

String Story Necklaces

Learning to sound out words is just one part of learning to read. Kids also need to be able to understand what they're reading. In teacher terms, this is called "comprehension". Of course, tell your kid you're going to spend the afternoon working on comprehension and you're sure to get a "ho hum". This activity delivers the goods with a fun art project that will also teach kids to look for a story's beginning, middle, and end.

What You Need:

- Story book, any length will work
- 3 large index cards
- Enough string to make a loose necklace
- Pencils, crayons or markers

What You Do:

1. **Get Ready:** Deck out your kitchen table with art supplies, and pull out one of your child's favorite books. Together, write the words "First", "Then", and "Last" on the three index cards (one word on each). Then challenge your child to a Story Tell.
2. **Get Set:** More likely than not, you've got their curiosity piqued. Explain that you're going to read the book together and then they're going to retell the story in their own words.
3. **Go!:** Every good game has rules and this one's no different. As your child retells the story, they must start their first sentence with the word "First", then write the remainder of the sentence on index card #1. The next sentence should start on the second card, using the word "Next" as the intro. And the third card should start with the word "Last" and go from there.
4. **Talk About It:** Once all three cards are completed, and your child shouts, "Done!", gather up the cards and re-read them together, in order. See if the story makes sense and if it has a beginning, middle, and end.
5. **String It Up:** If they nailed it, punch some holes in the cards and let them illustrate the story. They can draw a picture on the opposite side of each card to go along with its text. Once they're satisfied with their creation, string it around them like a necklace for retelling to others. If the story needs additions or adjustments, work with your child to figure out what they should add, delete, or change. Ask questions like, "Did that happen first or last?", or "What happened in between those two things?"

Not only does this activity give you a great excuse to talk about books, but it encourages kids to listen up for what's most important in a story, then hold it in their memory for later. Plus, these necklaces look really cute, either as dress up jewelry, or hooked onto a story wall. Check out a [story](#) to practice comprehension.

