

# Storytelling – great!

Richard Martin

## Finding stories on the Internet

*You have already found out that storytelling is one of the most exciting things to do in the classroom. You have started telling stories and discovered how your children love them. You have seen how listening to stories helps them get into the language, that it gives them the feeling they can understand. You have begun to experiment with getting them to participate – and seen the enthusiasm that also generates. Perhaps you have seen that traditional folktales are ideal material for you to use in your English classes. But now you realise that you want to have some more stories to tell.*

So this collection of websites is just a tiny proportion of what there is. Most sites have links to other sites. And there is always [www.google.com](http://www.google.com) if you want to look for a particular story. Suddenly the problem is not that you do not have enough stories: there are now so many, how can you choose which ones to tell?

### Short tales

Let's start at a website with lots of short stories. Heather Forest is an American storyteller, whose homepage is [www.storyarts.org](http://www.storyarts.org). Heather's library page at [www.storyarts.org/library/index.html](http://www.storyarts.org/library/index.html) links to a page of "Stories in a Nut-shell", a collection of over 30 stories suitable for primary pupils. The same page has another link to "Aesop's ABC ... Twenty Six Fables". Look at Heather's simple re-telling of how the thirsty crow managed to get the water: [www.storyarts.org/library/aesops/stories/pitcher.html](http://www.storyarts.org/library/aesops/stories/pitcher.html) – an easy way to incorporate an English story with some science! Tale-Spin is an Indian website with more short and simple folktales, including many Aesop's fables written from an Indian perspective: [www.pitara.com/talespin/folktales.asp](http://www.pitara.com/talespin/folktales.asp)

### Story skeletons

A site with literally hundreds of stories is [www.story-lovers.com](http://www.story-lovers.com) organised by Jackie Baldwin. The most useful pages are about the books of story skeletons which Jackie has assembled: the "Bare Bones Stories". Currently there are six volumes, each with around 100 story skeletons contributed by storytellers from around the world.

### Listening to stories

Instead of reading stories, you might like to listen to some. Storyteller Sue Black has a page with 18 children (8- and 9-year-olds) telling world folktales: [http://clow.ipsd.org/lmc\\_storytellers\\_listen.html](http://clow.ipsd.org/lmc_storytellers_listen.html)  
On my own website, there is an audio file of the ever-popular jump tale "The Blood-Covered Vampire" at [www.talesandmusic.de/tales/bloody\\_vampire.htm](http://www.talesandmusic.de/tales/bloody_vampire.htm). Many of the other tales are for teenage and adult listeners, but there are 12 more skeletons suitable for younger learners at: [www.talesandmusic.de/download/young\\_learners.pdf](http://www.talesandmusic.de/download/young_learners.pdf). More articles on storytelling can be accessed at [www.talesandmusic.de/resources/articles.htm](http://www.talesandmusic.de/resources/articles.htm)

### Serious reading

You might like to explore some sites with more and longer stories. One of the major resources is certainly the collection of "Folklore and Mythology Electronic Texts" assembled by Prof. D.L. Ashliman of the University of Pittsburgh: [www.pitt.edu/~dash/folktexts.html](http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/folktexts.html). There are hundreds of stories, categorised by the title, the folktale motifs or the themes. This is an academic folklore site but has much of general interest. For example, "Three Little Pigs" [www.pitt.edu/~dash/typeo124.html](http://www.pitt.edu/~dash/typeo124.html) has five versions of the folktale: two English, two African-American and one Italian.

### Tips about storytelling

As you become more experienced as a storyteller, you might like to look at some of the excellent material on Tim Sheppard's large website "Storytelling Resources for Storytellers" at [www.timsheppard.co.uk/story](http://www.timsheppard.co.uk/story). This is also the home of the official "Storytelling FAQ". See, for example, the practical tips from tellers around the world about how to learn a story: [www.timsheppard.co.uk/story/articles/learning.html](http://www.timsheppard.co.uk/story/articles/learning.html). Tim's site is a mine of information to explore!

### Talking to storytellers

If you want to talk to other storytellers, you can always meet up to 600 from many different countries at the Storytell listserv. This is a free e-mail list where all aspects of storytelling are discussed. Above all it is a great place to get stories: tellers are invariably generous! More information about the listserv and how to join are here: [www.talesandmusic.de/resources/storytell\\_listserv.htm](http://www.talesandmusic.de/resources/storytell_listserv.htm).

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