



# Using Pictography to Support Narratives

The ability to produce oral and written narratives is a challenging process for students with Language Disorder. The use of pictography drawings can serve as a useful strategy to help students organise and plan their ideas during oral and written narrative tasks. For students with writing difficulties, the use of pictography offers a quick and easy alternative in allowing them to convey a story.

**Key words:** *oral narrative, stories, pictography, drawing, writing, sequencing*

## What is pictography?

Pictography can also be referred to as “picture writing” and involves the creation of simple pictures organised in a left to right manner to help represent story ideas and events. Although many students with Language Disorder have ideas for narratives, they often struggle to sequence these ideas to provide a clear story structure.

## Introducing pictography in the classroom

When introducing pictography within the classroom, it is important that these drawings are initially modelled by the classroom teacher so students can see how the direction and movement from one drawing to the next can represent narrative sequences. While many students may wish to add detail to their drawings, it is important that they are reminded to keep drawings simple.

## Strategies to support implementation in the classroom

- Have students listen to a short story. This could be completed in reference to a picture book.
- Demonstrate the use of pictography drawings to represent the story. It would be beneficial to take the time to model to students how to draw simple stick figures to represent male and female characters. When linking ideas, demonstrate the use of arrows to represent the order and sequence of events.
- Once modelled, have each student think of a general idea for their story, including characters, the setting, and the main events.



- When beginning drawing, use prompts such as “What happened first?” and point to the section of the paper where you would like the student to begin drawing. This should be in the upper left-hand corner, in the same position that writing would commence.
- Continue to use prompts such as ‘then’, ‘and’ or “What happened next?”, “What could you draw to help you remember that part of the story?” or “Tell me how the story will end.”
- Once completed encourage students to refer to their drawings to tell their story from beginning to end.

Initially, students may use pictography drawings to help produce stories in sequence, however, over time stories can be revised to help target further detail (vocabulary) and complex story episodes (multiple events within a story).

### Example of Pictography Drawing



(Ukrainetz, 1998)

### Want to learn more?

To learn more about Language Disorder and how to support children and young people for whom language is their primary disorder, please **contact us**. Language Disorder Australia provides holistic, innovative and effective therapy, education and support services and has a transdisciplinary team of speech pathologists, occupational therapists, educators, psychologists and physiotherapists.

Contact: 1300 881 763 or [hello@languagedisorder.org.au](mailto:hello@languagedisorder.org.au)

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