



Presentation/organization setup of a Story Slam

Attendees:

One presenter

One timekeeper/points keeper (or 2 people) 2 teams, each with 3 storytellers

An audience of at least 7 people (=jury chairs)

Introduction of the Story Slam

- The presenter briefly explains what the Story Slam is.
- The audience serves as the jury. There are 7 jury chairs. (It's easiest to first appoint the jury chairs and then explain the game further). (Hand out stacks of scoreboards!)
- There are 2 teams with 3 storytellers. (Briefly introduce the teams).
- Each storyteller has prepared a story of exactly 5 minutes at home.
- Each storyteller receives 2 improvisation tasks to incorporate into his or her story. One task via the presenter and one task with the help of the other team. The team that is not playing can shout out a number of items that the storyteller must integrate into his or her story in some way. (The presenter determines the genre of the items and chooses one mentioned item.)
- After giving the first task, the team that is up decides which storyteller will play in this round. One joker can be used once (give jokers to the teams).
- Penalty points are given for stories that are too short or too long (see below).
- After all six storytellers have had their turn, there is still a team task. (Given the amount of information, it is better to call it a group task in the introduction, but explain it later).

Rules of the Story Slam

- After each storyteller and after each team task, the audience can give points.
- The audience judges how well the two tasks were incorporated into the stories. For this purpose, jury chairs have been appointed in the audience, and they receive scoreboards.
- They consult with the audience around them for 1 minute about the score to be awarded.
- The jury can give points from 6 to 10, with 10 being excellent and 6 being moderate/barely sufficient.
- The scorekeeper/timekeeper records all points.
- The timekeeper determines how many seconds/minutes the storyteller has gone over his or her time. For every 20 seconds above or below 5 minutes, 1 penalty point is deducted. So, if a storyteller tells a story that is 1 minute too long or too short, they will receive 3 penalty points.
- The audience can signal the storyteller to keep an eye on the time. The storyteller can even ask for it before starting. However, other team members cannot give signals or instructions during storytelling!

Tasks of the presenter

The presenter has 8 cards (A6 size) with tasks on them. Someone in the audience or the storyteller himself may - of course blindly - choose one of the cards and read the task aloud. (There are two extra tasks in case the joker is used).

Do not make the tasks too difficult, but make sure to challenge the storyteller as well. A task that turns the whole story upside down can cause problems for a less experienced Story Slam player. For example, a task that changes the setting of the story (if the entire story has to take place in a certain location or in another time period). Tasks with a clear action or event are easier to incorporate into the story. For example:

- One of your characters has a coughing fit.
- Incorporate the following sentence into your story: "The earth trembles."
- Music or a song is heard somewhere in your story.
- A fragrant meal is consumed somewhere in your story.
- One of your characters receives a text message with a special message.

Additional options for this presenter

Only one joker can be used if the team finds the first task too difficult. Then the task may be handed in and a new one will be drawn.

The team can discuss who will carry out the third task. But each storyteller must be involved at least once.

It must be determined which of the two teams will begin. Then, a team member will be chosen to tell the story.

After receiving the first task, the presenter picks up plates with six different genres written on them. The player from the team that will play draws one of the six plates, and the other team may shout out a few (strange items) that fit with the genre. The presenter then selects one. The more unusual the item, the more fun (and challenging) it is for the storyteller who has to incorporate it into their story. Possible genres for the plates are:

- Object
- Location
- Vehicle
- Event
- Character
- Animal

The storyteller will only begin their story after receiving both tasks. After each story, the jury in the audience can discuss for a maximum of one minute and then give points. The plates with the scores are then held up, and the timekeeper/scorekeeper determines how many penalty points are deducted if necessary.

Team Task

After all six storytellers have had their turn, each team must perform a team task together. The team that started with the first storyteller will now perform this task as the second team. Both teams receive the same task.

Do not make the team task too difficult. Association tasks are less suitable. (Although a lot of imagination is needed to carry out these tasks, they usually only result in a story with a beginning and end for very experienced Story Slammers or improvisation players). Tip: Use existing improvisation exercises (which focus on storytelling). In the book 'Improvisation and Theatre' by Keith Johnstone, you can find these types of tasks (ISBN 90-6403-206-8). From page 119 to 158, it talks about storytelling and provides examples of improvisation tasks.

The timekeeper rings the bell (or blows a horn) after 5 minutes. If the story is not finished by then, one of the team members can conclude the story in a maximum of three sentences.

The audience gives points for the overall performance of the team. The audience that needed the least time to improvise the story gets an extra three points.

Results of the Story Slam

The timekeeper/scorekeeper determines which of the two teams has won. If necessary, the timekeeper can act as the jury.

Equipment

- 7 colored plates with large numbers 6 through 10.
- 8 plates with tasks for task 1.
- 6 plates with items for task 2.
- Material for team task (if necessary).
- Bell or horn to indicate the time limit (when judged by the audience).
- Stopwatch or smartphone with stopwatch.
- Scorecard to keep track of the points and penalty points (available for download on the page where you opened this description).

Presenter Tip

It is important to maintain the tempo of the Story Slam. Structure the information you need to give in advance and keep your presentation smooth.

The game, as described here, can be played (without a break) in 75-80 minutes (including explanation).

Organization Tip

The organizers can ask the storytellers to align their five-minute story (and the group task) with a predetermined theme. And communicate in advance with the storytellers what the consequences (point system) are for stories that are too long or too short.

Variations First round

Of course, you can vary the above concept in your local Story Slam. For example, in task 2, you can experiment with not letting the player draw the card blindly, but allowing them to choose one (after which the other team gives their associations). You can also vary the group task.

Variation Team Task

An exciting variation is to tell the teams to choose one of their opponent's players to execute the team task in their team. Hence, two players will be exchanged between the teams. It is a surpris for the audience and tones down the element of competition.

Organising an interland

There is a challenge cup available, that was gifted during the first interland between The Netherlands and Germany in 2016. In 2022 the cup moved to Flanders. Besides that, there should be a floating trophy in the shape of a cookie tin, that has been in Germany since the first interland.

Downloads:

<https://www.vertelacademie.nl/campus/tips-links-en-literatuur/story-slam-zelf-organiseren>

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