

# SPEAKING TRUTH TO POWER

Standing Up For Your Beliefs Promotes Peace!

We have all faced difficult choices. Unfortunately, a violent response seems to be more common than we would like. Every day we are challenged by a new set of problems and opportunities. How do we face difficult moments?

The not so simple questions are: How do we solve these problems? How do we respond to violence? How do we rise to meet these challenges? How do we, as a society, make better choices?

Throughout history there have always been individuals who dared to confront violence with the truth of their lives. From American Abolitionists to the Dutch Resistance against Hitler there are role models who can teach us the skills we need to confront crises peacefully. Research the life stories of people like [Martin Luther King Jr.](#), [Harriet Tubman](#), Henry David [Thoreau](#) and [Mother Theresa](#). Read their biographies in order to meet these courageous souls. Learn and tell one story that models their strengths. Focus on the pivotal moment, the difficult dilemma, the critical crisis; focus on the stories that you could tell to inspire others.



There have also been monumental struggles for human rights that rarely get the attention they deserve in history books. Rather than dwell on the wars and massacres, take a closer look at [The Underground Railroad](#), [The Suffragettes who won Women's Right to Vote](#), and [The Civil Rights Movement](#). On the international front: [Mahatma Gandhi and India's struggle for independence](#), [Oscar Schindler](#) and the Jewish Resistance, or [Desmond Tutu and South African Apartheid](#) all make for exciting case studies in human rights and non-violence. Choose one of these events and research the facts. Use the facts to write a story. Imagine you were there to better tell the tale. What would you have done? What setbacks did they face? How did they achieve success? How did the outcome affect the average person? What can history learn from these efforts?

Traditional fairy tales are filled with unlikely heroes and excellent examples of teamwork, and creative problem solving. You will find folk tales from around the world under 398.2 in the Dewey Decimal System in your library. When you find a story you like read the story out loud several times. How might you change your VOICE for different characters? How might you use your BODY to act it out? Close your eyes and see the story in your IMAGINATION. Use your voice, body, and imagination together to TELL, not read, your story. Practice, Practice, PRACTICE. When you feel confident, ask your teacher if you could tell your story to the class. Within the context of these stories you can learn problem-solving strategies as you participate with the main character in conflict resolution.



You could also write your own fairy tale or fable that models good problem solving. Think of a problem you have had or one that society faces today. Use animals or imaginary creatures as characters. Use the following outline to map out your plot, plugging in the details of your problem: First define the problem; then brainstorm possibilities; then evaluate your options and decide on a plan (usually two or three choices blended together is your best choice); then act! Often, as one attempts to solve a problem, a new hurdle causes the character to think on their feet; change plans mid-stream. How do your characters handle a setback? Finally, success is achieved. In your story, (and in your life!), work towards a win-win solution in which “the enemy” becomes a friend who shares in the celebration! Dr. Suess was a master of this type of fable for modern times; see [The Lorax](#) for a wonderful example.

These same strategies can be used to solve real life problems. With a small group of friends choose a problem to discuss using. Working together, there is no problem we cannot solve!

