may be unclear, the pace too fast, the task too broad or the support unsuitable. Plan, observe and adjust accessibility throughout the activity.

Keep Literature and Authorship Visible

Literary activities may support learning, confidence and social connection. But the literature should not disappear behind these outcomes. Keep returning to the story, poem, character, image, question or text that brought the group together.

Participants' creative decisions should remain visible. A person who dictates a sentence, chooses an ending, decides what an illustration should show or changes a character's action is making an authorial choice, even when someone else provides practical support.

You can adapt the pace, format, amount of text or way of taking part while keeping the literary purpose intact.

Ask yourself: What are participants invited to do with the literature in this activity? If the answer is unclear, the activity may have moved too far from its purpose.

Four Important Questions

When planning or adapting an activity, ask yourself:

1. Is literature still central to the activity?
2. Do participants have real choices?
3. Does support help without taking over?
4. Can participants influence what happens next?

These questions are not a test. They are a quick check that the activity still reflects the principles of the Toolkit.

Part II – Prepare and facilitate

Chapter 4: Plan and Run the Activity

A good literary activity begins before participants enter the room and continues after the meeting. Planning should connect the purpose, literature, participants, access, communication, timing and follow-up. Use enough structure to prepare well, with enough flexibility to respond to the group.

Literary Purpose and Participants

Begin by asking what participants should be able to experience, explore or influence. A purpose such as “explore a character’s decision and decide whether to continue the story” gives clearer direction than “organise a reading activity”. To have a defined purpose helps you choose the text, amount of material, questions and ways of taking part.

Keep literature in focus. The starting point might be an accessible book, poem, short scene or story created by participants. Creative work can grow from what has been read and, where appropriate, lead back to the text.

Find out what participants are interested in and how they want to take part. When possible, involve them early in choosing texts, themes or activities. Other people may offer useful practical information, but the participant’s own preferences come first.

Choose a realistic amount of material. A short, well-chosen passage with time to read, think and respond is often more rewarding than many pages. Prepare a natural stopping point and, if useful, an optional continuation.

Before the first activity, it can help your planning to ask:

- What would you like to read or explore?
- How do you prefer to read?
- What makes reading easier or tiring?
- What support would you like?
- How can you ask for help or a break?

Prepare Access, Roles and Support

Look at the whole experience from the participant’s point of view: finding out about the activity, getting there, entering the space, following what happens, taking part and knowing what comes next.

A quick planning check

Before the activity, make sure you can answer these questions:

- **Purpose:** What will participants read, explore, choose or create?
- **People:** Who is taking part, and what support do they want or need?
- **Access:** Can participants find, reach and use the venue?
- **Communication:** How can information be clear before and during the activity?
- **Materials:** Are the text and other materials available in suitable formats?
- **Time:** Is there enough time for reading, processing, breaks and a realistic stopping point?
- **Roles:** Who will facilitate, welcome participants and provide agreed support?
- **Consent and privacy:** Will anything be photographed, recorded, collected, shared or published?
- **Follow-up:** What will happen afterwards, and when will participants hear from you again?

Chapters 5 and 6 give more detail about the venue, arrival and communication.

Collect only the access or support information needed for a clear purpose and share it only with people responsible for the agreed arrangements. Prepare a simple running order with approximate times, planned breaks, main stages and team responsibilities. Also identify realistic alternatives if a facilitator is absent, technology fails, the room becomes noisy or the text takes longer than expected. A backup might be printed material, a shorter activity, another quiet space or continuation at a later meeting.

During the Activity

Welcome participants. Introduce the people and their roles.

Show the plan in an understandable format. Remind the group how they can ask for help, take a break or pass. Confirm any choices specific to photographs, recording or collecting work.

Keep the sequence easy to follow. Introduce one step at a time and make transitions visible.

For example:

1. We have read the first scene.
2. Now you can choose to talk about the character, write or draw a response, or continue reading.

Allow time to process and respond. Notice whether the pace, amount of text and agreed support are working. If something is difficult, ask what would help. Apply the Chapter 3 principle that support enables participation without replacing the participant's response or decision. Use the plan to support the group, not to control it. If participants want to spend more time on a scene or prefer reading instead of the planned creative task, follow that interest when possible. But keep the literary purpose visible.

Close the Activity and Improve Practice

End the activity clearly. Briefly summarise what the group did and explain what happens next. Tell participants what will happen to their texts, drawings, notes or feedback, return personal materials and clarify arrangements for leaving the venue.

Invite feedback in more than one way. Feedback can be given via:

- conversation,
- a written response,
- a simple choice or
- a private message later.

Make room for both positive and negative comments about the literature, activity, instructions, timing, support and setting.

Remember to compare your plan with what happened together with the feedback from the participants.

Record only what will help improve the activity:

- which parts took more or less time than expected;
- what participants chose to do;
- what support was requested;
- what was adapted during the session;
- what helped or created a barrier;
- what should change next time.

Describe what you observed rather than interpreting a participant's motivation or behaviour. Do not retain personal details that are unnecessary for improvement.

Example: Planning a Reading Activity

A facilitator plans a 75-minute session on one scene from an accessible classic that participants helped choose. The invitation gives information about arrival and transport, names of facilitators and specifics about the venue.

The scene is available in print and digital form, with unfamiliar words prepared for explanation and several optional ways to respond.

During the meeting, readers become interested in one character and choose to continue the discussion. The planned illustration activity moves to another meeting instead of being rushed. The group finishes at a clear stopping point and hears when it will meet again.

The plan provided structure while leaving space for readers to shape the activity.

Chapter 5: Make the Setting Accessible

The venue is part of the activity. Participants need to reach it, recognise the entrance, understand how the space works and use it without unnecessary physical, sensory or cognitive effort. A room may meet formal requirements and still be noisy, difficult to navigate or difficult to use for reading and discussion.

Getting There

Choose a venue participants realistically can reach. Check the journey, cost and return transport, as well as the route from the bus stop, parking area or drop-off point to the activity room. Consider entrances, steps, lifts, doors, security procedures, signs and temporary changes from the viewpoint of a first-time visitor.

Make sure the information contains:

- Full address
- Weekday and date
- exact start and end time
- travel information
- Contact person in advance

A photograph of the entrance and a short route description are especially useful when a building is unfamiliar or has several entrances. Explain steps, separate accessible entrances, lifts or security desks before people arrive.

Links and QR codes may add information, but essential details should also appear directly. Not everyone can or wants to use a smartphone while travelling.

Whenever possible, ask a participant or co-designer who may use the venue to check the route and arrival information. They may notice an unclear sign, hidden lift or hard-to-recognise entrance that people familiar with the building overlook.

The Room

Visit the room before the activity and consider how its features work together.

Use this practical check:

- **Entrance and movement:** Is there a usable route, enough circulation space and access to toilets that will be open?

- **Seating and sightlines:** Can participants sit comfortably and see the facilitator, other participants and the materials? Choose an arrangement that fits reading, conversation, writing, drawing and communication devices.

- **Sound:** Reduce competing noise and echo. Test any microphone before the activity.

- **Light and visual comfort:** Provide sufficient, even light and good contrast, with as little glare, flicker or visual distraction as possible.

- **Orientation:** Use short, consistent signs for the room, toilets, exits and break space. Add clear images when they help.

- **Breaks and comfort:** Provide water and a place to pause or move to a quieter area without attracting attention.

- **Materials and technology:** Test power, internet, sound, projection and digital tools. Have an accessible alternative when technology is essential.

Avoid last-minute changes to a room arrangement shown in advance. When a change is necessary, explain it clearly on arrival.

Arrival and Orientation

A stressful search for the entrance can affect a participant's ability to focus. Name a person before the activity who will be easy to recognise to welcome participants and show them the room, toilets, water and break space. Participants should not have to repeat private access information to unfamiliar reception staff. Share the minimum information needed with the people responsible for agreed arrangements.

At the beginning, briefly explain the room, breaks and any change since the information was sent. Mention unusual sounds, building works or procedures that may affect the session. The aim is to remove uncertainty, not to give a long tour.

Final Venue Check

Shortly before participants arrive, walk through the venue once more and ask:

- Can a first-time visitor find the correct entrance and room using the information we sent?
- Can each participant reach the space, sit comfortably, use the materials and take a break in the way they need?
- Have we reduced avoidable noise, clutter and uncertainty?
- Does the team know who will welcome participants and respond to any accessibility problem?
- Do we have an accessible alternative if the lift, projector, internet connection or planned room is unavailable?

Example: Using a Public Library

A library meeting room is suitable, but construction closes the main entrance. The organiser checks the alternative route to the room, photographs the temporary entrance and sends updated arrival information. A clear sign is added, and a named facilitator waits there while participants arrive.

Inside, the group uses tables rather than a discussion circle because several participants want to follow large-print texts and one person needs space for a communication device. These practical changes make the room and activity easier to use.

Chapter 6: Clear Communication

Clear communication helps people decide whether to take part. It helps them to prepare and participate with confidence. Clear communication is not only about simplifying the words. It is also about choosing the right information, presenting it at the right time and allowing time for the intended target group to understand and respond.

Relevant Written Information

Write directly to the person who may take part. Explain early what you are inviting them to do. Even when a support person helps someone read an invitation, the invitation should speak to the participant, not about them.

Concrete information is more useful than general project language.

“We will read a short story together and talk about the characters”

tells the reader more than
“You are invited to an inclusive cultural participation event”.

Use the channels that work for the intended participants. It can be email, a website, social media, a printed notice or a familiar contact person. Keep essential information consistent across all the different channels.

Participant-facing information should follow established Easy Language principles. They are:

- Use familiar, precise words.
- Explain necessary difficult terms.
- Organise information so readers can find what they need.
- Headings, spacing, type size, contrast and purposeful images should support understanding and not to be used as decorations.

Ask intended readers to check whether information is easy to find, understand and use. When material is presented in Easy Language, involve validators during preparation and revise it in response to their feedback.

Support Different Ways of Communicating

Some participants use AAC (augmentative and alternative communication) to supplement or replace speech, for example through communication boards, writing or speech-generating devices. Needing support to communicate does not in itself tell us how much a person can read or understand. Before the activity, ask how the participant prefers to communicate and what support they would like.

Make their usual communication tools available and allow time for them to express their own questions, interpretations and creative ideas. Address the participant directly; a support person can help them use their communication method without choosing or composing the response on their behalf.

Seven Questions for an Invitation

A useful invitation answers these questions before a person decides whether to join:

1. What should I do?
2. Why should I do this?
3. Where?
4. With whom?
5. For how long?
6. What do I need to participate or bring?
7. What happens afterwards?

Add details that matter for the activity, such as registration, cost or reimbursement, transport, support persons, access arrangements, refreshments, photography or recording, and what may happen to work created during the activity.

Give one named contact person and a direct way to reach them. Ask what support will help rather than requesting a diagnosis when it is not needed.

Before sending the invitation, check whether the date, exact times, place, contact, activity and optional elements are easy to find. Essential details should not be hidden behind a link or QR code.

Example: Invitation

Come and read with us
We invite you to a reading afternoon.
We will read a short story together
and talk about it.
You can read silently,
follow while someone else reads or listen.
You do not have to read aloud.
It is free to participate!

Why we are inviting you
We want to enjoy a story together with you
and learn what makes reading activities
interesting and accessible.

When: [Date] [Start time–end time]
There will be a break.

Where: [Name of venue] [Full address]
[Add photo of the entrance]

Who will be there?
[Name] will lead the activity.
[Name]will meet you at the entrance.

What you need to bring
You do not need to bring a book.
We will prepare the text.
Tell us if there is something we can prepare
to make the activity easier for you to join.
You can bring a support person if you want.

What happens afterwards
You can tell us your thoughts about the activity.
We will not publish your words, creative work
or photographs without asking separately.
We will explain what happens next.

How you join
Call/email us to register if you are coming.
Last date to register is [date].
Contact: [Name] [Telephone] [Email]
You can contact us with questions
before you decide whether to take part.

This is a starting point, not a fixed template. Adapt the final invitation to the activity and check it with the intended target group.

Speak Clearly and Naturally

Spoken Easy Language is not written Easy Language read aloud. Conversation happens in real time. Facilitators must therefore notice responses and adjust.

Prepare the information participants need: the basic plan, purpose of the next step, important names or words, choices and what happens afterwards. Use a natural adult voice, introduce one main idea at a time and leave time for processing.

Choose familiar, precise words. When a difficult word matters to the story, explain it rather than removing it. Use names when pronouns could be unclear, and support speech with a relevant page, image, object or written plan when useful.

If important information is not understood, first repeat it in the same words. If it remains unclear, explain it differently or show an example. Allow time for the participant to respond and use their familiar communication method. Do not complete their sentence or re-direct the conversation to a support person.

Check Understanding Without Making it a Test

“Do you understand?” often tells us very little. A person may say yes to continue, because the question feels like a test or because they are unsure what to ask. Check understanding naturally within the activity instead.

Before a creative task, ask “What would you like to do first?”

Before a break, ask “Where will we meet again?”

When there are choices, show or name them and let the participant indicate what they want.

If a response seems unexpected, first consider whether the wording, pace, instruction or support was unclear. Changing the explanation is often more useful than repeating the question more loudly.

Listen carefully when you paraphrase

Paraphrasing may help a group follow discussion, but it can change what someone meant. Check your interpretation: “I heard you say that you did not trust the character. Have I understood you correctly?”

Give the participant time to confirm, correct or change it. A support person may help with communication but continue to address and listen to the participant.

Understanding is not the same as interpretation

Clarification of facts can establish who entered the room, what happened first or what a word means. Interpretation is different. It is a participant's view of a character, motive or ending. It does not need to match the facilitator's interpretation.

Begin with an open question such as "What did you notice in this scene?"

If it is too broad, make it more concrete without supplying the answer:

"Ana closed the door and left. What do you think she wanted?"

Start with the character or text rather than asking participants to disclose personal experiences. If someone chooses to connect a story to their life, listen respectfully and let them decide whether to continue.

Some useful phrases:

- Take your time.
- Would you like me to repeat that or show you?
- You can answer, point, write or pass.
- This word is difficult. Here it means …
- I heard you say … Have I understood you correctly?
- Would you like to continue, choose something else or take a break?
- We have finished this part. Next, we will …

These are examples, not a script. Fit the wording to the person, language and situation.

Example: An unclear instruction

A facilitator says: "Choose a turning point and reinterpret it." Several participants wait and do not begin.

Instead of repeating the instruction more loudly, the facilitator shows three moments when something important changed and says: "Choose one moment when the story changed. You can point to it. Then you can tell, write or draw what could happen differently."

Participants begin to choose. Afterwards, the facilitator revises the written instruction. The difficulty provided useful feedback about the activity. It was not a matter that participants were unable to do it. It was the instruction that was unclear/too difficult to understand.

Part III – Methods

Chapter 7: Storytelling

Storytelling can provide an accessible way into literature, conversation and authorship. A story may be read from a book, told aloud, retold from another viewpoint or used as a starting point for something new. Participants may listen, follow the written text, respond, choose, retell or create within the same activity.

In this Toolkit, storytelling remains connected to literature. Oral telling can help a group enter a text, follow a difficult sequence or explore a character and setting, but it should not quietly replace access to written literature. Keep the relationship between the story being told and the text being read visible.

Use Storytelling with Purpose

Stories move between books, oral traditions, performance, film and digital media. A facilitator might briefly tell the beginning before participants meet the written version, recap an earlier scene or invite the group to imagine the same event from another character's viewpoint. After reading, participants may retell a scene, change an ending or create a related story.

Different interpretations can remain possible. Return to what happens in the text when clarification is needed, without turning discussion into a search for one correct meaning.

Choose stories for their literary quality, themes and relevance to the group. Folk stories, legends, classic scenes and contemporary short stories can all suit young adults. Adapt language and support without reducing the age or complexity of the subject.

Listening is a valid form of participation. When possible, make the written text available before, during or after the telling so participants can choose how to move between listening and reading.

Prepare and Tell the Story

Know the main characters, sequence, turning points and ending well enough to tell the story without rushing or losing the thread. You do not need to memorise every sentence.

Prepare only the context listeners need. Explain unfamiliar names, words or references when they create a real barrier, but leave participants room to discover the story for themselves.

Use a natural adult voice, leave pauses and use brief recaps when a sequence is complex. Keep supports simple. These may help:

- character names,
- a few key words,
- a short image sequence or a timeline.

But remember, too many props can compete with the story.

After telling, allow a moment before asking for a response. Begin with an open invitation such as “What stayed with you?”
If this is too broad, return to two or three concrete moments. Do not turn listening into a comprehension test or require a correct retelling.

From Listening to Creating

Storytelling becomes participatory when people can influence what happens. A participant may select an important moment, suggest a character’s next action, dictate one sentence, choose an ending, change the viewpoint or decide where the group should return. Contributions need not be equally long or visible; what matters is a genuine opportunity to influence the story.

Support should not give the most prominent role automatically to the person who speaks, reads or writes most fluently. Choosing the setting, changing a decision or contributing one key sentence are all creative acts.

When the group works from an existing literary text, distinguish the source from what participants add, change or imagine.

Note: Storytelling can naturally lead to Activity 1: Reading Together, Activity 3: Change the Story or Activity 5: Story Circle: Build a Story Together.

See the Activity Cards in chapter 10.

Handle Personal and Cultural Stories with Care

Stories may lead to memories, family histories or cultural traditions, but personal disclosure remains a choice. Do not ask for a personal story as proof of engagement. If someone shares something sensitive, listen respectfully, check whether they want to continue and explain any limits to confidentiality in a group. Name a cultural source when it is known and do not present one version of a folk story or tradition as the only authentic version. Participants may know another version or have context to add.

An original or personal story is not automatically available for recording, publication, translation or use elsewhere. Ask separately before any such use.

A Simple Storytelling Sequence

1. **Introduce:** Name the story and source. Explain how participants can take part.
2. **Enter the story:** Introduce the main characters and setting. Provide the text or another useful support.
3. **Tell or read:** Use a natural pace with time for processing and meaningful pauses.
4. **Respond:** Invite participants to notice, choose, question or interpret without requiring personal disclosure or performance.
5. **Choose what follows:** Return to the text, retell a scene, explore another viewpoint, create a variation or continue reading.
6. **Close:** Summarise what happened and explain what will happen to any notes, recordings or stories.

Example: A Folk Story as Route into Reading

A group chooses a folk story about freedom from three adult-oriented themes. Participants receive an accessible written version and names of four characters. The facilitator tells the first part while participants follow the text, if they wish.

The group chooses whether to read on, listen or first to discuss what the character might do. Afterwards, one participant suggests another ending, another selects a sentence to revisit and two prefer to listen. The group decides to compare the story with a modern literary re-telling at its next meeting. Storytelling has opened a route into the text while literature remains central.

Chapter 8: Book Clubs

A book club offers more than one reading activity. Through regular meetings, readers can develop preferences, become familiar with one another and take an increasing influence over what the group reads and how it should work.

Continuity can build trust, but the literary purpose must remain visible. Social connection matters, yet books, reading and readers' responses are what bring the group together. An accessible book club is not a language lesson or a place where participants mainly listen to professionals.

Give the club purpose and continuity

Familiar people, a recognisable structure and a clear agenda for the next meeting can make participation easier. Continuity does not mean repeating the same format. A Book Club may for example:

- stay with one novel
- compare stories around a theme
- meet an author or illustrator
- prepare recommendations.

Agree a literary purpose for each period of the club. For example:

"Over the next four meetings, we will read one accessible novel, explore two characters' choices and decide whether to recommend the book."

This provides direction while leaving room for new questions and changes of pace.

A one-off event can also be valuable, but do not present it as a continuing club unless participants know whether and when the group will meet again.

Co-design the Book Club with Readers

Readers should influence both the literature and the way the club works. Ask about themes, genres and reading interests, then offer a small selection that participants can explore through covers, illustrations, extracts or samples before choosing.

The group can also decide how often to meet, how long meetings should last, where most reading happens and which formats or support are useful. Reading at home is not a condition of membership. Readers who continue independently and those who read mainly in meetings remain full members.

Choose Books and Prepare Access

Choose books with adult relevance, literary and emotional interest, and enough material to interpret or discuss. Accessibility and literary quality are not opposites.

An Easy Language edition may be the group's main text. Another edition, illustration or audio version can help readers compare how the story is presented when this serves the literary experience.

Prepare only what the text and readers need, such as character names, a short introduction, map, timeline or explanation of an important word. Plan a realistic amount of reading and leave time to think and respond.

Use Flexible Meeting Structure

A recognisable sequence helps orientation without becoming rigid:

- **Arrive and orient:** Welcome participants, show the plan and explain changes.
- **Reconnect:** Return to the previous meeting or introduce the day's text without testing memory.
- **Read:** Offer the reading routes that work for the group.
- **Pause and respond:** Allow time for observations, questions and interpretations.
- **Explore:** Return to a passage, compare characters or versions, or add a relevant response.
- **Choose and close:** Gather the main ideas, decide what happens next and invite feedback.

If readers want to stay longer with one scene, shorten another part. Explain changes to the plan. Over time, the routine can belong increasingly to the group.

Facilitate Reading and Discussion

People do not need to read aloud to be active book-club members. One person may read while others follow, participants may take voluntary turns, listen while reading along or read quietly. Different approaches can be combined.

Avoid interrupting the literary experience to correct every pronunciation or ask frequent comprehension questions. Explain what readers need to follow, then return to unfamiliar words when they matter.

After asking a question, wait. Invite quieter members without putting them under pressure, and notice when a facilitator or support person begins answering for others. Follow an interpretation back into the text:

“Which part of the story made you think that?”

Keep clarification of facts separate from interpretation. The group may agree on the order of events while understanding a character’s reasons differently. Disagreement can be one of the most interesting parts of reading together.

Let Readers Shape the Club

Offer participants roles rather than assigning them. A reader may choose a passage, recommend a book, open the meeting, prepare a question, track the plan or welcome a guest. Another may prefer to contribute through reading and discussion without a formal role.

Leadership does not depend on fluent public speaking. Choosing the next book, the scene to discuss or a question for a guest already shapes the club. The facilitator remains responsible for access and respectful participation without remaining the source of every decision.

Example: A Four Meeting Reading Cycle

Eight young adults choose a contemporary story about friendship and independence from three accessible books.

At the first meeting, they explore the cover and opening, then choose where to continue. At the second, they discuss two characters whose decisions divide opinion and select important passages.

An illustrator joins the third meeting to discuss scenes selected in advance by readers.

At the final meeting, participants create optional spoken, written or recorded recommendations and choose the group’s next book. Some read between meetings and others do not. Each meeting gives everyone a clear route back into the shared text.

Chapter 9: Creative Writing Workshops

A creative writing workshop should give participants genuine literary choices and the experience of authorship. Handwriting, spelling, speed and confident public reading are not conditions for being an author. What matters is developing an idea, making decisions about the text and recognising the result as one's own.

Writing may begin with literature or with an image, question, character or situation. It may produce one sentence, a poem, a scene, a collective story or a longer work developed over several meetings. A finished publication is not required for the workshop to be meaningful.

Begin With Literature or an Open Prompt

A literary passage, image, character, question or conversation can give writers something concrete to respond to without determining the result. After reading, participants might write a dialogue between characters, change a scene, create a missing moment, write a poem or postcard, shift viewpoint or begin a new story from one idea in the text.

A useful prompt opens possibilities. "What would you like to change in this scene?" leaves more authorship than "Write three sentences in which the character apologises." Make the starting point understandable without narrowing imagination.

Before writing begins, explain the possible audience. Writing for oneself, sharing with one person, contributing to a collective book and publishing online are different choices. Participation never depends on agreeing to public use.

Support Different Routes into Authorship

Participants may write, type, dictate, record, arrange words or images, tell a story aloud or work with a scribe. These are different routes into writing, not different levels of authorship.

The creative decisions remain with the author when they choose characters, events and words or accept and reject revisions. Ask what help is wanted, and do not automatically correct, simplify or complete a contribution.

A visible structure such as:

Who? → Where? → What happens? → What changes? → What next?
can help when an empty page is difficult.

Remove the structure when it is no longer useful. Let writers work at different speeds; a short or unfinished text can still be serious creative work.

A Simple Workshop Sequence

- **Encounter:** Begin with literature, an image, object, theme or question.
- **Notice:** Let participants choose a character, line, conflict, place, image or unanswered question.
- **Generate:** Allow time to talk, collect words, sketch, arrange images, dictate possibilities or try several beginnings.
- **Compose:** The author forms the text using the method and support that work for them.
- **Return:** Let the author read, hear or review the draft and decide what to keep or change.
- **Share by choice:** The author decides whether anyone else sees or hears the work.
- **Continue or close:** Agree whether the work continues and how the author's draft will be returned or stored.

This sequence may take one meeting or several. Do not rush creation, revision and publication into one session to produce a visible result.

Support Scribing, Editing and Feedback

A scribe records an author's words when the author wants help to write them down. The scribe preserves the contribution and checks uncertain parts like: "Do you want me to write this exactly as you said it?" or "Where should this part go?" They do not add an ending, remove an unusual image or replace adult language with childish wording.

Separate expression from editing. First help the author put the idea into a stable form. Later, explain any proposed changes to spelling, clarity or Easy Language and let the author decide.

Where publication standards apply, make them visible without quietly erasing the author's voice. Keep earlier versions when possible.

Before giving feedback, ask what response the author wants, for example:

- listening,
- a question,
- help with one part,
- ideas for continuing
- or no feedback yet.

Comment on something specific in the text. A question such as "I was not sure whether Mira knew about the key before she arrived. Would you like to make that clearer, or should the reader remain unsure?" leaves the decision with the author.

Participants may decline feedback and do not need to say whether a story is autobiographical. Do not judge every contribution against professional writers or participants who write more fluently.

Share and Publish By Choice

A booklet, exhibition, reading, digital collection or book can give writing a real audience, but publication is an opportunity rather than proof of success. An author who keeps a text private has still taken part fully.

When authors want to publish, involve them in choices about selection, order, title, illustrations, presentation and credit. Explain what will be published, where it will appear, who may see it, whether it will be edited or translated, how the author will be named, whether images are included, whether it will be online and what can later be changed or withdrawn.

Ask separately about meaningfully different uses and record decisions in a form the author can understand and keep. Follow national law and organisational policy where formal consent is required, while continuing to communicate directly with the author.

Work with Authors and Illustrators

A professional author or illustrator can connect participants with the literary world. Prepare the guest by explaining that participants are adult readers and authors, sharing only useful access information. Ask for a manageable example from the creative process, such as two drafts or sketches.

Keep the meeting connected to what participants are reading or creating and let their questions shape the exchange.

Note: Activity 9: Meet the Author or Illustrator provides a practical format.

See the Activity Cards in chapter 10.

Example: Literary Postcard Workshop

After reading a scene in which a character leaves home, participants choose whether to write a postcard from the character, or to the character.

One participant types independently, one dictates to a scribe, two participants arrange images and words before adding sentences, and one makes a drawing before recording a short caption.

Each author reviews the draft and decides whether to change, continue or share it.

At the next meeting, some keep writing, one adds an illustration and another keeps the first version private. The common starting point has led to different texts because structure supported authorship without determining the result.

Part IV – Practical literary activities

Chapter 10: Activity Cards

In this chapter you will find ten activities. They turn the Toolkit's principles and methods into practical sessions. They offer different ways to read, interpret, create and connect through literature. Each card is a starting point, not a fixed programme: use it on its own, return to it over several meetings or link it with another activity.

Adapt the amount of text, timing, format and support to the participants while keeping the literary purpose and their choices visible. Completing every step matters less than creating a worthwhile literary experience in which people can take part as readers, writers, authors, interpreters or co-creators.

Information about the Activities

The proposed activities represent different aims and objectives. They can be organised under the keywords read, interpret, create and connect. It can be seen as a route into different aspects of culture based on literature.

- **Read:** Activity 1 begins with a shared encounter with a literary text.
- **Interpret:** Activities 2, 6 and 8 explore dialogue, scenes, choices and readers' responses.
- **Create:** Activities 3, 4, 5 and 7 support new stories, changes and visual interpretations.
- **Connect:** Activities 9 and 10 connect participants and their work with authors, illustrators, readers and cultural spaces.

The routes support orientation, not classification. Reading may lead to interpretation, interpretation to creation, and creative work back to the original text. Choose the route that fits the group and move between routes when this serves the literary purpose.

Shared Principles

The principles in Chapters 3 and 4 apply to every Activity Card and are not repeated in full. Across all ten activities:

- Participation is voluntary, and a participant can pause, pass, decline or change their mind.

- Reading aloud, acting or public performance is never a condition for participation.
- Participants have more than one meaningful way to contribute, including listening and quiet participation.
- Participants are approached as adults with their own literary interests, interpretations and preferences.
- Support enables access and communication without answering, choosing or creating on a participant's behalf.
- A participant's creative work remains their own when practical support is used to record or develop it.
- Photography, recording, publication and public sharing require clear and separate decisions.

When adapting an Activity Card, check that literature remains central, choices remain meaningful, support does not take over, and participants can influence what happens next. Plan for variability from the beginning while remaining ready to arrange individual support.

Online and Hybrid Participation

Online and hybrid formats need planning. Send one clear way of joining and the necessary information in advance. Test the connection, sound and materials, and make sure remote participants can use the literary text and take part in decisions rather than only watch the room.

Plan turn-taking so that people in the room do not dominate. Captions, chat, shared documents and familiar communication tools can help when they match participants' ways of taking part. Keep a non-digital alternative where possible. Recording is always a separate decision.

How to Use the Activity Cards

Every Activity Card begins with a short introduction and then uses the same headings: Purpose, Briefly, Before you start, What you need, Steps, Support without taking over, Adapt it, Reflect and Example.

Group size and timing are recommendations, not rules. The steps give a practical structure. It is not a script. Spend time where participants are engaged and stop at a meaningful point when needed.

Only activity-specific support and safeguards appear on the cards. Use them together with the shared guidance in Chapters 3–6.

When an Easy Language text is being prepared, it should be checked by validators as defined in Chapter 1. General feedback on a book, activity, venue or digital tool is not validation.

The Cards are based on PAGE research, project aims, documented practice and proposed adaptations developed for this Toolkit. They are well-informed starting points rather than evidence that one format will work for every group.

Observe what helps or limits participation and adapt the next session accordingly.

Activity Card 1: Reading Together

Reading together creates a shared encounter with a literary text. Participants may read, follow while another person reads, listen, pause, respond and decide whether to continue.

This is not a comprehension test and does not require everyone to read aloud. The aim is to make a worthwhile text accessible while leaving room for readers to notice, interpret and become interested in what happens next.

Purpose

To build interest in literature, support understanding without over-explaining and make readers' responses part of the shared experience.

Briefly

Best suited for: the start of a book club, a first encounter with a book or author, or a group that reads mainly during meetings

Suggested group: 4–8 participants

Suggested time: 60–90 minutes or two shorter meetings

Literary material: an adult-relevant short story, poem, scene or manageable extract in accessible formats

Before you start

- Choose the text with participants where possible, using a small selection they can sample before deciding.
- Read the complete text yourself.
- Identify names, references and sequence points that may need brief clarification without preparing one correct interpretation.
- Select a realistic section and an earlier stopping point. Check that all formats contain the same passage.

What you need

- the literary text in the formats participants use;
- a visible plan and clear reading section;
- only text-specific aids that help, such as character names, key words, a short timeline or map;
- agreed audio or digital equipment and a simple feedback option.

Steps

1. Welcome and orient

Introduce the title, author, plan and possible stopping point. Explain only the context needed to begin.

2. Read together

Use the approach agreed with the group: one person may read while others follow, participants may take voluntary turns, or several formats may be used together. Let the text develop some rhythm before pausing.

3. Pause when it helps

Stop at a natural point. Clarify a word, person or event only when it blocks access, then allow time for responses. Ask what stayed with readers or return to a particular sentence, character or event.

4. Explore without testing

Let different interpretations remain possible. Return to the text when useful and keep factual clarification separate from deciding what the story means.

5. Choose whether to continue

Ask whether readers want to continue, revisit a passage, stop or stay with the discussion. If it fits, offer an optional response such as selecting a sentence, dictating a message to a character or drawing a place.

6. Close and choose the next step

Gather the questions that emerged and ask whether the group wants to continue the text, return to a character or scene, choose another book or change how it reads next time.

Support without taking over

- Give time for processing before repeating a question. Explain only what blocks access; ambiguity, humour and metaphor may be part of the reading.
- A participant who finds decoding demanding can still interpret literature. Reading aloud for the group can open access without replacing readers' responses.
- A support person may locate a page, operate agreed technology or support communication, but the interpretation remains the reader's own.

Adapt

- Use a shorter extract, paired or supported reading, a character list or a simple timeline. If the text is read aloud, keep the written text available so participants can follow it if they wish.
- If the book does not interest the group, consider changing the text instead of adding exercises to force engagement.

Reflect

Choose two or three questions that fit the session.

- Would you like to continue this text?
- What helped you take part?
- Which character, question or passage would you like to return to?
- What should we change next time?

Example

Six young adults choose one of three accessible adult stories, selecting a story about friendship and independence.

The facilitator reads the opening while some readers follow in print, one listens and another uses a digital copy.

At a character's important decision, the group pauses. Two readers imagine messages between the characters, one returns to an illustration and others discuss the decision. They choose to finish the story next time and ask for the character names to stay visible.

Different routes keep everyone connected through the same text.

Activity Card 2: Characters in Conversation

Dialogue reveals what characters say, avoid saying and may want, as well as how a relationship changes. Readers explore a short exchange closely and may add a reply, message or unspoken thought.

Expressive reading is welcome when someone enjoys it, but memorisation, acting and performance are not required. The focus stays on dialogue as literature.

Purpose

To deepen understanding of characters and relationships through dialogue and offer a manageable route from close reading to a creative response.

Briefly

Best suited for: book club or workshop after readers know the text, or a stand-alone scene with a clear relationship or conflict

Suggested group: 4–8 participants, with pairs useful for complex dialogue

Suggested time: 60–90 minutes or two shorter meetings

Literary material: a short adult-relevant dialogue with enough context to understand the situation

Before you start

- Choose a manageable exchange and read its wider scene so you know what happens before and where the dialogue changes direction.
- Make speaker changes easy to follow without redesigning the literary form.
- Prepare a short introduction to the situation, but do not decide what every character feels or wants.

What you need

- the dialogue in accessible formats with speakers clearly identified;
- a short introduction to the setting and immediate situation;
- an optional character or relationship guide;
- materials for a written, dictated, recorded or visual response.

Steps

1. Meet the exchange

Introduce the situation, then read or listen to the whole dialogue once without analysing every line.

2. Clarify the speakers

Use names, page position or a simple guide where needed. Keep the sequence of events separate from interpretations of feelings or motives.

3. Choose how to take part

A participant may read a character or one line, read with someone else, select a line for another person, follow silently or listen.

4. Read again and notice change

Pause at one or two meaningful points. Ask what a character may want, which line supports that view, or whether the relationship changed. Allow disagreement grounded in the text.

5. Create a response

Offer a missing line, reply, message, unspoken thought, different turn or short continuation. Participants may also stay with the original dialogue.

6. Return and close

Make clear what comes from the original and what has been imagined. Participants decide whether to share their response and which character, line or question to explore next.

Support without taking over

- Keep speaker names visible if it helps, but do not use emotion cards or suggested feelings as an answer key.
- When recording dictated words, read them back. Do not make a reply more grammatical, positive or dramatic without the author's agreement.
- A support person may point to a line or operate communication support. But the support person should not decide what a character means or complete the participant's reply.
- Fictional conflict can be explored without asking participants to disclose similar experiences from their own lives.

Adapt

- Use one-line, paired reading, facilitator reading, close listening or selecting the most important sentence.
- Turn a reply into a contemporary message, note or voice recording when this fits the characters.
- If participants want to act, move later to Activity 6, where dramatic interpretation is explored separately.

Reflect

Choose two or three questions that fit the session.

- Which character or line interested you most?
- Did the dialogue change how you understood a character?
- Was it easy to follow who was speaking?
- Would you like another dialogue or a different kind of response?

Example

A group reads a disagreement between two characters about leaving home. The facilitator reads both parts first. On the second reading, two readers choose individual lines, one listens and another points to the sentence they think changes the conversation.

Readers disagree about why one character becomes quiet and find support for both views in the text. Two dictate messages the character might send afterwards, one writes independently and another continues discussing the original scene.

The activity moves from reading to interpretation and authorship without becoming a performance.

Activity Card 3: Change the Story

Changing one part of a familiar story can bridge reading and authorship. Participants begin with characters and events they know, make one meaningful change and explore what follows.

The task is not to correct the original or find a better ending. It makes the original author's choices visible while giving participants literary choices of their own.

Purpose

To explore how decisions, events, viewpoint and setting shape a story, while offering an accessible route into authorship within a familiar framework.

Briefly

Best suited for: a book club that knows a story or an early writing workshop

Suggested group: 4–8 participants working alone, in pairs or together

Suggested time: 75–90 minutes, with another meeting if authors want to continue

Literary material: an adult-relevant story or scene with a decision, turning point, viewpoint shift or ending

Before you start

- Use a story participants already understand.
- Select one manageable section rather than expecting a whole-book rewrite.
- Prepare several genuine possibilities without setting an expected answer. Such as changing a decision, event, arrival, setting, viewpoint or ending.

What you need

- the original text in accessible formats;
- an optional short sequence of original events;
- writing, drawing, recording or digital tools;
- a clear way to distinguish source material from the new version.

Steps

1. Return to the story

Revisit the relevant scene and ask what is important in it. Make sure participants can follow what happens before inviting changes.

2. Find a point of change

Invite a change to a decision, event, relationship, setting, viewpoint or ending. If needed, offer a small set of real choices but be open for other ideas.

3. Make one change

Each author, pair or group decides what to change. A valid literary choice is also to keep the original unchanged and explain why.

4. Follow the consequence

Use a simple route: Original story → Our change → What happens next? One meaningful consequence is enough to begin.

5. Create and review the new version

Participants write, dictate, tell, arrange or record their version. Return it to the author, who decides what to keep, change, continue or stop.

6. Share and continue by choice

Treat different versions as literary possibilities rather than ranking them. The author decides whether a short experiment becomes a longer piece.

Support without taking over

- Keep the original visible for orientation, but do not use it to stop an intentional change.
- A facilitator may help organise the sequence without deciding which option is more interesting or logical.
- When scribing, preserve the author's wording, read it back and ask before completing or changing anything.

Adapt

- Change only one sentence, decision or message.
- Use What happened? → What will change? → What happens because of it? for more structure.
- Rearrange a short visual sequence or re-tell the same event from another character's viewpoint.

Reflect

Choose two or three questions that fit the session.

- What did you choose to change?
- Did you have enough help without losing your idea?
- Would you like to continue this version?
- Would you like more, less or the same amount of choice next time?

Example

A group revisits a story where a young woman accepts a job in another town and leaves her partner behind.

One author decides that the partner goes too and dictates what happens on arrival. Another keeps the decision but writes a message sent one week later. Two participants create a version in which she refuses the job and starts a business at home. Another participant keeps the original ending and explains why.

Each response begins from the same literary moment, but participants decide where their own version goes.

Activity Card 4: Create Your Own Story

Creating an original story gives authors freedom to develop their own characters, settings, events and voice. A literary text, image, object, question or personal idea may provide the starting point, but the story belongs to its author.

Authorship does not depend on handwriting, spelling or length. A participant may write, type, dictate, record, begin with images or work with a scribe while keeping the creative decisions.

Purpose

To support participants in creating an original literary work and developing their own narrative choices in a manageable and meaningful form.

Briefly

Best suited for: a creative writing workshop, continuing writing group or participant moving towards an independent story

Suggested group: 4–8 participants, with most work individual and optional discussion

Suggested time: 75–90 minutes, often continued across meetings

Starting point: a text, image, object, character, place, question, opening sentence or the author's own idea

Before you start

- Prepare one to three adult-relevant prompts that open possibilities, while allowing authors to ignore them.
- Offer different routes into creation: immediate writing, conversation, drawing, image choice or a few organised ideas.
- Arrange scribing or recording support where needed and agree that unusual language will not be silently polished.

What you need

- optional creative starting points;
- paper, writing and drawing materials;
- digital writing or recording tools where useful;
- an optional simple story framework.

Steps

1. Offer a starting point

Give participants time to choose a prompt, combine ideas or begin in some other way.

2. Find the idea

Ask only what helps the author begin, such as who the story is about, where it starts or what is happening. Avoid turning brainstorming into an interview.

3. Build enough to begin

The author may collect words, sketch a character, choose a place or tell the opening aloud. If useful, offer Who? → Where? → What happens? → What changes? → What next? as support, not a form to complete.

4. Create

Authors write, type, dictate, record or combine words and images. Give enough uninterrupted time for the work to develop.

5. Support the existing story

If an author becomes stuck, return to what is already there. Ask whether they want another idea or more time rather than proposing a plot for them.

6. Review and decide what finished means

Return the draft in a form the author can review. They decide what to keep or change, whether today's work is complete and what happens next.

Support without taking over

- Do not confuse physical writing with authorship. A scribe records and reads back the author's words and choices.
- Separate practical help—organising pages, operating software or finding the stopping point—from decisions about characters, wording and events.
- Do not measure literary value by length or complexity; one sentence or image may carry the central idea.

Adapt

- Begin with a visual sequence and add language later, or combine text, images, photographs and recorded voice.
- Develop the story across sessions, perhaps beginning with only character and setting.
- Offer a beginning–change–ending framework for authors who want more structure; remove prompts for those who want less.

Reflect

Choose two or three questions that fit the session.

- What part of your story would you like to keep?
- Did the support help without changing your idea?
- Would you like to continue this story?
- What would you like to try differently next time?

Example

The facilitator offers photographs of an empty railway platform, a key on a kitchen table and two people sitting apart in a café.

One author chooses the key and dictates a story about returning to an apartment after ten years. Another types the opening of a mystery at the station. A third ignores the photographs and begins a story about friends starting a band. Another participant draws a character and records what the character says.

None finishes during the meeting. Each author reviews the work and decides whether to continue, start again or keep it as audio. The session supports several forms of authorship rather than one required written product.

Activity Card 5: Story Circle – Build a Story Together

A Story Circle creates one shared story through a group's contributions and decisions. Participants listen to what already exists and influence what happens next.

The name describes a collaborative process, not a seating arrangement or a rule that everyone must speak in turn. Contributions may be words, images, choices or decisions; influence matters more than equal speaking time.

Purpose

To experience storytelling as a shared literary process and make collective authorship possible through different kinds of contribution.

Briefly

Best suited for: a writing workshop, a session after reading, or a group that wants to create together

Suggested group: 4–8 participants

Suggested time: 60–90 minutes or several linked meetings

Starting point: an open sentence, image, object, character, theme or situation

Before you start

- Choose an open beginning that allows several directions rather than determining the plot.
- Decide how the developing story will remain visible or available to the group.
- Prepare different ways to contribute and agree who will record decisions without quietly improving the story.

What you need

- one or more open starting points;
- a board, projected document or other visible place for the story;
- writing, drawing or digital materials;
- optional character, place, image or event prompts and a short timeline.

Steps

1. Introduce shared authorship

Explain that the group will make one story and no one needs to know the whole plot in advance.

2. Choose the beginning

Offer one or more starting points or invite another. Read the chosen beginning back so everyone starts together.

3. Build the next event

Invite ideas without a fixed speaking order. When ideas compete, help the group compare and choose rather than deciding for it.

4. Keep the story visible

Record the main events briefly and return to them when the group needs orientation. Use questions that connect new ideas with what the group has already made.

5. Read back and revise

Let participants correct, remove or reorder material as well as add it. A suggestion does not enter the story simply because it was offered.

6. Choose when to stop

The group may end the story, stop at a deliberate unresolved moment or continue next time. Agree how the shared draft will be kept and credited.

Support without taking over

- Notice whose ideas are repeatedly accepted or ignored. A confident speaker should not become the automatic author.
- Confirm a supported choice with the participant, not only with the support person.
- The facilitator may hold the sequence and point out contradictions. But the facilitator should not become the hidden author who solves every difficult transition.

Adapt

- Begin from a book and create a new episode, keeping the source separate from the group's new work.
- Build the story by ordering images before adding words.
- Combine verbal and visual contributions or carry an unresolved story into the next meeting.

Reflect

Choose two or three questions that fit the session.

- Could you influence the story?
- Was it easy to follow what had happened?
- Did the group listen to different ideas?
- What would you change or continue?

Example

The group begins:
"Leon receives a key in an envelope, but there is no message."

One participant chooses a railway-station image, and the group sends Leon there. Another introduces Mira, someone he has not seen for years. A participant who listened at first later decides that Leon should not trust Mira because she knows too much.

The facilitator keeps five events visible and reads them back; the group corrects one detail and removes another. At "That key is not yours", participants stop and choose to continue next time. The unfinished draft belongs to the group.

Activity Card 6: From Page to Scene

Dramatic exploration lets readers investigate a literary scene through voice, movement, position and pause. A participant may speak, narrate, direct one moment, select a gesture or line, arrange positions, observe or respond.

The aim is not to test acting ability or prepare a performance. The literary text remains the reference while participants make and compare different ways of interpreting the story.

Purpose

To deepen interpretation of a scene through drama and make participants' ideas about characters, relationships and events visible.

Briefly

Best suited for: a book club or workshop after participants know a scene with a decision, conflict, meeting or turning point

Suggested group: 4–8 participants, with pairs or small groups possible

Suggested time: 60–90 minutes

Literary material: short adult-relevant scene from published

or participant-created work

Before you start

- Choose a scene because it offers something worth interpreting dramatically, not simply to add movement.
- Read the wider context and keep the original passage available throughout.
- Prepare meaningful speaking, directing, arranging and observing roles. Check usable space and any movement or sensory barriers.

What you need

- the scene in accessible formats;
- a short reminder of characters, place and situation;
- optional names, key lines, chairs or position markers;
- a clear space for those who choose to move;
- paper or digital tools for lines, thoughts or stage directions.

Steps

1. Return to the text

Re-read the passage, clarify the immediate situation and ask which moment participants want to explore.

2. Choose roles and place the scene

Participants choose whether to speak, narrate, direct, arrange, select a line or observe. Use chairs, positions or verbal description to establish the scene.

3. Try the moment once

Explore the short sequence without expecting polished acting. Let the group experience it before analysing each choice.

4. Pause and interpret

Ask what a character may want, what changes or which line matters. Return to the text when useful.

5. Change one element

Try one suggested change in movement, position, pause, tone, line or action, then compare how the scene feels without ranking versions.

6. Return to the words

Distinguish what the author wrote from what the group added. Decide whether to stop, read on, write from the scene or explore another version.

Support without taking over

- Drama does not require memory, speech, movement, eye contact or physical contact. Directing one pause or position can be a complete interpretive contribution.
- Participants may hold the text throughout. Correct pronunciation only when meaning is blocked or help is requested.
- A support person may help locate a line or communicate a choice but should not decide how the participant's character behaves.
- If public performance becomes interesting, treat it as a separate project rather than an automatic outcome.

Adapt

- Explore only one line, silence or position.
- Create a still image instead of moving through the scene.
- Let a participant direct rather than perform or let pairs compare two interpretations.

Reflect

Choose two or three questions that fit the session.

- Did the scene help you notice something new?
- Did you have a role that suited you?
- Would you like more, less or the same amount of movement?
- Would you like to explore another scene this way?

Example

A group revisits two adult siblings disagreeing about selling their family home.

Two participants read the lines from the page while another decides where the participants should sit. The group tries the scene, then adds a long pause after “I have already decided.”

A participant later asks one sibling to stand before replying.

Back at the printed text, readers notice that the author specifies neither movement. Silence and distance were their interpretations.

They decline a public performance. Some choose to write what happens after one sibling leaves, while others continue reading.

Activity Card 7: From Words to Images

Illustration is another way of reading. Choosing what an image shows, leaves unseen and places in the foreground is an interpretation of the text.

Drawing skill is not required. Participants may draw, paint, photograph, make a collage, arrange images, use digital tools, describe a composition or direct another person. A participant can author the visual idea even when someone else helps produce it.

Purpose

To deepen engagement with literature through visual interpretation and support participants in making meaningful decisions about how a story is represented.

Briefly

Best suited for: a book club after a scene, a writing workshop, or development of a shared or individual book

Suggested group: 4–8 participants working alone, in pairs or across one shared story

Suggested time: 60–90 minutes, with more time for later publication or display

Literary material: a scene, poem, description or participant-created story with visual possibilities

Before you start

- Choose a manageable literary moment and do not decide in advance what its image should look like.
- Keep clear whether participants are illustrating published work, their own story or a group story.
- Prepare adult-oriented materials and several routes beyond drawing. Agree the helper's role if another person will physically produce part of an image.

What you need

- the text in accessible formats;
- adult-oriented visual examples where useful;
- drawing, painting, collage, photography or digital materials;
- a way to keep the relevant passage beside the image.

Steps

1. Return to the text

Revisit the passage and give participants time to notice what feels visually important.

2. Choose what should be visible

Ask what one image for this moment should show. Separate details stated in the text from those left open to interpretation.

3. Choose a visual route

Participants decide whether to draw, paint, photograph, arrange, select, describe or direct. No route is treated as more creative.

4. Create or direct

Keep the text available. When another person helps, the participant decides what is included, where it appears, the viewpoint and what remains outside the image.

5. Look at words and image together

Ask what came from the text and what the participant added. Let the participant decide whether to revise anything.

6. Choose what happens next

The image may stay a workshop response, inspire writing, join a sequence or be developed later for a book or display.

Support without taking over

- Begin with what the participant wants the image to communicate, not drawing quality or realism.
- Do not silently make an image more attractive, accessible or professional. Explain proposed changes and return decisions to the visual author.
- If an illustrator develops a participant's concept, show drafts and provide a real opportunity to accept, reject or change them.
- Do not assume that a pictogram, expression or colour has one fixed meaning; ask what the participant intended.

Adapt

- Create three or four images as a visual sequence and add words only if they are helpful.
- Combine an image with a caption, thought, short dialogue or sentence.
- Compare several interpretations of the same passage without ranking them.
- Develop a display or publication later, with separate decisions on editing, credit and use.

Reflect

Choose two or three questions that fit the session.

- Were you able to show what you wanted?
- Did the image change how you thought about the story?
- Is there anything you would change?
- Would you like to make another image for this text?

Example

A group reads about a woman waiting at a bus station after leaving home. The text gives information about a suitcase and a late bus but says little about weather or expression.

One participant draws the woman small in a large empty station. Another makes the suitcase much larger than the character. A third directs the facilitator to arrange photographs of a road, empty bench and dark clouds.

Placed beside the same passage, the images create different feelings. Participants discuss what the author states and what they imagined.

One image starts a new story, while another is considered for a later book-club display.

Activity Card 8: Read, Review and Recommend

Readers know what draws them into a book, what makes reading easier or harder and whether they would recommend it. This activity treats those views as literary and accessibility feedback rather than a test of reading ability.

Reader feedback is not automatically Easy Language validation. Any reader can describe an experience. A validator is a person with own experience of barriers to reading and understanding who takes part in a structured check of an Easy Language text during its preparation, as defined in Chapter 1.

Purpose

To strengthen readers' influence over literary and publishing choices, explore the reading experience and help participants make useful recommendations.

Briefly

Best suited for: a book club after enough of a text has been read, a discussion of an accessible edition, or a defined feedback session

Suggested group: 4–8 participants, combining individual and group responses

Suggested time: 60–90 minutes

Literary material: a book or text participants have had time to read

Before you start

- Decide whether you need feedback on the story, recommendation, reading barriers, presentation or a clear combination.
- Keep preference separate from accessibility. A romance in Easy Language may still bore a crime reader.
- If formal Easy Language validation is planned, define the validators' task separately from the general discussion and use the agreed validation process.
- Prepare an individual response option so the first group opinion does not set the answer for everyone.

What you need

- the book or text in the formats readers used;
- relevant covers, illustrations, layouts or digital versions;
- a small number of accessible review questions;
- optional response choices with room for another answer;
- a way to distinguish literary, accessibility and presentation feedback.

Steps

1. Begin with the book

Ask what participants want to say or what stayed with them before introducing a questionnaire.

2. Explore the literary experience

Discuss characters, events, pace and passages that were interesting, boring, funny, difficult or worth returning to. Keep minority views visible.

3. Examine the reading experience

Return to specific pages. Ask what in the wording, speaker identification, layout, illustration, navigation or text-image relationship made reading easier or harder.

4. Separate preference and access

Clarify whether a comment concerns genre or taste, the literary work, access to it, or the tool used to reach it. Record each accurately.

5. Make a recommendation

Participants may recommend the book, decline or qualify the audience: for example, “for someone who likes mysteries but not someone who wants a lot of action”.

6. Handle formal validation separately

If validators are checking an Easy Language text, mark the change of role, define the material and use the agreed validation process. Do not call all reviewers validators.

7. Close the feedback loop

Record differences rather than artificial consensus. Explain who will receive agreed feedback and, when possible, later report what changed or why it did not.

Support without taking over

- Do not defend the book or expand a brief opinion into an explanation the participant did not give.
- Use rating scales or choices only as a starting point and always allow another response.
- If reading was difficult, examine the text, format, instruction, technology and conditions before attributing the barrier to the reader.
- A support person may support communication but should not turn a participant's view into their own review.

Adapt

- Create a short written, spoken or recorded recommendation covering the book, the reader's response and who may enjoy it.
- Compare one carefully chosen passage or layout feature in two editions.
- Send agreed feedback to a publisher or project team and report back on its use.

Reflect

Choose two or three questions that fit the session.

- Could you say what you thought, even if you disagreed?
- Was there something important we did not ask?
- Would you recommend the book, and to whom?
- Would you like to hear what happens with the feedback?

Example

After an accessible short story, readers first discuss the characters and pace.

On selected pages, one participant says that three names made the speaker hard to follow; another found the opening character list useful. One likes the illustrations but finds one setting confusing. Another says illustrations did not matter to them.

Four recommend the story, one says maybe and one says no because they prefer crime fiction.

The facilitator records that as literary preference, not an accessibility problem. The group agrees which comments can go to the publishing team and receives an update at its next meeting.

Activity Card 9: Meet the Author or Illustrator

Meeting an author or illustrator can turn reading into a direct cultural exchange. Participants bring their interpretations and questions, while the guest opens part of the creative process.

The encounter works best as a conversation about literature and making books, not a long presentation followed by a few rushed questions.

Purpose

To connect participants with an author or illustrator, explore how literary and visual choices are made and support an exchange in which readers influence the agenda.

Briefly

Best suited for: a book club or workshop that knows some of the guest's work

Suggested group: 4–12 participants, small enough for genuine exchange

Suggested time: 60–90 minutes, with preparation in an earlier meeting

Literary material: one accessible work or a small selection of passages, images or drafts

Before you start

- Choose the guest and material with participants when possible. Give the group enough time to read or examine the work.
- Tell the guest about communication, pace and access needs, the group's interests and the expectation of dialogue.
- Prepare participant questions, passages and images without scripting what people must say. Ask the guest to bring one concrete example of a creative decision.

What you need

- the selected text or images in accessible formats;
- participants' chosen passages and questions;
- one early and later draft, sketch or other process example from the guest;
- tested display or online equipment where needed.

Steps

1. Prepare through the work

Before the meeting, read or revisit the material and let participants choose what they want to ask or discuss.

2. Welcome the guest

Introduce the guest and plan briefly. Begin with the shared work rather than a long biography.

3. Show a creative decision

The author or illustrator compares two versions of a paragraph, opening, sketch, character or removed scene and explains the choice.

4. Bring in participants early

Use their selected passages, images and questions throughout. Stay with an interesting exchange rather than rushing through every prepared item.

5. Allow different interpretations

Participants may prefer an earlier draft, dislike an image or read a character differently. The guest may explain intention without closing the reader's interpretation.

6. Try a small exchange and close

If useful, compare two openings or sketches, or discuss a participant's creative question. End by choosing whether to read more, create a response or continue another way.

Support without taking over

- Prepare questions with participants. A facilitator may clarify a question while preserving what the reader wants to ask.
- When another person communicates a prepared question, identify it as the participant's question.
- The facilitator may occasionally clarify or summarise but should not become the guest's main conversational partner.
- The guest should not evaluate participants' literary or artistic ability.

Adapt

- With an author, explore a character, changed scene, word choice or movement from draft to publication.
- With an illustrator, compare sketches, compositions or what an image includes and leaves out.
- Meet online with short inputs, tested display and frequent participant involvement.

Reflect

Choose two or three questions that fit the session.

- Did you discuss something that interested you?
- Was it easy to communicate what you wanted?
- Did you learn something about how a book is made?
- What should change in another encounter?

Example

A book club reads a story about a man leaving town after a family argument, then meets the author online. Participants choose three passages.

One prepares a spoken question about the ending, another asks the facilitator to communicate a question about a confusing sentence, and a third asks whether the author likes the main character.

The author compares an early and final ending. One reader prefers the earlier version; the author explains the edit without trying to change that preference.

Another question returns everyone to a scene about the character's sister. One participant listens throughout and later chooses to read the author's next book.

The meeting remains an exchange rather than a lecture.

Activity Card 10: Share the Story through a Literary Event

A group may want to share a book, recommendation, story, illustration or conversation with other people. The event can be a small reading for another group, a library display, a conversation with guests or a larger public programme.

Public visibility is not the goal for everyone. Participants act as co-designers of the purpose, content, roles and next steps, and each person chooses how visible they want to be.

Purpose

To extend literary participation beyond the regular group and give participants real influence over what is shared, how it is presented and which role they take.

Briefly

Best suited for: a book club or writing workshop ready to share a reading experience or participant-created work

Suggested group: the regular group, with planning roles distributed

Suggested time: at least two meetings plus the event

Literary material: books, recommendations, selected passages,

stories, collective texts or illustrations

Before you start

- Begin with what participants want the event to achieve, not publicity, venue or programme size.
- Agree what may be shared and with which audience. A small, engaged audience may serve the purpose better than a large one.
- Choose a setting using Chapter 5 and prepare invitations and arrival information using Chapter 6.
- Ask each author or visual author separately before including their work. Plan several public and non-public roles.

What you need

- selected books, texts or images in accessible formats;
- a simple programme and accessible invitation;
- venue and arrival information, including a contact for access questions;
- tested sound, display or digital equipment needed for the chosen contributions;
- a clear record of roles, authorship, credit and agreed uses of work.

Steps

1. Decide the purpose together

Ask what visitors should read, hear, see, think about or discover. Confirm that participants still want the event.

2. Choose material and audience

Select a few strong contributions rather than filling the programme. Confirm each author's agreement and decide who the event is for.

3. Co-design the programme and roles

Build a visible sequence and let participants choose roles such as reader, author, interviewer, host, welcomer, curator, question-preparer, technical operator or audience member.

4. Check access in practice

Walk through arrival, room, seating, sound, movement, breaks, text formats and information. Make the sequence clear to participants and guests.

5. Rehearse access

Use a short run-through to find practical barriers and test equipment. Do not turn it into repeated correction of how people speak, stand or perform.

6. Confirm choices

Check roles, credit, display, photography, recording, publication and online use separately. Prepare an alternative role when useful, without pressuring anyone to remain visible.

7. Run and review the event

Keep the structure visible and do not invent new public roles on the day. Afterwards, ask whether participants influenced the event, whether their chosen roles worked and what should happen to displayed or recorded material.

Support without taking over

- Do not choose only fluent speakers as the public face of the group. Public and non-public roles can both carry real influence.
- Keep participant-created language and work intact unless the author agrees to changes. Typing, scribing or communicating a contribution does not transfer authorship.
- A participant may withdraw from speaking, display, photography or publication even after preparation; organisational effort does not override that choice.
- Support should make a chosen contribution possible, not make the event look smoother to the audience.

Adapt

- Invite another reading group into the regular meeting space and share one book or several recommendations.
- Create a library display of passages, images and captions chosen and arranged by participants.
- Organise a moderated literary conversation rather than a sequence of readings.
- Partner with a library, bookshop, festival, publisher, author or illustrator while protecting participants' influence over the programme.

Reflect

Choose two or three questions that fit the session.

- Did you have a role that suited you and could you influence the event?
- Did you know what to expect?
- Would you organise another literary event, and what would you change?
- Is there anything you do not want shared afterwards?

Example

A book club chooses a small evening at the local library to introduce accessible stories to another reading group and invited guests.

One participant welcomes visitors, two recommend books, and another curates three illustrations without speaking publicly. One author asks the facilitator to read their story but does not want a photograph. Another participant asks a support person to communicate a prepared question.

A run-through shows that microphones and noise are uncomfortable for one participant, so one part of the program moves to a quieter conversation.

Afterwards, the group agrees that the illustrations may remain for two weeks, but the story will not go online.

Success is judged by participants' influence and chosen roles, not audience size or publicity.

Closing words

Accessible literary activities begin with a simple idea: people need access not only to books but also to the cultural life around them. Readers should be able to discover literature that interests them, spend time with a story, disagree with a character, interpret a scene, create something new, meet other readers and authors, and decide whether and how their work is shared.

No single format works for every person or group. Good facilitation combines preparation with attention: prepare the text, information, setting and support, then listen to what participants choose and experience. The activities in this Toolkit are practical starting points, not recipes. Adapt them while keeping literature meaningful, respecting adult identity, offering real choice, supporting without taking over and allowing participants to influence what happens next.

Sometimes the most useful change is small: more time, a shorter text, a clearer invitation, a quieter room or another way to contribute. At other times, participants may change the direction of the activity itself. That influence is part of accessibility and genuine cultural participation.

All the partners of the PAGE Project wish you Good luck!

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