



## TECHNICAL SHEET

### STORY CARDS

#### WHAT IS IT?

**STORY CARDS** originate from the cards of Vladimir Propp and his studies of fairy tales. In his analyses, he identified a series of recurring schemes and elements with specific characteristics. Not all of these elements occur in tales and neither do they always, but they instead alternate and mix in an ever-changing way. There is, however, always a protagonist, an antagonist, helping friends, magical objects as well as specific locations. Using these cards, children have the opportunity to tell and, at the same time, create new stories.

The cards we propose are inspired by the cards of Propp and have been adapted to the tales of our project, which also include the storytelling of myths and legends or real stories. That is why, it was necessary to adapt the cards to these specific stories. This does not detract from the fact that our cards can also be used to invent new stories, although the primary function of our cards is to provide visual and memory support for the narrative.



## THE CHARACTERS



Ariadne



Daedalus  
Inventor



The Minotaur



Theseus  
Hero

## THE OBJECTS AND ACTIONS

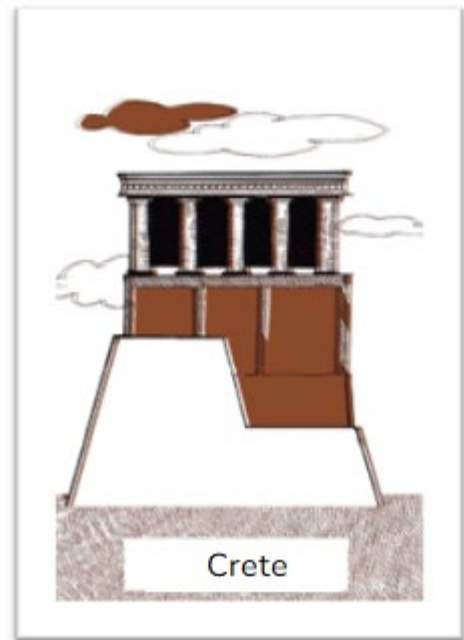
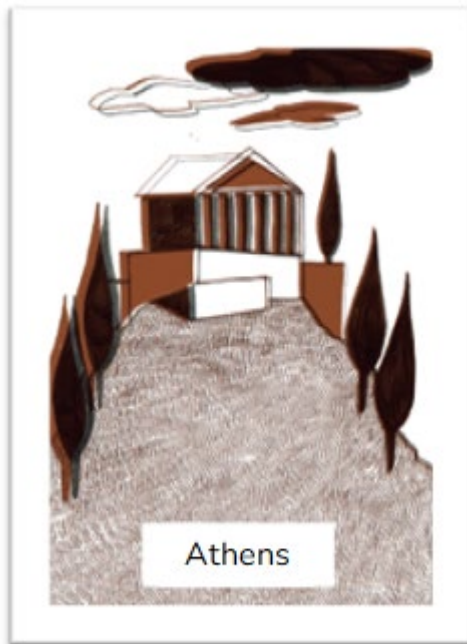


Ball of yarn



Trip

## THE PLACES





## HOW TO USE IT

This game is a good support for storytelling. Each deck is composed of a variable number of characters depending on the story. On the back of the card, as a reminder, the child and teacher will find a brief description of the character, their characteristics and the role they play within the story.

Together with the characters, the cards also depict magical objects or objects significant to the development of the story and, of course, the places where the story takes place.

## STORYTELLING

The teacher will create small groups of two to a maximum of four children. Each group will be given its own deck of cards, distributed equally so that each child is involved.

The “player” / storyteller will use the cards in sequence, associating a narrative description with each one, building up the whole story card by card, alternating the cards with characters, objects and places.

The first child will put down their cards according to the sequence of the story, the other children will intervene by placing their cards at the appropriate time to continue the storytelling.

Should the “player” / storyteller have difficulty, however, they will have the opportunity to read a short description on the back of the card.

The teacher can first show the use of story cards in the classroom, accompanying each card with a full description, before proceeding with the narration.

It is very important that children understand the roles of the characters, the environments in which the actions take place and the use of various objects. Also with this narrative tool, the aspects of the narrator's voice, such as intonation as well as facial expressions, are important.

As with the story map, the cards constitute a visual transposition of the story; however, as we wrote at the beginning, the cards are more flexible, allowing the "player" to change the sequence and also use the characters in a different way.



## THE VARIANT TO THE STORY

As with the first use, the teacher can show the children how to change the story by deciding to perhaps give a different ending, changing the characteristics of the various characters, etc.

The teacher will have to show how it is done, in addition to explaining the basic rules, perhaps stimulating the children with questions.

For this function, the teacher can introduce the "UNKNOWN" variable, or using the deck of cards in an unpredictable way. The cards will be drawn randomly in order to create unexpected and sudden changes to the course of the story.

In each group, the children will take turns drawing cards from the deck in a random manner. The "player"/storyteller will choose which role to play for their characters, or objects, and will start a new story that will be enriched by the other "players"/storytellers.

This tool, which is very useful for stimulating children's imagination and their capacity for expression and language, can also be a valuable aid in the creation of Participatory Stories.

Once the teacher has established the topic, for example "synonyms and antonyms", they can invite the children to "rewrite" the story by previously simulating the story with the help of the cards.

## TECHNICAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE

After printing the cards preferably on paper with a grammage of at least 200 g (to ensure longer and better use by the children), the teacher will create small groups. Each group will be given a deck of cards, inviting the children to "play" by telling.

If printing on a suitable grammage is not possible, it is recommended as an alternative to place the 90 g paper, on which you printed, to a stiffer card and then cut out the individual cards.



## WORKSHOP: HOW TO MAKE YOUR OWN VERSION

Teachers can make their own story cards. If they do not have drawing skills, they can search for materials in books and magazines or possibly also on specific websites. However, the quality will be better if they decide to get involved themselves! Alternatively, children can be involved in the creation of the deck. In order to standardise the various works, a small graphic intervention by the teachers is necessary, which will also safeguard the children's originals. Once scanned, it will be sufficient to adjust the size and then print them out. The same suggestions given in the section “TECHNICAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE” are valid here as well.

## BENEFITS OF STORY CARDS FOR PUPILS WITH SPECIFIC LEARNING DISORDERS

The use of story cards for improving literacy-related skills is a beneficial teaching method to reach pupils with Specific Learning Disorders (SLD), too. Very often, these pupils have more defined right-brain capabilities (creative and artistic), which means they struggle with order, logic and memory (skills governed by the left brain), but excel in identifying patterns, as well as tasks involving visual learning and learning by doing. The visual component of the story cards, therefore, plays to the strengths of these learners: the detailed illustrations depicting key elements do not contain a long string of words meant to be memorised, but, instead, engage the vivid imaginations of these children using concise language.

Just because these cards activate pupils' imaginations and engagement does not mean that they are void of structure. Seeing as how each card contains a key element of the story, they serve to imprint on pupils the basic order of story events, thereby helping them both recognise elements related to the beginning, middle and end of each story, and better understand the possibilities of a story's elements. Nevertheless, the descriptions at the back of the story cards still provide these children with



a framework around which to work, and a needed dam against an overflowing of illogical and abstract ideas.

As mentioned, the utility of story cards can also be seen in them being used as a tool for memory retrieval, particularly impactful for pupils with SLD that experience short-term memory challenges (colloquially known as ‘word blindness’). For children with SLD, and especially dyslexia, retaining information requires more repetitions to ingrain new words compared to their peers. Story cards allow these pupils to be exposed to new concepts using spaced repetition: repetition over personalised intervals of time to strengthen neural pathways for identifying new concepts.

Besides aiding in memory retrieval, the concise content on the story cards allows children with SLD who experience delays and difficulties with expressing their thoughts to focus on the key words that make up the most important story elements. In that sense, story cards are a form of ‘instructional media’ meant to guide linguistic expression.

As ‘instructional media’ story cards are conducive for multisensory learning, too. This means that they can be used to engage multiple senses, a proven method for improving the learning performance of children with SLD who respond best to visual and kinesthetic learning instruction. The multisensory potential of story cards can include using them to act out each card’s illustration or shuffling and re-shuffling them to vary the pace or events of a story. Since children with SLD often struggle with dexterity, both of these activity examples allow for the engagement of fine motor skills. Make note, however, to pace any activity in which you use story cards – do not rely on ‘quick flash’ techniques or timed tasks as they overwhelm children with SLD; instead, slowly reveal each card to the children and thoroughly explain them.