

The Story Routine: Main, Side, and Hidden

A routine for exploring the complexity and depth of an incident, document, painting or photograph

After closely looking at or reading the source document, identify and begin to elaborate on:

1. What is the *main* or central story being depicted or documented?
2. What is the *side* story (or stories) happening on the sidelines or around the edges that may not necessarily involve the main characters?
3. What is the hidden story—that other story that may be obscured, neglected, or happening below the surface that we aren't readily aware of initially?

Purpose: What kind of thinking does this routine encourage?

This routine helps students to dig into events and explore documents in more depth by constructing different narratives related to those events. This may raise new questions of inquiry and wonderings to be explored. The routine also encourages students to identify additional points of view, beyond those of the central characters, which traditionally might not be presented when examining events.

Application: When and where can it be used?

This routine asks students to identify and begin to tell multiple narratives stemming from a photograph they are looking at, a story they are reading, a work of art they are examining, an historical event being discussed, or a newspaper account under review. Use this routine when you want to go beyond the main story itself or want to explore new perspectives or alternative accounts of events, perhaps of marginalized actors. The main story is that which is being centrally presented and often the purpose or main intent of the account or image. Often instruction stops with the main story, but that needn't be the case. The side story encourages learners to look at what may be happening on the sidelines and to explore the perspective of those supporting the story and impacted by it but perhaps not playing one of the major parts. Alternatively, a side story might be the action happening right alongside the main event but is being overshadowed by it. The hidden story or the other story usually doesn't present itself directly. One needs to go beneath the surface to identify what isn't being stated, what is obscured, or what perspective isn't being heard or seen.

Launch: What are some tips for starting and using the routine?

To uncover these narratives requires both looking closely and looking beyond. As such, it may be useful to combine this routine with See-Think-Wonder, focusing on the See and Think steps to identify the main story as well as what might be happening on the sides. Wonderings could then explore the possible hidden stories. Alternatively, three columns (Main, Side, Hidden) could be drawn on the whiteboard and the class could identify the characters that exist for each section. Once the characters are identified, events and actions can be charted for each column as well. Using this information, students can then craft their own versions of the main, side, and hidden story either orally or in writing. Such accounts would be based on the information identified but enhanced by details that are creatively imagined to produce a work of historical fiction. Alternatively, students might select an emerging side or hidden story to research and present this factual information to the rest of the class to help in understanding the complexity of the event being explored.

Colors, Shapes, Lines

What are they like? What do they do?

A Routine for Exploring the Formal Qualities of Art

1. Take a minute to look at the artwork. Let your eyes wander over it freely. What do you see? Take a few observations from students and then move on to the next step.

2. Observe and describe the colors, shapes, and lines in detail. Make 3 columns.

COLORS <i>What colors do you see? Describe them.</i>	SHAPES <i>What kinds of shapes do you see? Describe them.</i>	LINES <i>What kinds of lines do you see? Describe them.</i>

3. Choose a kind of color, shape, or line that you listed.* How does it contribute to the artwork overall? (How does it help the artwork “work?”) Consider:

- How does it contribute to how the artwork feels?
- How does it contribute to the mood of the artwork?
- How does it contribute to how the artwork looks?
- How does it contribute to the story the artwork tells?
- How does it contribute to the ideas in the artwork?

* Do this with at least two elements. They can be chosen from any column.

4. What new ideas do you have about the artwork? What do you see now that you didn't see before?

LAYERS

A routine for structuring analysis of creative works

*Each Layer Consists of 4 Possible Elements
to Seek Out and Identify in the Work*

NARRATIVE	The story, the back or pre story, the other or hidden story, the message
AESTHETIC	The appeal (what pulls you in?), the reward or take away, the skill/mastery of the artist on display, the new/different/unusual
MECHANICAL	Technique, Form/structure, Methods, Symbolism
DYNAMIC	Surprise, Tension, Emotion and Movement
CONNECTIONS	To other works (in and out of the medium/genre), to history, to oneself, to the artist's other works or personal life.

Purpose: What kind of thinking does this routine encourage?

The routine provides learners with a structure for looking analytically at creative works through a variety of different frameworks.

Application: When and Where can it be used?

There are many layers through which one can approach or look at any creative work (literature, dance, painting, etc.). Some layers may be more appropriate than others given the work being examined. Part of analysis involves selecting appropriate frames or layers to use in one's analysis. Selecting interesting and unexpected layers can help one understand the work better. Sometimes this means rejecting the obvious layer and starting with one of the other layers.

Launch: What are some tips for starting and using this routine?

After looking closely at a creative work to fully notice what is there, students select a "layer" from the list to use in their analysis. This analysis can be done individually, with a partner, or whole group. Initially you may want to introduce one layer at a time with the whole class so that students have some collective experience using the layers. Initially the analysis should be done verbally so that students hear and can build on other's ideas and contributions. Other possible ways of using the layers are:

- 1) To identify prominent and hidden qualities: In this work, what layer immediately speaks to you? What makes you say that? Which layers seem more distant? What makes you say that?
- 2) To compare and contrast: Use the layers to contrast 2 works to see how they relate to one another. Looking at 2 works, where do you see connections as well as differences in terms of the layers?
- 3) As a sieve: Pick one element from each of the layers through which to explore the work.
- 4) As a source of questions: Use the layers and their elements to identify questions you want to ask an expert about the work of art.

SIMPLEXITY

A routine for exploring the connection between the simplicity and complexity

Identify instances of complexity and simplicity and then explore their connection

SIMPLICITY	Where does it appear in the object/event/plan/design? Where does it hide and lay unseen? How does each of these complex elements contribute to the whole?
COMPLEXITY	Where does it appear in the object/event/plan/design? Where does it hide and lay unseen? How does each of these complex elements contribute to the whole?
SIMPLEXITY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How do the simple and complex elements relate to each other?• How does the simple give rise to the complex?• How is the complex made simple?• What dominates your experience of this object/event/plan/design? The complex or the simple?

Purpose: What kind of thinking does this routine encourage?

The routine provides learners with a structure for uncovering complexity and looking closely. Through analytic looking, learners explore how elements of simplicity and complexity are not opposites but often work together in the creation and realization of an object/event/plan/design.

Application: When and Where can it be used?

This is a framework that may be used from anything from analyzing a story to a work of art to an everyday object. It is particularly well suited to examining issues around design. Designers (of apps, hardware, buildings, etc.) often encounter complexities that they must find elegant, simple solutions for. Likewise, the execution of simplicity is sometimes complex. This routine helps students develop greater appreciation for these two qualities and how they function and may be helpful before their own engagement in the design process.

Launch: What are some tips for starting and using this routine?

You may want to begin by exploring quick associations with words “complexity” and “simplicity” to help students see the many different ways each may appear. Explain that “simplicity” is looking at the connection and relationship between these two ideas; how one relates to the other. (Note: there are other definitions of simplicity as well, such as how simple things become more complex over time). Pick and object or image that has both complex and simple elements operating together. Have students working in pairs or as a whole group identify those elements. You can either consider simplicity or complexity separately or at the same time. Push students by asking where simplicity or complexity might be hidden from view. If students have missed an important element, draw their attention to it and ask how they would classify it and why.

Using some or all of the simplicity questions above, explore how the simple and complex elements identified relate to each other.

