Content Through Characters

BranchED

Setup: Various content topics on slips of paper (e.g., "fractions," "water cycle," "civil rights movement").

Activity: Each participant draws one and invents a **character** to embody that concept (e.g., "Freddy the Fraction," "Droppy the Water Droplet," "Justice Jane").

Swap: In your group, each person tells their story using their character.

Goal: Experience how personification makes abstract concepts relatable and memorable.

Content Through Character

Fractions	**Water Cycle**	**Civil Rights Movement**
Geometry	**States of Matter**	**Industrial Revolution**
Patterns	**Forces and Motion**	**World War II**
Measurement	**Solar System**	**Great Depression**

Story Spine for Lesson Planning

BranchED

Set Up: Use the "**story spine**" framework (a narrative structure from improvisation theater):

- Once upon a time…
- Every day…
- But one day…
- Because of that…
- Until finally…

Activity: Select a content area. Use the story spine to build a content-based story. Example: Fractions → "Once upon a time, four friends always shared a pizza…"

Goal: Apply the story spine to make content engaging and meaningful.

Data-to-Drama

BranchED

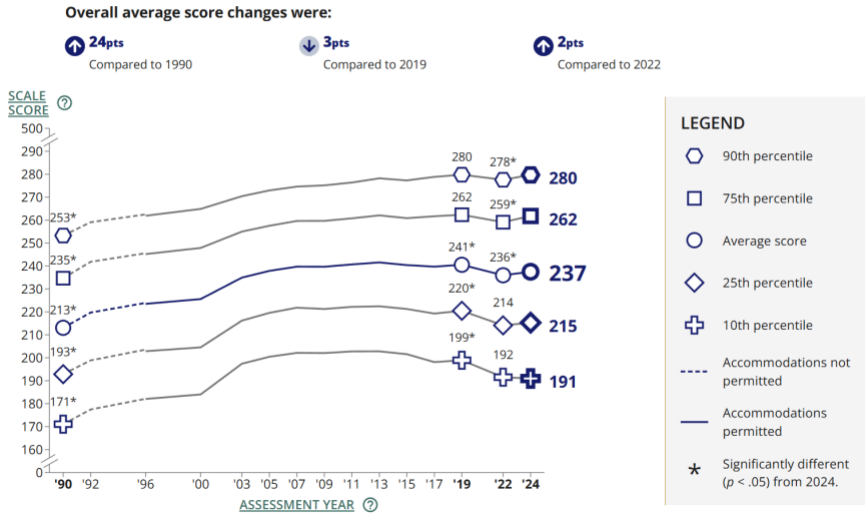
Setup: Give participants a **data set or fact sheet** (e.g., population growth, chemical reactions, math word problems).

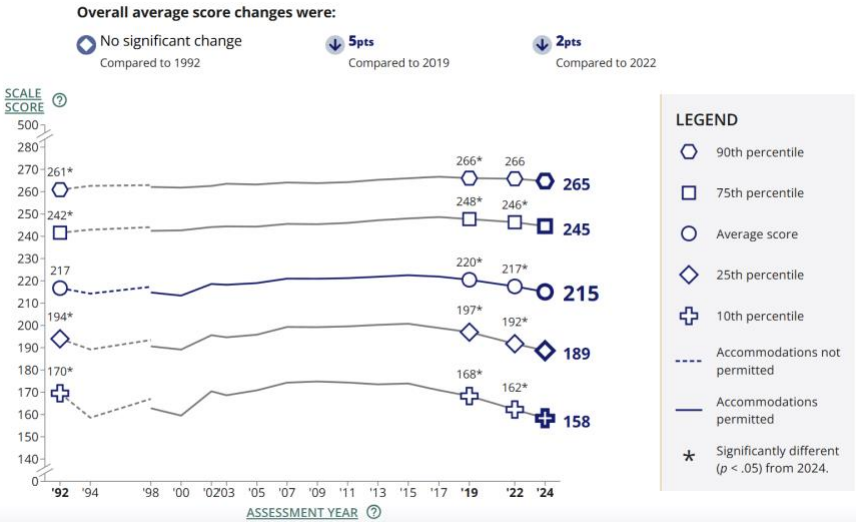
Activity: Groups must dramatize the data in story form, turning numbers/facts into a narrative.

Example: Population growth becomes "A town that keeps running out of chairs for everyone at dinner."

Goal: See how storytelling translates abstract numbers into concrete, lived experiences.

FIGURE | Trend in fourth-grade NAEP mathematics average and selected percentile scores





History as First-Person Narrative

BranchED

Setup: Select historical or scientific figures/events.

Activity: In your group write a lesson as **a first-person diary entry or oral story** (e.g., "I am Harriet Tubman guiding families to freedom," or "I am a carbon atom traveling through the atmosphere").

Goal: Practice empathetic perspective-taking and humanizing content.

History as First-Person Narrative

Stephen Hawking	**Isaac Newton**	**Harriet Tubman**
Charles Darwin	**Jane Goodall**	**Susan B. Anthony**
Albert Einstein	**Kathryn Johnson**	**Thomas Edison**
Eleanor Roosevelt	**Florence Nightingale**	**Abraham Lincoln**

STEM Myth-Making

BranchED

Activity: Ask groups to invent a **myth** that explains a natural phenomenon **before science explained it** (like how ancient cultures created myths for eclipses, thunder, or seasons).

Example: "Why does the moon change shape?" → A rabbit keeps nibbling at it each night.

Goal: Create a myth that explains a natural phenomenon and shows how stories shape understanding.