

Storytelling

Paddington Bear's First Concert

Telling Stories Together:

This storytelling activity is inspired by a very funny part of *Paddington Bear's First Concert*. Paddington gets stuck backstage and knocks to be let out in the middle of Hayden's Surprise Symphony. It is funny for so many reasons! Paddington's knocks can be heard in time with the music. The conductor hears the sound, stops, and tries again. The audience watches as a broom handle appears, then a "familiar looking hat" and then Paddington's whiskers. The audience thinks that the appearance of Paddington is intended as the "surprise" in the surprise symphony and demands an encore!

Now, how did Michael Bond, the author of *Paddington Bear*, come up with the idea for this story? I wonder if he happened to be listening to Hayden's Surprise Symphony as he wrote, closed his eyes, and imagined this funny part of the adventure. In this activity, we will help each other to imagine and tell stories by making a variety of sounds.

Materials Needed:

Everyday objects for making sounds. A piece of paper and writing utensil.

Optional: A device for listening to *Paddington Bear's First Concert* minutes 27:00 – 30:00. It is possible to find the recording at this link >>
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VEkrwBxg_wM

"It was Judy who noticed the knocking first. It was in the middle of the surprise symphony. BANG BANG BANG!"
-Michael Bond, *A Bear Called Paddington*.

Directions:

Step 1: Getting Ready

- Give everyone in your group a couple of minutes to find three objects that make interesting sounds. For example, a set of keys, a jar full of pennies, or a pot and a spoon.
- Person #1 will make up a title for the story, and write it on a piece of paper or tell it to the others. Some examples "My spooky journey," or "a funny day on the farm." The person making up the title doesn't have to know what the story will be, they just make up a title that sounds interesting to them.

Step 2: The Inspiration

- Everyone except Person #1 will close their eyes. Person #1 will use the collected objects to make a variety of sounds. They may have an idea of what the sounds could be in a story, and they may not. Anything they do is right!
- The people with their eyes closed simply listen and allow themselves to imagine a story. It is as if they are experiencing a movie inside their minds, and the sounds they hear are the sounds of the movie. The title of the story may give them ideas, but whatever story they imagine is right!

Step 3: The Stories

- Everyone takes a turn to tell the story they imagined while hearing the sounds. It may be as simple as "somebody was running down the stairs," or it may be more complicated and have lots of details.
- After everyone has told their story, the storytellers can guess which objects were used to make the sounds.
- Person #1 reveals the objects they used to make the sounds, and may choose to tell a story as well.

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Closing: Give everybody in your group a big round of applause and thank each other for the inspiration and stories!

Bonus: Try one of these extra challenges:

- Draw a comic book based on one of the stories someone told, or combining several of the stories.
- Try acting out one of the stories someone told, using the objects to make sound effects.
- Choose one of the objects that were used to make the sounds and use the object itself as the inspiration for a round of stories. For example, if someone holds up a wooden spoon, everyone has to make up a short story that includes a wooden spoon.

Curious about what inspired author Michael Bond to write these stories? Want to explore Paddington's experience as an immigrant in London? Checkout these articles:

- [*Paddington Bear 'inspired by evacuees'*](#)
- [*Michael Bond: 'Paddington stands up for things, he's not afraid of going to the top and giving them a hard stare'*](#)
- [*On Michael Bond, Paddington, and Being An Immigrant In The UK*](#)