



What Happens Next?

Building Excellence in Writing and Imagination Through Radio

What Happens Next is an exciting way to promote literacy skills, self-confidence, and public speaking proficiency. The goal of the creators of *What Happens Next* is to encourage the students to read and write for pleasure. WLOY, the radio station of Loyola University Maryland, in collaboration with the Baltimore Community Radio Coalition has created a literacy enrichment program where children read the beginning of an original story by award-winning author Esta de Fossard and are encouraged to imagine and write their own ending. The group discusses the stories and the endings the children write. The children record their endings, which are then broadcast on WLOY on 1620 AM and at www.wloy.org.

The *What Happens Next* program started in June 2009 and has attracted thirty children so far, between the ages of five and twelve. The children's writing has become more complex and creative as they spend more time in the program. Feedback received from the children and their parents has been overwhelmingly positive, spurring the program's continuation and development.

The founders of *What Happens Next* plan to expand beyond its incubation site of the Red Canoe Bookstore to the Baltimore City Public Schools. The program will be a resource for teachers striving to improve the integral literacy skills of students, which often suffer because of the demands of state testing. *What Happens Next* will support literacy skills at no expense to the schools involved. The program founders have aligned *What Happens Next* with Maryland State Department of Education reading and writing standards in order to make it more meaningful to schools. Children who participate in *What Happens Next* will improve their reading fluency, grammar usage, listening, and writing.

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What Happens Next follows a simple schedule. The instructor should first discuss the setting and theme of the story with the children. Ask the children to suggest appropriate vocabulary words for the story and try to create visual images in their minds. List the characters, setting, and vocabulary words on a chalkboard. Then read the story or poem using dramatic voices if possible. It is important that the children do not have a copy of the story in front of them or anything in their hands so they can visualize the story, it may help them to close their eyes while listening. After you have finished reading the story, discuss punctuation usage and emphasize what parts of the story need to be completed. Let the children write their endings as soon as possible after finishing the reading and instruct them to use the written story as a resource. Encourage the children to write independently but if they have questions answer them quietly so as not to disturb other writers.

Once all the children have finished their story or poem endings it is a good idea to have them read them aloud to the group. This is good practice for when they record their stories for broadcast. Children should introduce themselves using their first names only and then say, "This is my ending for ..."





Bringing *What Happens Next?* Into Your School

The Basics

WLOY offers your school the opportunity to join the *What Happens Next?* program at no cost. In addition to the audio and texts for a teacher, WLOY will provide you with the studio equipment to record programs. In return, you agree to use the program ONLY in your school and with a trained teacher. You agree to work with WLOY to provide audio from your programs to the station for use in weekly broadcasts and to notify us if there are any issues or concerns with the program or the equipment. You additionally agree to host a low power AM transmitters on your roof and provide power and network connections (if required) for that device. This will allow residents (and parents of your students) in your community to hear the broadcasts from WLOY.

The Teacher

You agree to provide a teacher to manage the program in your school and to be trained in the use of the studio equipment. WLOY will provide a trainer for the designated teacher and support as needed. The teacher will be responsible for coordinating the program in your school (whether used by one or many classes), and ensuring that recorded material is sent to WLOY for use on the weekly radio show. We do not expect the material on a weekly basis until the program is fully functioning in the school and will provide needed support to make sure that you are able to use the materials.

The Program

WLOY will provide a CD with 16 stories and poems for playback in the classroom. Associated materials will include a master copy of the printed stories and poems, a teaching guide, materials recommendations. As the program progresses, additional CDs will be provided to allow the program to be run for an entire academic year.

The Studio

WLOY will provide a Macintosh computer, audio editing system, microphones, headphones and cables to create a recording studio in your school. This would ideally be located in a spare room, or large closet, which is secured. If a permanent location cannot be made available, we suggest a cart for the equipment and a secure location for its storage when not in use. The school will be responsible for the security of the equipment (ARV \$4000) and it's replacement if damaged or stolen.

The Cost

The program is provided free of charge, including equipment. The only requirement is regular feedback and communication from the teacher on site. If you are not actively using the equipment, it will be relocated to a school that will.

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