

Repetition! Repetition! Repetition!



Give it a Listen: Season 3, Ep. 27: "Sarah's Song Story / The Door that No One Could Open"

What's this activity about?

Writing a funny story using repetition and heightening

What stuff do I need to do it?

Creator Club notebook or paper, pen or pencil, imagination

Using patterns and repetition is one of the Story Pirates' favorite ways to make a story funny. In the story, "The Door that No One Could Open," by a kid from Illinois named Claire, a family tries over and over again to open a door. Each time they try to open it, they do the same thing: "lean back as hard as they can and yell, 'Mommy! Daddy!'"

Claire repeated this line FIVE times in the story, and the line got even funnier each time because the reaction of others to the line was different each time. We loved how each repetition of the same line brought in new characters, and that each new character was bigger and weirder than the one that came before. This repetition with bigger and weirder results is called *heightening*, and it's one of the best things a writer can do to make a story funny! Here's how you can try:

First, come up with a character and a problem:

One day, Peter looked around and saw NO SNACKS.

Next, write an action and a line of dialogue for that character:

Peter climbed into the crow's nest and looked through the lookie loo and shouted, "Where are you, snacks??"

Then, show how *others* react to that action and dialogue, and repeat it AGAIN:

Rolo heard Peter, and so he ALSO climbed into the crow's nest to try to look through the lookie loo to find snacks. It was a bit snug, and they barely fit. They shouted together, "Where are you, snacks??"

Now comes the *heightening*! See how many times you can repeat that line and that action, but make the results *bigger and weirder* each time.

Because Rolo and Peter were yelling, a passing circus caravan full of seals, lions, and elephants heard them. They wanted snacks too. So, they ALSO climbed into the now very crowded crow's nest and tried to look through the now very smudged lookie loo. Together, they shouted, barked, roared, and trumpeted, "Where are you, snacks?"

Try repetition and heightening in a story, and it's sure to be funny. We can't wait to read what you come up with!

Grownups, please share your kids' stories with us!

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