

Good Tidings

READ ♥ CREATE ♥ GROW

A
WRITING
ACTIVITY
PACKET
for
Elementary
Students

Big
Stories
Start with
a Few
Sentences!

Tell It In 5

Small
Moments.
Big
Stories!



Stories
are
everywhere!

- 1 Plan
- 2 Write
- 3 Add Details
- 4 Share
- 5 Be Proud! ♥

You've
got a
story
to tell!

WRITE
IMAGINE
SHARE
GROW
BELONG

A Simple 5-Step Writing Activity
FOR CLASSROOMS, SMALL GROUPS, OR AT HOME

Teacher Quick Guide

The goal: Help students retell a story without giving every detail or getting stuck. Students choose five parts that take the listener from the beginning to the end.

THE WHOLE ROUTINE

1. READ.

Enjoy the story first.

2. THINK.

Ask: What five parts would someone need to understand this story?

3. CHOOSE.

Pick one student page: 5 Pictures, 5 Sentences, or 5 Important Moments.

4. RETELL.

Students use their five parts to tell the story to a partner or teacher.

5. CHECK.

Ask: Does it make sense from beginning to end? If not, fix one part.

Easy Teacher Prompts

STUCK?

What happened first? What happened at the end? What three important things happened in between?

TOO MUCH?

Which detail could we leave out and still understand the story?

OUT OF ORDER?

Show me where the story starts. Now point to what happens next.

Teach It Once: The 5-Part Retell

Use this page for your first lesson. After students understand the routine, go straight to a student sheet.

1	BEGINNING Who is the story about? What happens at the start?
2	NEXT What important thing happens next?
3	THEN What happens in the middle?
4	AFTER THAT What important thing happens before the ending?
5	ENDING How does the story end?

Important parts • In order • Beginning to end

Teacher note: Students do not need the exact same five parts. If the retell is accurate, in order, and understandable, it works.

Tell It In 5: Pictures

Name: _____

Story: _____

Draw 5 important pictures from the story, in order from beginning to end.

1	2
3	4
5	

Tell It In 5: Sentences

Name: _____

Story: _____

Retell the story in 5 sentences. Write one important part in each box.

1

2

3

4

5

Tell It In 5: Important Moments

Name: _____

Story: _____

Write 5 important moments from the story. Use a few words or one short sentence.

1

2

3

4

5

Tell It To A Partner

Use your Tell It In 5 page to retell the story aloud.

Partner A retells. Partner B listens. Then switch.

1

Could I follow the story from beginning to end?

☐ Yes ☐ Almost — ask one question

2

Did I hear the ending?

☐ Yes ☐ Almost — ask one question

If something is confusing, ask ONE question:

“What happened there?” OR “What happened before that?”

Optional:

Compare your five. Which parts were the same or different?

Quick Help When a Student Gets Stuck

Use one quick prompt. No extra worksheet needed.

CAN'T THINK OF FIVE?

What happened first? What happened last? Find three important things in the middle.

TOO MANY DETAILS?

You only have five spots. Which five help me understand the story best?

OUT OF ORDER?

Number the parts. Point to each one while you retell.

WRITING IS TOO HARD?

Use the Pictures page or write short phrases instead of full sentences.

READY FOR MORE?

Why was one of your five moments especially important?

Teacher Quick Check

Use only when you want a fast record of student progress. A checkmark is enough.

Student	5 key parts	In order	Clear ending	Next step

Keep it simple: A student is on track when the retell includes important parts, follows a sensible order, and reaches the ending.

Notes:

Teacher Quick Check — Continued

Use this second page for the rest of your class. A checkmark or a few words is enough.

Student	5 key parts	In order	Clear ending	Next step

Ready to Use

Tell It In 5 is intentionally simple. The routine should become familiar enough that students spend their energy thinking about the story — not figuring out the worksheet.

FOR MOST LESSONS, YOU ONLY NEED:

the story + one student page + a quick partner retell

USE PICTURES

when drawing or oral language makes retelling easier.

USE SENTENCES

when students are ready to write a concise retell.

USE IMPORTANT MOMENTS

when students should focus on choosing key events without worrying about full-sentence writing.

READ IT. PICK FIVE. TELL IT.

Website Description

Tell It In 5 is a simple elementary story-retelling resource that helps students focus on the parts that matter. Kids retell a story using only five pictures, five sentences, or five important moments, making sequencing and comprehension practice feel manageable instead of overwhelming. Includes a teacher quick guide, three reusable student pages, partner practice, simple supports, and classroom quick-check pages.

Good Tidings • Where reading feels like fun.

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