

Story Deck: Tips for group leaders

We've suggested the following prompts as ways to get the discussion going while you use Story Deck together.

This guide is for: anyone leading a Story Deck activity or session! Learning professionals – you might use this to help a young person get ready to share Story Deck with other young people, e.g. in a paired reading or buddy session.

Activity Tips

What a Story Deck group leader does – the super short version

- Keep the chat going
- Help people feel safe and not judged when they tell you what they like
- Help people understand what Story Deck is and how to use it
- Keep activities on time, or as close to it as you can 😊

Don't worry too much about the end result

The **quality of the chat about stories** is the main purpose of Story Deck, and taking time to talk as a group or pair is the **main part** of all Story Deck activities.

💬 If the chat is good, and people are enjoying it, it's working. 😊

🕒 You might want to set a timer or a time to stop the discussion, but don't worry if you don't get all the way through the activity.

There are no wrong answers

We've chosen images that can mean a lot of different things.


 **There is no one 'correct' meaning for each card.** The cards are just **a place to start** and **a thing to talk about** together.

Top tip: Gently pull back the conversation back if it gets into what a card 'really' means.


You might say:

- It's interesting that this card can mean different things to different people. Did anyone else use [this] card? How did you use it?
- Let's pick one card and go around the group – can you tell me one word you think of when you see it?

It's okay to not like things, too

 You might not be in the mood for a long book right now. You maybe didn't like the last video game set in the past that you played so you want to try something else. It helps you narrow down what you *do* want to try.

Nobody likes every single tv show, game or book! Not *even* people who watch, read or play them all the time.

 Make sure your group knows **it's okay to not like things** and keep an eye out for **strong reactions to cards**. You can build this into your session by using our **Hot and Cold** activity.

Top tip:

- **Be kind with it**, but if you think someone will be okay with being asked, you might say: 'you said 'ugh' to that one, what happened there?' or similar.
- Ask the group to share one card they like and one they don't.

Asking good questions

😬 Try to set aside your own interpretation of the card. As tempting as it is, **don't tell people what you think that they like** until they're ready to hear recommendations.

? If you're working with a group, try to model questions that help keep the conversation going but that are not mean, judgemental or rude. This can help other people in the group to ask each other questions if they aren't sure how to ask.

✗ **Don't say:**

- 'You like horror / romance then?'
- 'that's a bit random, isn't it?'
- 'not sure I'd read it like that but'

👍 **Do ask instead:**

- What do *you* think this card means?
- Why did you choose this one?
- These two / this group of cards is interesting. Can you tell me why you put them together?
- I'd never have thought of that way of looking at it. Tell me more about that?
- Did anyone else use the same card differently? Or a different card to say something like that?
- You might model good feedback here – you could say something like, 'I loved when you talked about why you like stories set in space. I didn't know that you liked those until we chose the cards.'

Book recommendations

📖 When you've had a good discussion, you might say:

- Do you want to look for books together with that kind of plot or setting?
- Do you want me to suggest some books that might make you feel like that?

- Now that you've told me about it, your cards remind me of a book you might like – can I tell you about it?

You can use our **activity pack** to turn this into a game, too.

- You can ask someone to recommend you a film, book or game by showing you what cards they'd use to describe it.
- Ask people in the group to recommend things to each other (anything – not just books) based on one or two cards they've chosen.

! If the person or group says no, that's okay! You've still had a great discussion and hopefully learned a lot. Learning professionals, you might use this information to inform your displays or to suggest books to classes or groups in the future.

Have fun

However you choose to use Story Deck, we hope you enjoy the time you spend together, and we hope you enjoy sharing what you like about stories with each other. Don't be afraid to stop if it's not working, or to give up on an activity and switch to a different one. Remember: if people are having good conversations about stories, it's working!

✉ Get in touch with us

If you find a great way to use Story Deck that we haven't thought of, we'd love to know more!

Get in touch at schools@scottishbooktrust.com.

Thank you for trying Story Deck!