



## TECHNICAL SHEET

### THE STORY MAP

#### WHAT IS IT?

**THE STORY MAP** is a narrative tool that takes its cue directly from the maps and charts of the past, which were true artistic masterpieces. The drawings in the maps depicted not only the shape of the territories (geographic and orographic), but also the true or supposed stories that were connected to them. Similarly, the STORY MAP reproduces the places and space described in the story.

If we think of the first maps, they were in fact the representation or rather the graphic account of a journey - an adventure that had been necessary in order to draw and narrate that territory. Men and women undertook long and perilous journeys so that they could make maps that others after them could use for orientation.

The task therefore of the STORY MAP is precisely to help children 'orient themselves' and follow the various stages of the story.

This tool in fact represents the places and settings as well as the characters, arranged in temporal order and tells the story visually, in a true graphic synthesis that enables children to orient themselves.

One of the difficulties for children in general, and especially for children with SLD, is precisely that of being able to give a logical and chronological order to events. For this purpose, the map is a real support.



## HOW TO USE IT

The map lends itself both as a valuable visual support tool for the teacher's narration, who can use it, for example, while reading, pausing and pointing out the various stages/scenes as they proceed with storytelling, or it can be used as a base from which the teacher can narrate orally from the represented images.

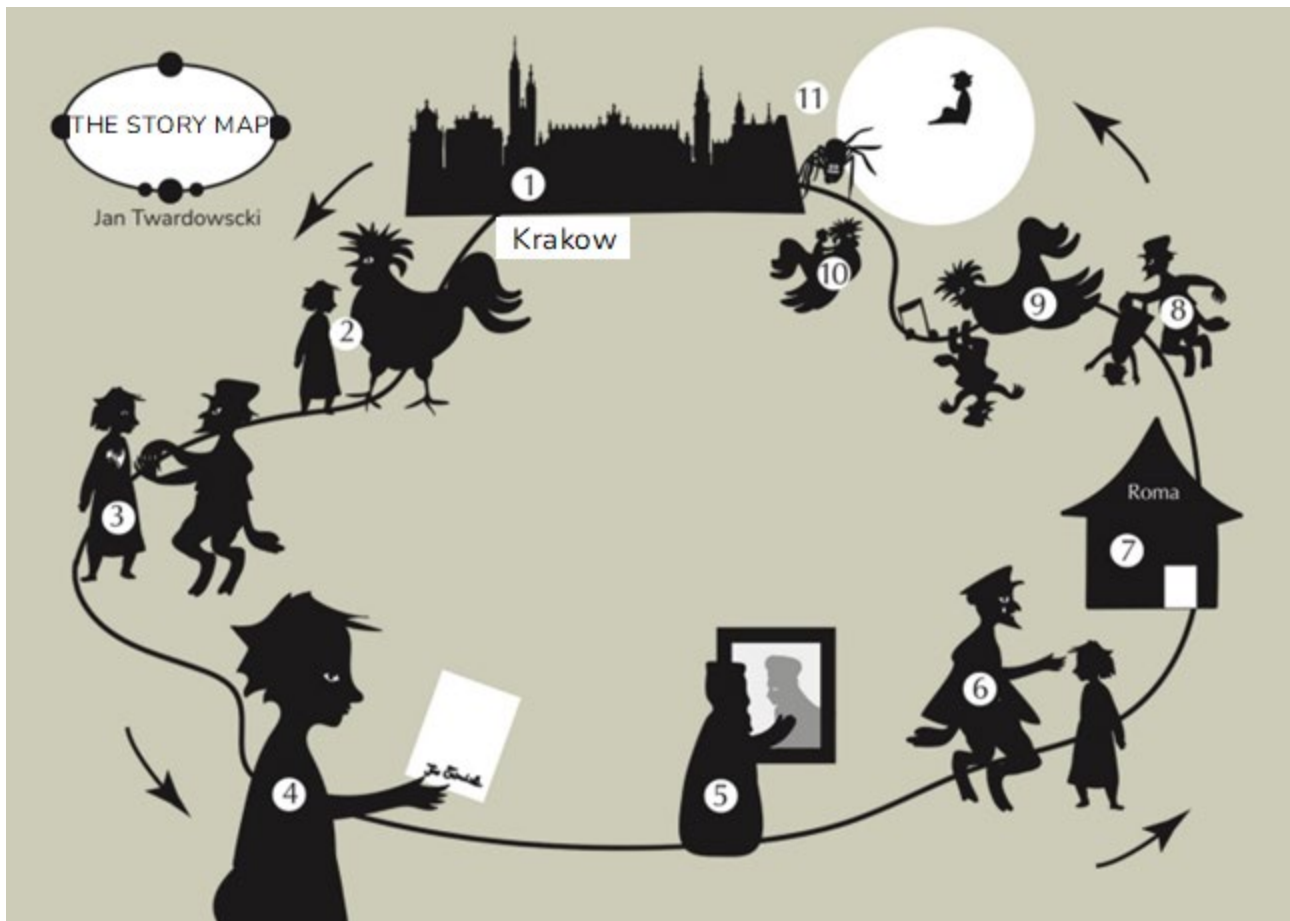


THE STORY MAP of "The most powerful wizard"

This tool will be particularly useful when the teacher asks the children to tell their story. Using this tool, they can easily remember and proceed in their narration without difficulty. The fact that all the salient moments are represented in chronological succession ensure that the children proceed correctly in their exposition. The teacher should show the children how to use the map.



Given the small size (two A4 sheets side by side), we recommend sticking them on an A3 sheet in order to give both more consistency and also to prevent the sheets from separating during the narration).



After placing the map on a table, the teacher can ask the children to stand in a semicircle, leaving it exposed in their direction. Or the teacher can stick it on a wall and let the children stand close enough to see it. Then the teacher can start the narration, identifying and indicating each scene as they go along.

For example:

"In the city of Krakow (point 1) lived the young magician Jan with his rooster (point 2).

Feeling that his powers were not strong enough, he turned to the devil (point 3).

The devil proposed a pact, which Jan signed by selling his soul, (point 4), Jan became very powerful and also fulfilled the king's dream of re-embracing his dead wife (point 5) etc."



Enriching each point with details and information and then inviting the children to do the same. In fact, the map is a real visual summary that can provide points of reference, it is a support for memory and the chronological reconstruction of events.

From this point of view, it is an extremely useful tool, although a little rigid as it does not allow for major changes to the narrative.

As in the case of the other narrative tools, the teacher must take on the role of speaker and storyteller, appropriately using body language and voice intonation to accompany the salient moments of the story, emphasising the succession of events with feeling and participation. The images of the map combined with the voice and words will involve the children in the story, allowing everyone to understand the development and to feel involved.

When the teacher finishes the narration, a small debriefing may follow to make sure that all the pupils have really understood, and perhaps to answer their doubts or curiosity, after which the teacher can ask them: "Would you like to try to take my place and tell the story yourself using the map?"

The teacher will create small groups of two to four children, give each group a map and invite the children to "play". The children can choose to tell the story one at a time, or to divide it into a number of parts equal to the number of children that make up each group, telling the story alternately and helping each other in moments of memory lapse.

## TECHNICAL INSTRUCTIONS FOR USE

After printing the two parts that make up the map, (preferably on paper with a grammage of at least 200 g, which will ensure longer and better use by the children), simply apply some adhesive tape to the back. Alternatively, if it is not possible to print on a suitable grammage, we recommend placing the two sheets of 90 g paper, on which you have printed, to an A3 or A3+ cardboard of a higher grammage, which will act as a backing for the map.



## WORKSHOP: HOW TO MAKE YOUR OWN VERSION

The teacher can also use this narrative tool for other stories and even for other subjects such as history. Once the text has been chosen, the teacher will have to identify the salient points and draw them, then arrange them in a chronological order that allows for classroom narration. However, this tool is also suitable as a classroom workshop.

The teacher, having identified the salient points of the new story, will distribute the scenes to each child and ask the children to draw them. In this case, it will then be necessary to paste the individual works on a very large sheet of paper. Once the map has been created, the storytelling will start.

## BENEFITS FOR PUPILS WITH SPECIFIC LEARNING DISORDERS

Story maps not only represent the settings and characters in a story – they also arrange these elements in temporal order. Considering that children with learning disorders very often struggle to determine the logical and chronological order of events in a story, this tool helps readers orient themselves in the world that the story has conjured up.

Being able to better identify the chronological order in which elements appear in a story also helps these children with writing-planning skills. In relation to this, a study showed that the ability to map the composition of a story positively affects the number of story elements that pupils can recall. Therefore, story maps also function as a schema – a story framework that helps to organise and interpret information. This is especially beneficial for pupils with SLD as they experience difficulties with memory retrieval. Accordingly, the story map provides learners with a bird's eye view of the story structure and the relationship between the story elements. Thus, by using a story map, pupils are not only supported in remembering what happened in the story, they are also able to realise how the settings, events, and characters of a story are interrelated.



The potential to use story maps for learner support can also be seen in the possibility to personalise the story map according to the needs of your pupils. The most basic story maps needn't include more than the beginning, middle, and end of a story, yet more advanced maps can be enriched to focus on plot details or characters' traits. Another example of using the story map to support your learners with special needs is by applying them at different parts of the lesson. Story maps can be used effectively before reading the text to extract previous knowledge, during the reading to guide learners and help them remember important, or even after reading the text to review the information from the story. Whichever way you choose to use them, story maps exemplify the 'scaffolding strategy' – learners apply them to the degree in which they need them, and after they manage to internalise the information contained within, they don't have to rely on them to understand the story.

Finally, story maps are also beneficial in improving writing fluency of pupils with SLD. Using the events on the maps as a guide, these pupils are able to write stories that are more complete and contain more story elements. If, however, your pupils need added support in improving their knowledge of the story's key words, then story maps should be used in tandem with another helpful narrative tool – story cards.