



PARTICIPATORY STORIES

The last song of the lark (9 – 10 years)

Learning objectives

This document is made up of four writing suggestions that enable pupils to identify with the characters, and even to embody them. The aim is to write an alternative story. By developing it and, above all, writing an entirely new story, the aim is to gain a better understanding of the issues, reflect on the moral of the story and draw lessons from it. By moving from one level (writing theme) to another, the children will develop the story and create a new ending.

Useful storytelling and writing tools

- Ask the children, in small groups, to write a summary of the story, identifying three different phases.
- Ask the children to change the course of the story. They can add dialogue to role-play the new versions.
- Using storytelling cards, children can change the course of the story by changing the order of the characters and interpreting their actions differently.



Part 1: SUMMARY OF THE STORY

Ask each group of pupils to identify three parts in the story of Olympe de Gouges. Here's how the story can be segmented:

1. Marie Gouze was born in the small town of Montauban in Occitanie. Although she was only sixteen years old, she had to marry a man much older than her. She did not want this marriage but she had no choice. Her marriage lasted just one year. Her husband died, leaving her alone with a son named Pierre. She decided to leave her home town and move to Paris.
2. She joined her sister in the capital and changed her name. From then on, she was called Olympe de Gouges to give herself a nobler air. She also began learning French and studying. Her ideas took shape, and she wrote plays and novels. She mocked King Louis XVI, who lived in the cocoon of his palace in Versailles, far from the realities and suffering of his people. At the same time, the first signs of the Revolution were beginning to be felt.



3. Her plays and operas were rejected, but she was not discouraged. The angry people attacked the fortress of the Bastille, and difficult days for both royalty and the people followed this revolution. Despite the prevailing terror, Olympe wrote a decree demanding rights for women and all citizens who had been forgotten by the Revolution. Robespierre ordered her arrest. Following an unfair and rigged trial, Olympe de Gouges was sentenced to the guillotine to prevent her from spreading her ideas of inclusion and respect for all.



Part 2: CHANGING THE COURSE OF THE STORY

Ask the pupils to work on the story using the three parts of the summary, making any necessary changes. They can use the storytelling cards for this exercise.

Marie Gouze was born in the small town of Montauban in Occitanie. Although she was only sixteen years old, she had to marry a man much older than her. She did not want this marriage but she had no choice. Her marriage lasted just one year. Her husband died, leaving her alone with a son named Pierre. She decided to leave her home town and move to Paris.

Ask the pupils to change the course of the story between the protagonists, by trying to imagine themselves in the place of Olympe, her mother and her sister, Louis XVI and Robespierre. To help them, ask them some questions such as:

- **"If you were Olympe / her mother / Louis XVI / Robespierre, what would you think?", "How would you feel?", "What would you say?"**
- **"What would you do to avoid this forced marriage?", "What would you do if you lived in the time of the Revolution?", "What would you say to defend yourself in your trial?"**



- We know that Olympe de Gouges was courageous and disseminated her ideas, but what did she really think? "Was she afraid?", "Did she fear for her life?", "Did she have friends to support her?"

An example of what you could achieve:

Marie Gouze was born in the small town of Montauban in Occitanie. Although she was only sixteen years old, she had to marry a man much older than her. She did not want this marriage ~~but she had no choice. Her marriage lasted just one year. Her husband died, leaving her alone with a son named Pierre. She decided to leave her home town and move to Paris.~~ **The night before the ceremony, she couldn't sleep because she is so sad. She only sees one solution: to run away. Taking advantage of the fact that everyone else is asleep, she leaves for Paris in the middle of the night.**

Do the same for the other parts of the story.



She joined her sister in the capital and changed her name. From then on, she was called Olympe de Gouges to give herself a nobler air. She also began learning French and studying. Her ideas took shape, and she wrote plays and novels. She mocked King Louis XVI, who lived in the cocoon of his palace in Versailles, far from the realities and suffering of his people. At the same time, the first signs of the Revolution were beginning to be felt.

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She joined her sister in the capital and changed her name. From then on, she was called Olympe de Gouges to give herself a nobler air. She also began learning French and studying. Her ideas took shape, and she wrote plays and novels. She mocked King Louis XVI, who lived in the cocoon of his palace in Versailles, far from the realities and suffering of his people. At the same time, the first signs of the Revolution were beginning to be felt. **Olympe's plays were increasingly successful. She won the support and sympathy of the people.**



And the last part:

Her plays and operas were rejected, but she was not discouraged. The angry people attacked the fortress of the Bastille, and difficult days for both royalty and the people followed this revolution. Despite the prevailing terror, Olympe wrote a decree demanding rights for women and all citizens who had been forgotten by the Revolution. Robespierre ordered her arrest. Following an unfair and rigged trial, Olympe de Gouges was sentenced to the guillotine to prevent her from spreading her ideas of inclusion and respect for all.

Ask the pupils to write dialogues from the trial between the protagonists, Olympe and Robespierre.

- **"What would you think?", "How would you feel?", "What would you say at the trial?", "Imagine you could change destiny, what would you do?", "What would you write in the decree?"**



An example of what you could achieve:

~~Her plays and operas were rejected, but she was not discouraged. The angry people attacked the fortress of the Bastille, and difficult days for both royalty and the people followed this revolution. Despite the prevailing terror, Olympe wrote a decree demanding rights for women and all citizens who had been forgotten by the Revolution. Robespierre ordered her arrest. Following an unfair and rigged trial, Olympe de Gouges was sentenced to the guillotine to prevent her from spreading her ideas of inclusion and respect for all.~~ **The people who adore Olympe are outraged by this decision. Her sister set up a liberation group to intervene at the trial. They prove that Olympe is innocent. Robespierre is booed: by cutting off a woman's head for her ideas, he is no better than the king. Olympe is released and continues her fight for equality.**



By changing the course of the three parts of the story, we create a new story.

An example of what you could achieve:

Marie Gouze was born in the small town of Montauban in Occitanie. Although she was only sixteen years old, she had to marry a man much older than her. She did not want this marriage. **The night before the ceremony, she can't sleep because she is so sad. She only sees one solution: to run away. Taking advantage of the fact that everyone else is asleep, she leaves for Paris in the middle of the night.** She joined her sister in the capital and changed her name. From then on, she was called Olympe de Gouges to give herself a nobler air. She also began learning French and studying. Her ideas took shape, and she wrote plays and novels. She mocked King Louis XVI, who lived in the cocoon of his palace in Versailles, far from the realities and suffering of his people. At the same time, the first signs of the Revolution were beginning to be felt. **Olympe's plays were increasingly successful. She won the support and sympathy of the people.**

The angry people attacked the fortress of the Bastille, and difficult days for both royalty and the people followed this revolution. Despite the prevailing terror, Olympe wrote a decree demanding



rights for women and all citizens who had been forgotten by the Revolution. Robespierre ordered her arrest. **The people who adore Olympe are outraged by this decision. Her sister set up a liberation group to intervene at the trial. They prove that Olympe is innocent. Robespierre is booed: by cutting off a woman's head for her ideas, he is no better than the king. Olympe is released and continues her fight for equality.**

At this point, you can ask the different groups to share anecdotes about correcting and checking punctuation in their work.



Part 3: WRITING A LETTER

Based on the new story, ask the pupils to imagine a hypothetical letter written by one character to another. For example, Olympe writes to her sister, etc. The text produced should be written in the first person singular, as if the chosen character's experience were a personal one. The letter should also contain all the information and references from the part to which it refers. For example, Olympe (still Marie) writes to her sister in the first part of the new story.

An example of what you could achieve:

My dear sister,

I am writing to tell you that I have decided to come and join you in Paris. This marriage is a nightmare, and I refuse to marry an old man I did not even get to choose. Women are treated like food to be exchanged and I can't accept this fate. I know I can count on you and your discretion.

I'm leaving immediately and hope to see you in a few days. Until I see you, I send you my warmest love.

Marie



Part 4: STORY CARDS

To change the story completely, you can ask the pupils to use the storytelling cards. By using the cards to interpret the characters, the pupils can change the way they enter the story and change the narration with the help of the place and object cards.

Ask the pupils to write down the result of their new story.

