SOFTWARE & TECH

Story Grammar Marker Iep Goals

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Introduction to Story Grammar Marker and IEP Goals

For educators and speech-language pathologists, developing effective Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals that target narrative language skills is a critical component of supporting students with communication disorders. One of the most powerful and evidence-based tools available for this purpose is the Story Grammar Marker (SGM). This visual, tactile, and kinesthetic approach helps students understand the structure of stories, improve their ability to retell and generate narratives, and build foundational literacy skills. When these narrative competencies are translated into **Story Grammar Marker IEP goals**, educators gain a clear roadmap for instruction and progress monitoring. This article explores what Story Grammar Marker is, why it belongs in IEP goal writing, and how to craft meaningful, measurable goals that support student success. Whether you are a special education teacher, a speech-language pathologist, or a parent advocating for your child, understanding the intersection of story grammar and IEP objectives will enhance your ability to foster language development.

What Is Story Grammar Marker?

Developed by MindWing Concepts, the Story Grammar Marker is a multi-sensory tool that uses icons, manipulatives, and color-coded cues to represent the essential elements of a story. These elements typically include characters, setting, initiating event, internal response, plan, attempts, direct consequence, and resolution. The SGM approach enables students to visualize story structure, sequence events logically, and express themselves with greater coherence. It is widely used in speech-language therapy, general education classrooms, and special education settings to support students with Autism Spectrum Disorder, language delays, learning disabilities, and other challenges that affect narrative development.

When educators incorporate the Story Grammar Marker into IEP goals, they are not merely teaching story grammar—they are building a scaffold for higher-order thinking, reading comprehension, and written expression. The tool's systematic nature makes it ideal for setting clear, observable benchmarks that align with both academic standards and functional communication needs.

The Role of Story Grammar in IEP Goals

IEP goals must be measurable, meaningful, and directly tied to the student's present levels of performance. Narrative skills are a core component of academic language—students who struggle to tell or understand stories often face difficulties in reading comprehension, social interaction, and written expression. By focusing on **Story Grammar Marker IEP goals**, teams target a foundational skill that impacts multiple areas of learning. Research consistently shows that explicit instruction in story grammar improves story retell, story generation, and overall language complexity.

Moreover, narrative ability is a strong predictor of later reading success. For this reason, IEP teams increasingly look to integrate story grammar objectives into goals for both oral and written language. The Story Grammar

Marker provides a common vocabulary and structure that can be used across speech-language therapy, classroom instruction, and home support, ensuring consistency and generalization of skills.

Key Components of Story Grammar for IEP Goal Writing

To create effective IEP goals using Story Grammar Marker, it is essential to understand the core elements that make up a complete narrative. These components serve as the building blocks for goal development. The typical story grammar elements include:

- Character: Who is the story about? This includes main and supporting characters.
- Setting: Where and when does the story take place? Incorporating time and place details.
- Initiating Event: What starts the story? This could be a problem, an unexpected occurrence, or a change.
- Internal Response: How does the character feel or think about the initiating event?
- Plan: What does the character decide to do?
- Attempts: What actions does the character take to carry out the plan?
- Direct Consequence: What happens as a result of the attempts? Does the problem get solved?
- Resolution: How does the story end? Typically includes a concluding thought or feeling.

When writing IEP goals, it is common to focus on one or more of these elements depending on the student's current skill level. For example, a student may initially work on including character and setting before moving on to initiating events and consequences.

Examples of Story Grammar Marker IEP Goals

Below are several examples of measurable IEP goals that incorporate Story Grammar Marker principles. These goals are designed to be adapted based on the student's age, grade, and present levels. Each goal includes a clear target behavior, condition, and criterion for mastery.

Example 1: Story Retell Goal (Early Elementary)

Given a short narrative read aloud and the Story Grammar Marker icons, the student will retell the story by verbally identifying at least three of the following story grammar elements (character, setting, initiating event, direct consequence) with 80% accuracy across three consecutive data collection sessions.

Example 2: Story Generation Goal (Upper Elementary)

When prompted to create a fictional story, the student will use the Story Grammar Marker graphic organizer to produce a written narrative that includes at least five story grammar elements (character, setting, initiating event, internal response, plan, attempt, direct consequence, resolution) as measured by a rubric in 4 out of 5 trials.

Example 3: Oral Narrative Goal (Middle School)

During a structured conversation activity, the student will spontaneously incorporate a clear initiating event and a direct consequence when recounting a personal experience, using Story Grammar Marker cues as needed, in 3 out of 4 opportunities as measured by clinician data.

Example 4: Comprehension Goal (All Ages)

After listening to or reading a story, the student will answer wh- questions (who, what, where, when, why) that correspond to Story Grammar Marker categories with 85% accuracy over three consecutive probes.

These examples demonstrate how the same tool can be used across modalities—oral retell, written expression, and comprehension—making it a versatile foundation for IEP goal development.

Writing robust **Story Grammar Marker IEP goals**requires a systematic approach. Use the following steps to ensure goals are both meaningful and measurable:

1. Assess Current Narrative Skills: Use an informal narrative assessment or a tool like the SGM rubric to identify which story grammar elements the student currently uses and which are missing.
2. Choose a Target Element: Based on the assessment, select one to three story grammar components for the goal. Avoid overwhelming the student with too many targets at once.
3. Define the Condition: Describe the context in which the skill will be demonstrated (e.g., "Given a picture sequence and Story Grammar Marker icons," or "During a structured storytelling activity").
4. Specify the Behavior: Use action verbs such as "identify," "retell," "generate," "include," or "verbally describe."
5. Set the Criterion: Determine how success will be measured—percentage accuracy, number of elements included, number of trials, etc. Ensure the criterion is realistic yet challenging.
6. Align with Standards: Connect the goal to relevant Common Core State Standards or state standards for speaking, listening, and writing.

Remember that a well-written IEP goal is a team effort. Collaborate with the student's speech-language pathologist, classroom teacher, and family to ensure the goal reflects real-world needs and can be reinforced across settings.

Aligning Story Grammar Goals with Common Core Standards

Many educators worry about how **Story Grammar Marker IEP goals**fit into academic standards. In fact, the SGM approach aligns naturally with several Common Core anchor standards, particularly those for reading literature, writing narratives, and speaking/listening. For instance:

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.K.3: With prompting and support, identify characters, settings, and major events in a story.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.1.3: Write narratives in which they recount two or more appropriately sequenced events.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.2.4: Tell a story or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details.

By linking SGM goals directly to these standards, IEP teams demonstrate that the goals are not isolated skill work but are integral to the general education curriculum. This also supports the student's access to grade-level content and progress toward academic expectations.

Benefits of Using Story Grammar Marker in Special Education

The use of Story Grammar Marker in developing IEP goals offers numerous benefits beyond improved narrative skills. These include:

- Improved Reading Comprehension: Students learn to identify story structure, which transfers to better understanding of texts.
- Enhanced Social Communication: Narrative skills are essential for conversation, sharing experiences, and building relationships.
- Greater Executive Functioning: Organizing a story requires planning, sequencing, and monitoring—all executive function skills.
- Increased Engagement: The tactile and visual nature of SGM makes learning interactive and fun, especially for younger students or those with attention difficulties.
- Progress Monitoring Ease: The clear structure of story grammar allows for easy data collection and

objective measurement of growth.

Tips for Speech-Language Pathologists and Educators

Implementing **Story Grammar Marker IEP goals**effectively requires thoughtful planning. Here are some practical tips:

- Start with the Braidy the StoryBraid® tool (for younger children) or the SGM complete manual. These resources provide ready-made lesson plans and visual supports.
- Use consistent language across all settings. Train paraprofessionals and parents to use terms like "character" and "kick-off" (initiating event) so the student receives unified instruction.
- Embed narrative practice into daily routines. Story grammar can be used during morning meeting, social studies, and even math word problems.
- Collect data regularly. Use simple checklists to track which story grammar elements the student includes in retells or generated stories.
- Gradually fade supports. The goal is for the student to internalize story grammar structure, so reduce reliance on icons and prompts over time.

Conclusion

Integrating Story Grammar Marker into IEP goals provides a structured, evidence-based pathway for developing narrative language skills in students with communication challenges. By focusing on the core elements of storytelling, educators can create measurable objectives that lead to tangible improvements in oral language, reading comprehension, and written expression. Whether you are writing goals for a kindergartner learning to identify characters or a middle school student generating complex narratives, the SGM approach offers clarity, consistency, and measurable outcomes. When IEP teams thoughtfully craft **Story Grammar Marker IEP goals**, they empower students to become confident storytellers and successful learners.

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