



Spellbinders®' Storytelling and the Common Core Standards

98% of responding teachers agree – “Having a Spellbinders storyteller tell stories in my classroom is helpful in achieving my academic goals for my students.”

MYTH: The *Standards* don't allow much time for fiction, much less 'oral storytelling' as opposed to reading

FACT: The *Standards* require certain critical content for all students, including: **classic myths and stories from around the world**, America's Founding Documents, foundational American literature, and Shakespeare. Appropriately, the remaining crucial decisions about what content should be taught are left to state and local determination. In addition to content coverage, **the Standards require that students systematically acquire knowledge in literature and other disciplines through reading, writing, speaking, and listening.** (emphasis added). Common Core Standards website: <http://www.corestandards.org/about-the-standards/myths-vs-facts>

Strongest connections between oral storytelling and grades K – 5 ELA *Standards*

Reading and Range of Text Types: The *Standards* require students in K–5 to gain increasing proficiency in reading and to apply the Reading standards to, among other texts types, children's adventure stories, folktales, legends, fables, fantasy, realistic fiction, and myth.

- ★ Folktales, fables and myths from diverse cultures – the most common story type for Spellbinders storytellers – shared in the oral tradition, connect the literacy of the spoken word to the written word, as well as to areas of the social studies curriculum.
- ★ Storytelling elicits visualization which is a key component of reading comprehension.

Speaking and Listening: The *Standards* require that students gain, evaluate, and present increasingly complex information, ideas, and evidence through listening and speaking as well as through media.

- ★ Storytelling models communication skills and the narrative process, and encourages listeners to participate, to question, to tell, and to seek stories similar to those presented by the storyteller.

Language: The *Standards* expect that students will grow their vocabularies through a mix of conversations, direct instruction, and reading. The *Standards* require that students demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings. The *Standards* help prepare students for real life experience at college and in 21st century careers. The standards recognize that students must be able to use formal English in their writing and speaking but that they must also be able to make informed, skillful choices among the many ways to express themselves through language.

- ★ Storytelling **is** communication, an interactive art that uses gestures, facial expression and voice to define and enrich the language and meaning of stories. New vocabulary is readily acquired while listening to a tale accompanied by gestures and facial expressions; words such as “spend thrift” and “ne’er do well” are easily understood in the context of an oral story but may be difficult to convey through explanation alone.

The Common Core Standards “focus on results rather than means”

From the Common Core Standards

“By emphasizing required achievements, the Standards leave room for teachers, curriculum developers, and states to determine how those goals should be reached and what additional topics should be addressed.”

Why not bring in Spellbinders -- a *FUN* and *FREE* means to support your efforts to deliver the Common Core Standards?

Spellbinders® owes a debt of gratitude to the Youth Educators and Storytellers Alliance of the National Storytelling Network for their extensive work connecting the benefits of storytelling to the outcomes in the Common Core Standards.

Teacher Evaluation of the Spellbinders® Program

1,895 respondents nationwide over 4 school years (ending '13 to '16) whose classrooms were each visited 5+ times a year by a Spellbinders storyteller

"Is having a Spellbinders storyteller tell stories in your classroom helpful to you in achieving your academic goals for your students?"

98% of respondents replied YES

On a scale of 0 to 5, in your observation in your classroom, the Spellbinders program:

Enhances students' imagination, creativity and visualization. **4.83**

Enhances students' listening skills and ability to pay attention. **4.86**

Expands students' worldview by exposing them to many cultures and times. **4.43**

Enhances students' vocabulary and verbal communication skills. **4.36**

Enhances students' understanding of story structure. **4.57**

Increases students' interest in reading and improves their reading skills. **4.08**

Enhances students' recall and comprehension scores. **4.42**

Enhances students' problem solving (critical thinking) skills. **4.29**

Enhances students' writing performance. **3.96**



"Spellbinders' storytelling reinforces our teachers' efforts to foster a love of literature by complementing almost every component of our literacy efforts."

— Diana Sirko,
former Deputy Commissioner,
CO Dept. of Education



What is Spellbinders?

- ★ Non-profit organization with Chapters across the nation, trains seniors in the art of oral storytelling – yes, telling, not reading – and places them as volunteer storytellers in local schools.
- ★ 374 volunteers nationwide are paired with more than 2,000 classrooms.
- ★ Each volunteer returns to the same classrooms each month to provide a 20- to 40-minute oral storytelling session
- ★ Through these storytelling sessions, we aim to support each teacher's efforts to build literacy skills.

Contact info@spellbinders.org to request a Spellbinders storyteller for your classroom