

## LEARNING CARD

# Before 'Once upon a time' and after 'happily ever after'

**Description** Through exercises with micro-stories of Latin American literature, students experiment with prequels and sequels as narrative forms that show opportunities for reading and creation within a specific narrative universe. Explore the prequel and sequel narrative possibilities that constitute a significant key in transmedia narratives.

**Tag**

- Book
- Writing

**Skills** **NARRATIVE AND AESTHETIC**

- Interpret
- Recognize and describe
- Evaluate and reflect
- Apply

**Learning areas** • Language

**Card language** • Spanish  
• English

## Structure

**Sessions** 1

**Duration** 45' (Variable)

**Number of participants** 10-30

**Age** • 14-16

**Materials**

- Cards or pieces of paper cut 8 to 10 x 20 cm (post-it size if available)
- Markers, coloured pencils or pencils that write thickly
- Notebooks

## Process

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### Key questions

- What is the traditional way of telling a story?
- How do we know where a story begins and ends?
- Who can we decide the beginning and end of a story?
- Can that be changed?

### Development

To start the activity, a story by Augusto Monterroso called *El Dinosaurio* ("When he woke up, the dinosaur was still there") is read or projected/written on the screen, board or blackboard. However, the teacher can adapt the activity to works in their own country. The group talks about the story based on questions: Who woke up? Why was he asleep? Where? When? Why was there a dinosaur? If he had been there before, what is expressed in the word "still", when was before?

Based on the group's ideas, we work on the reconstruction of the universe of the story and the diversity of stories that explain what had happened. It is about keeping various versions about what had happened before. Once this phase is collected, the group is asked to do a second exercise thinking about what happened after the story. What did the character do when he woke up? What was their reaction? On this occasion the exercise will be to try to tell what happened immediately, what could happen a while later and what could happen a long time later.

The central story is fixed on a board or on the ground and, on a card, the possible stories before and after the event that is told in the story are written down. The teacher has 5 cards on the table that have questions and to the extent that each student contributes to the central story, he or she can see a card and write a short story that answers the question or continues the proposed story. The cards say: "two centuries ago they had met for the first time and ..."; "The origin of this dinosaur was ..."; "In the dream the character had dreamed that the dinosaur ..."; "The character in the cave age had really been ..."; "Centuries later archaeologists found the remains that ..."

Students seek to find plausible versions and each person must build parts of the story coherently with what is proposed in the base story.

To apply the strategy the teacher proposes as an individual exercise to do something similar for *Historias de cronopios y famas* by Julio Cortázar and for a brief historical story by Eduardo Galeano in *Memorias del Fuego*.

### Evaluation

The teacher works with the group to understand these narrative forms with other stories, seeking to establish the relationship between a central story and the prequels and sequels. What kind of story does this allow? Is it possible in any story? Where have you seen it before?

### References for professors

- Monterroso, Augusto. 1981. *Obras completas y otros cuentos*. Barcelona: Seix Barral.
- Cortázar, Julio. 2000. *Historias de cronopios y famas*. Madrid: Punto de lectura.
- Galeano, Eduardo. 2010. *Memorias del fuego*. Madrid: Siglo Veintiuno Editores.

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