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| **Reading: Storytelling**  Storytelling is also called “narrative”. A simple narrative starts by setting the scene. It then describes the characters and presents the characters with a problem. It then follows the characters as they solve the problem. The story ends with a resolution of the problem. We use narrative extensively in both written and spoken language because communication is frequently about telling a story, true or otherwise. Below is a very simple narrative to demonstrate the structure of storytelling. |

**The Spy and the Dog[[1]](#footnote-1)**

It was one of those rare, early spring days we sometimes get in the Rocky Mountains. There was a warm sun shining and a gentle breeze with just a bit of a chill to it. Patches of snow still decorated the ground. There was a hint of green buds on the trees. We would probably get another snow storm or two at some point, but for now we were out enjoying the sun.

My son, Simon, and I were walking in the local dog park with our bouncy, year old puppy named Shadow. We were having a grand time. Today, Simon was a spy. As we walked he crouched low, pointing his cap gun at invisible enemies. Periodically, he would duck behind a tree or a bush, dodging equally invisible bullets. Shadow was also engrossed in her own world, running to meet every single dog that came within smelling distance. By the time we reached the pond, in the middle of the park, I was feeling very relaxed and mellowed by the fresh air.

As I was chatting with a fellow dog lover, admiring his dog, I watched Shadow wade up to her ankles in the pond. The spring thaw was not complete and the pond had a large circle of ice floating in its centre. The outer perimeter of the pond circled the ice like a castle moat. Going further in, Shadow discovered the edge of the ice. After three tries, she successfully scrambled up on it. Proud of her accomplishment, she wandered around the entire surface sniffing it. She was a fierce explorer discovering an unknown territory.

Her exploration done, Shadow was ready to go back to shore. There was one problem. Shadow was not a swimming dog. She walked towards the water and suspiciously placed her paw on the thinnest portion of the ice. She quickly withdrew her paw when the ice cracked and fell away from under her. Shadow backed up and stared down at the ice. She glanced across the water, and looked longingly at me, her brown puppy dog eyes begging for me to rescue her.

I moved toward the pond and crouched low to meet her gaze. I called out, “Shadow, here. You can do it, Shadow!” No coaxing or cajoling would convince that dog to brave the crumbling ice and plunge into the icy water. She was stuck.

Not for long. The 10-year old, adventurous spy came bounding to the rescue! Not heeding the many warnings that the ice was very thin near the edges, Simon was determined to rescue his precious dog! He backed up and then ran to the edge of the pond. With one flying leap, he sailed through the air and landed right on the thinnest portion of the ice. Within seconds, he was up to his waist in icy water. Shivering, he abandoned the rescue. Floundering to get out of the water, he lost a shoe.

Now we were worse off. We had one freezing spy, minus a shoe, and one overly adventurous dog still stuck in the middle of the ice. By this time we had a large audience watching and offering their advice on the next step of our rescue mission.

There was nothing for it. I was going to have to go in and get the dog. The water was freezing. It went up past my knees. I reached the edge of the ice and stretched out my arms to grab Shadow. Just as my fingers were about to grab her legs, she barked sharply, jumped past me and plunged into the water. The splash from her jump completely soaked the parts of me that were not already wet. As I turned around to head out of the pond, I heard the crowd cheer. Shadow had reached the edge of the pond. Enjoying the attention, she crawled onto the grass, shook herself dry and barked. Little did she know that she was about to get wet again. Once we were home she was going straight into the bathtub to get clean!

*A. Complete the activities below based on the reading on the previous pages.*

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| Where is the story set? |

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| Who are the characters? What are they like? |

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| What is the problem that the characters encounter? |

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| How do they solve it? |

1. Adapted from a story by Shawna Wyville [↑](#footnote-ref-1)