Story starters: funny openings

Choose one opening. Say it, draw it or write it. The question is optional; decide what happens next.

1. The quiet sign

The library's quiet sign cleared its throat. "I have an announcement," it whispered.

What could be worth breaking the silence?

2. Umbrella on holiday

Every umbrella at the bus stop opened by itself, except mine, which asked for a day off.

How could you get it to change its mind?

3. Second prize

Our class plant came second in the talent show. Nobody would tell me what came first.

What did the plant do on stage?

4. Sock post

A parcel arrived for "The Person Who Always Loses Their Socks". Inside was a very annoyed sock.

What had happened to its partner?

5. The flour note

The baker found a note in the flour: "Please stop turning our house into bread."

Who could have written such a tiny note?

6. Toast map

At breakfast, my toast showed a map of a place I had never seen. Then the jam drew a cross.

What was waiting at the cross?

Keep the cards on the sheet, or ask an adult to cut them apart. There is no single right story.

Story starters: mysteries to solve

Choose one opening. Say it, draw it or write it. The question is optional; decide what happens next.

7. Future books

Someone kept returning library books that had not been written yet.

What happens when you open one?

8. Tiny visitor

The muddy footprints reached the kitchen table, climbed its leg and stopped beside an empty teacup.

How could you find the visitor?

9. The purple window

Every Tuesday, one window in the empty house glowed purple for exactly a minute. This week, it stayed on.

What could have changed inside?

10. The guarded button

The museum's smallest button had its own guard. When it vanished, all the clocks stopped.

What did the button control?

11. A late reflection

My reflection waved goodbye a moment before I did.

Where was it going?

12. Tomorrow's letter

The postbox delivered a letter to us with tomorrow's date and only two words: "Bring biscuits."

Who was expecting you?

Keep the cards on the sheet, or ask an adult to cut them apart. There is no single right story.

Story starters: adventures to invent

Choose one opening. Say it, draw it or write it. The question is optional; decide what happens next.

13. The cloud stop

Our bus driver missed the turn for school and stopped at a platform made of clouds.

Who was waiting to get on?

14. One teaspoon

I was sent to fetch a teaspoon. I came back with a dragon's invitation.

What was the invitation for?

15. The third button

The lift had three buttons: Upstairs, Downstairs and Not On The Map.

What would you pack before pressing the third?

16. Leaf raft

We built a raft from fallen leaves. When we stepped on, the pond became an ocean.

Where would you steer first?

17. Borrowing the moon

A small astronaut knocked on our shed door and asked to borrow the moon.

Why did they think you could help?

18. An unfinished mountain

The mountain on my jigsaw began to smoke before I had put the last piece in.

What might the final piece change?

Keep the cards on the sheet, or ask an adult to cut them apart. There is no single right story.

Story starters: everyday life with a surprise

Choose one opening. Say it, draw it or write it. The question is optional; decide what happens next.

19. The missing stall

On the morning of the school fair, we discovered that our stall had no sign, no table and a queue.

What did everyone think you were selling?

20. The notebook's last page

I found my lost notebook in a charity shop. Someone had filled the last page with a brilliant idea.

Would you try the idea or find its writer?

21. Looking after a secret

Our neighbour asked me to look after something while she went away. It was not a pet. It was a secret.

How could you keep a secret safe?

22. A cup of courage

The recipe said "one cup of courage". We had everything else.

Where could you find the missing ingredient?

23. The name from my story

The new child at our school knew everyone's name, including the name I had only ever used in my stories.

How did they know it?

24. The broken trophy

Our team had practised everything except what to do if the trophy arrived in pieces.

Could the broken pieces become something better?

Keep the cards on the sheet, or ask an adult to cut them apart. There is no single right story.

My story, in four parts

My chosen opening / title: _____

Draw, write a few words or tell someone what to add. Use the boxes in your own way.

1. BEGINNING — Who is here? What do they want?

2. PROBLEM — What gets in the way?

3. TRY — What do they do? What happens because of it?

4. ENDING — What has changed?