



Written by Joanna Grace
Sea shanty music produced by Liz Eddy

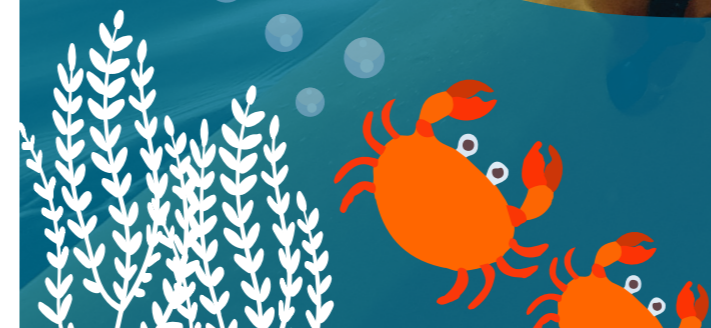
May 2021



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KAYAKING

A SENSORY ACCESS ADVENTURE





Written by Joanna Grace.

Sea shanty music produced by Liz Eddy and recorded by The Include Choir.
May 2021

Experience photography from Access Lizard Adventure on pages 6, 7, 13 and 18.

Photography from Unsplash:

Cover Photo – Aaron Burden

Page 2 – Pink flower floating. Nasam Thaufeeq

Page 4 – Aaron Lee

Page 5 – Merced County, CA, USA, Colton Jones

Page 10 – Sanibel, United States. Taryn Manning

Page 11 – Marco Island, United States. Alex Perez

Page 15 – Kayak and oars on decking. Iryna Khan

Page 17 – Ponden Reservoir, Keighley, UK. Rachel Penney

Page 19 – NON

Page 21 – Toes in sand. Ana Grave

Page 23 – Calicut, Kerala, India. Aswin P S

Page 24 – Kenai, United States. McKayla Crump

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A SENSORY ACCESS ADVENTURE

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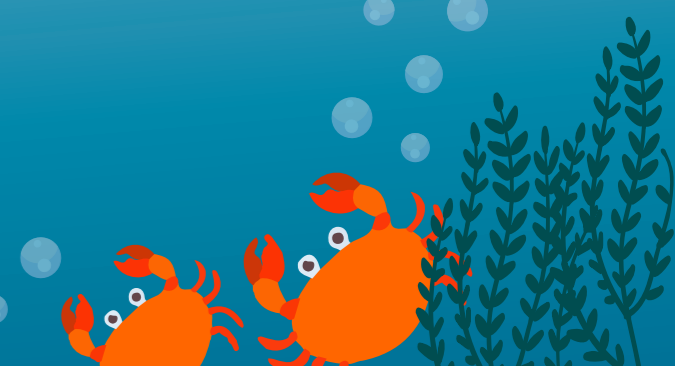
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ABOUT THE PROJECT

This story was produced as part of the 'Re-Storying Landscape for Social Inclusion' collaboration – a project led by Sarah Bell at the University of Exeter and funded by the UK Economic and Social Research Council Impact Acceleration Account from 2020-22.

The overall aim of the project has been to inform interpretation, access and management decisions that respect the diverse ways in which landscapes are sensed, valued and experienced by individuals and groups over time.

One project strand aimed to develop and use sensory stories to help support safe and rewarding water-based experiences amongst people with complex disabilities. In sensory stories, each sentence is partnered with a rich sensory experience.

The kayaking sensory story shared in this booklet has been developed in collaboration with Sense, Joanna Grace (Sensory Engagement and Inclusion Specialist and Founder of The Sensory Projects) and Access Lizard Adventure (a specialist organisation offering accessible kayaking adventures in Cornwall, UK).



The story can be experienced at home to gain a sense of what it might feel like to kayak. It can also provide a stepping-stone to kayaking, building points of sensory familiarity before visiting a kayaking site or meeting a kayak for the first time.

We hope it will encourage people to think about sensory landscape access in new ways, and perhaps initiate a whole new library of aquatic sensory stories for people to enjoy!

You can read more about the 'Re-Storying Landscape for Social Inclusion' project online: www.sensing-nature.com.

You can also find out more about The Sensory Projects (www.thesensoryprojects.co.uk) and Access Lizard Adventure's activities (www.lizardadventure.co.uk/access-lizard-adventure).





SENSORY STORIES: SENSORY ACCESSIBILITY

Sensory stories are an amazing tool for creating access to experiences. This can be access to an experience that one cannot have in person, or access to an experience that would otherwise have been inaccessible due to sensory barriers.

For all of us our senses tell us whether we are safe or in danger. For all of us, if our senses signal we are in danger we want to get away, we cannot engage, we cannot do, we cannot experience. This is not something we can change, it is fundamentally a part of our human nature.

For some people, sensory differences will mean that their sensory systems signal danger to them in situations where no danger exists. For other people, the demands of taking on board new sensory information can be overwhelming, such that access to an experience is prevented due to a capacity overload.

Providing sensory access is just like providing physical access. You may equip your building with ramps and disabled toilets to allow wheelchair users access. In the same way we can equip ourselves with sensory access tools to enable sensory access, and this sensory story is one of those!

A KAYAKING SENSORY STORY

The sensory story in this booklet takes you through the sequence of getting ready to go kayaking, crossing to the water and boarding the kayak. The adventure you have after that is up to you. This story is the route to it.

People who may never go kayaking can use this story to experience the sensations people feel when they do go kayaking. People who may go kayaking one day but who experience sensory barriers to access can use this story to rehearse experiences that they may encounter when they go kayaking.

There are many benefits to this:

- A chance to rehearse experiences in advance can help to orientate a person, enabling them to tune in their sensory systems. Knowing what to expect can mean they get more out of the experience when it happens.
- Encountering experiences ahead of time can help someone to mentally map out what will happen when they go kayaking, taking the anxiety out of it and helping to support their understanding.
- Practising a novel experience whilst in a space where they feel safe and secure can allow people to explore things they may find challenging without being afraid, enabling them to be bolder when they meet new experiences when out and about.





SHARING THIS SENSORY ACCESS STORY

ORGANISE, READ, SHARE, REPEAT.

Lay out the resources you will use to share the story (these are described on pages 11-12) and check they are all ready to go.

Use the text on pages 23-24.

Read each sentence clearly and then offer the associated experience.

Allow time for the words and the sensations to sink in.

Aim to repeat the story multiple times. The frequency of these repetitions is up to you. You may choose to read the story once a day for a week leading up to your kayaking adventure, or once a week, or perhaps just a few times before you go on the day itself.



Research around sensory stories has indicated that reading a story 8-12 times is ideal, but everyone is different, do what is right for you.

After your adventure, the story can be re-shared as a way of remembering what you did.

For more information on how to share sensory stories you can download a free guide from: www.TheSensoryProjects.co.uk/the-sensory-story-project.





SING IT!

Our Sensory Story has a special additional twist: the words of the story also form the verses of the lyrics of a sea shanty. So you may choose to sing it as a sea shanty!

Singing and Sensorying all at once could be like being asked to rub your tummy and pat your head at the same time. We suggest that when you are initially exploring the sensory experiences you simply read the words and then take your time exploring. But singing the sea shanty chorus could be a great way to signal the beginning and the end of the activity.

If you decide to sing the whole story as a sea shanty, you would introduce the shanty chorus before and after every verse, but when reading the story the chorus waits until the end.

You can hear the Going Kayaking Sensory Access Story here:
<https://tinyurl.com/4yww87rt>.



SEA WATER OR INLAND WATER

Some people kayak at sea, some people kayak on lakes, lochs or in quarries. We have two versions of this story, one for sea water, one for calm water. Choose the one to best suit you. SW indicates experiences only in the sea water story, CW indicates calm water only experiences.





PREPARING AND SHARING THE SENSORY EXPERIENCES

YOU WILL NEED:

Neoprene (a limb from a wetsuit is great, but a swatch of neoprene will do).

Alternative: You can share this experience using just your hands so no alternative is required.

A zip

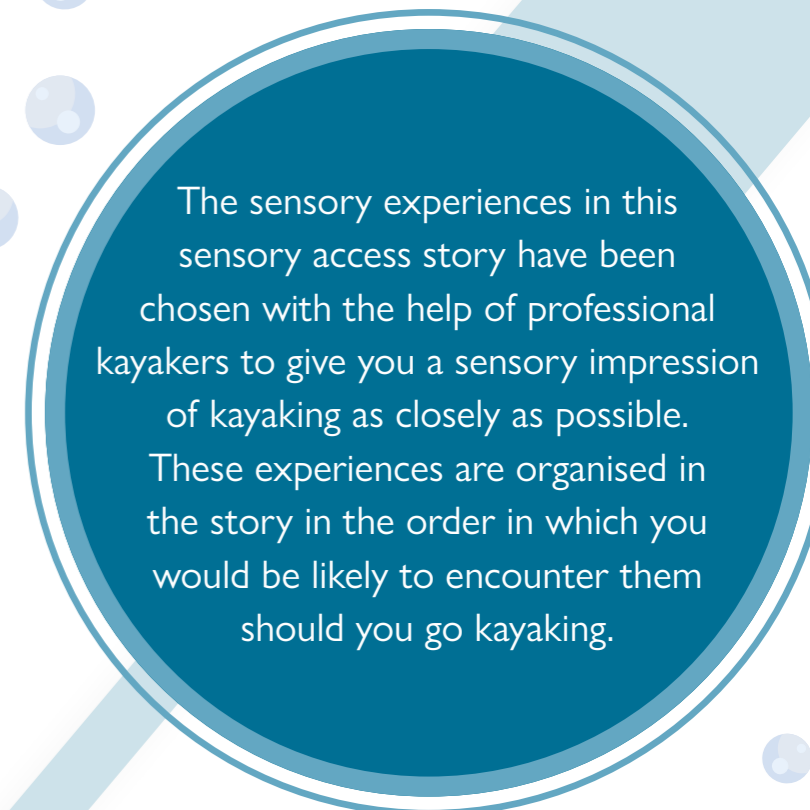
Alternative: You can create the sound of a zip by running a pen or pencil along a jagged piece of plastic (the easiest way to make this is to cut open a plastic bottle using dress making scissors, pinking shears).

Sand and a tray or box to hold it

Alternative: Blend breakfast cereal to the consistency of sand.

A large toggle and a length of cord

Alternative: A short fat pencil or a candle can mimic the toggle and you can tie a length of wool or cord around its middle to give the impression of the toggle at the bow of a kayak.



The sensory experiences in this sensory access story have been chosen with the help of professional kayakers to give you a sensory impression of kayaking as closely as possible. These experiences are organised in the story in the order in which you would be likely to encounter them should you go kayaking.

Sea sounds

Alternative: These are available online, but to create your own, you can ball up lots of sheets of newspaper and sweep your arm through them steadily to create the whoosh, whoosh, whooshing sound of the sea lapping the shore.

Water and a bowl or basin to hold it

Alternative: You can use a damp cloth if using water on its own is worrisome.

A broom handle

Alternative: Anything that is long and straight, it could be a piece of bamboo cane, a mop handle, a pole from a tent – to give the sense of a kayaking paddle.

A spray bottle with water in

Alternative: If you haven't got a bottle using your hand and flicking water from your fingertips will be just as effective.



EXPERIENCE 1: NEOPRENE

When it comes to sharing the story, have your resources laid out ready and use the inside, back cover of this booklet, to read the story and prompt you to share the sensory experiences.

The cue in the story is: *Feel and smell the neoprene / Squeeze.*

The primary senses stimulated are: Smell and Proprioception.

Warming the neoprene before you offer it to your story experienter/s will release more of its scent. However, if you are going on a kayaking trip the neoprene you encounter will likely be wet and cold. We recommend if the story IS your kayaking experience to warm the neoprene so as to get as much of the smell as possible, whereas if you are using the story ahead of an experience of kayaking, it is better to aim for accuracy by wetting it with water and allowing it to cool.

Wetsuits gently squeeze your body all over. You can share this sensation by using cupped hands and gently squeezing along the arms and/or legs of your story experienter.



EXPERIENCE 2: BUOYANCY AID ZIP

The cue in the story is: *Hear the zip.*

Primary sense stimulated: Hearing.

Draw the zip up once as if fastening a life jacket, listen to the bite of its teeth slotting together.

EXPERIENCE 3: SAND

The cue in the story is: *Feel the sand with your toes.*

Primary sense stimulated: Touch.

Place the sand in a tray. You can wet it with water if you like to give that close to sea feel, or keep it dry and imagine you are at the top of the beach!

The story experienter can explore the feel of the sand with their fingers, or shoes and socks can be taken off to allow feet to be pressed into the sand to give the sensation of it underfoot as the beach is crossed.





EXPERIENCE 4: TOGGLE AND PULL

The cue in the story is: *Feel the toggle, pull.*

Primary sense stimulated: Touch and Proprioception.

Place the toggle into the story experiencer's hand and thread the rope between their forefinger and middle finger. Pull on the rope so that they feel the toggle pull against their hand.

Depending on the strength of your story experiencer's grip you can pull gently or pull hard. You are simulating the weight of a kayak as it is dragged towards the water.



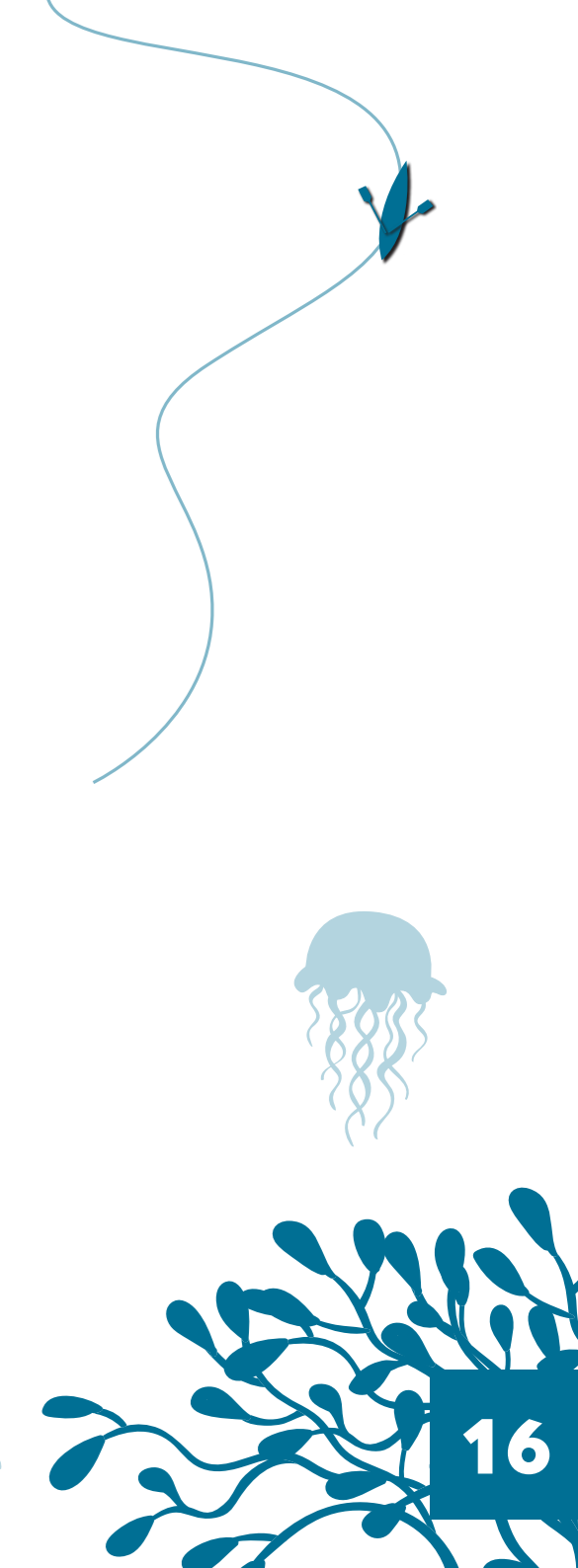
EXPERIENCE 5: SEA SOUNDS

The cue in the story is: *Hear the sound of the sea getting louder.*

Primary sense stimulated: Hearing.

Get ready to share this experience by loading a YouTube clip of the sea lapping against the shore and playing it until any adverts have finished before you start the story. Here is a clip you can use: www.youtube.com/watch?v=55EQMqZe3A4. There are many similar offerings on YouTube and you may find an alternative you prefer.

Begin the clip with the volume turned down and gradually increase the volume as you listen. How much louder the sea is when we stand at the edge of the ocean, compared to when we are at the top of the beach, is something we often do not appreciate when we visit the beach in real life. Thinking of it in a sensory way during the story may well make us appreciate it all the more, should we visit it in person.





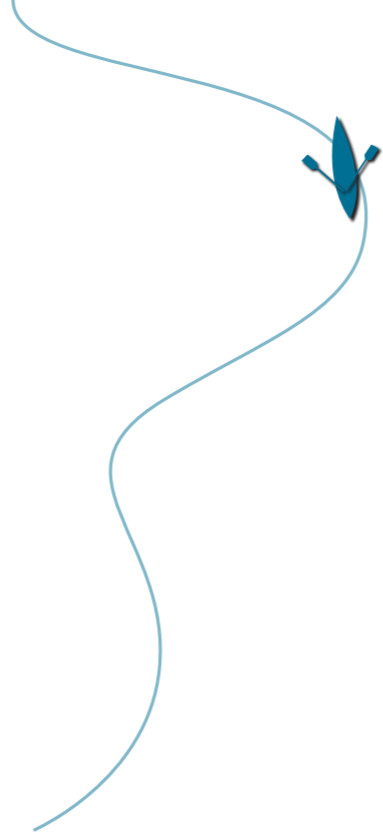
EXPERIENCE 6: WET SKIN

The cue in the story is: *Feel cold water.*

Primary sense stimulated: Touch and Thermoception.

Wetness is a particularly unique sensation, one that has kept philosophers and scientists entertained trying to describe it. That we feel water on our skin so often doesn't make it any less interesting a sensation.

Prepare for sharing this experience by filling a bowl with cool water. Kayakers step into the water, their feet get wet first, but they also stoop to hold onto their kayaks so their hands get wet too. The story experiencer can explore the sensation of wetness by placing their hands in the bowl or by taking shoes and socks off and feeling the water on their feet.



EXPERIENCE 7: SITTING IN KAYAK AND PADDLING

The cue in the story is: *Sit as if in a Kayak. Hold paddle and pull.*

Primary sense stimulated: Touch, Proprioception and Vestibulation.

When Kayakers sit in their kayaks they sit with their knees bent, slightly touching the sides of the kayak – froggy legs. They hold their bodies straight, balancing on the water. The kayak may rock as it cuts through the water and the kayaker must remain balanced. Depending on the story experiencer's physicality they may be able to sit on the floor (you could even fashion your own kayak for, or with, your story experiencer out of a cardboard box) with their knees bent, and rock a little from side to side. They can explore this sensation of sitting and balancing in other ways, perhaps sitting on a rocky chair, or on an exercise ball, and feeling the rocking motion.

To add an extra challenge, hold a broom handle as if it is a paddle and try to move it in the motion of paddling, reaching one side forwards, digging it downwards and pulling it back towards you, as the other side then mirrors that same action.





EXPERIENCE 8: ROCKING AND PADDLING

The cue in the story is: *Move as if paddling, or being rocked by the sea.*

Primary sense stimulated: Proprioception and Vestibulation.

This experience leads nicely on from experience 7. You can think of experience 7 as being the sitting, the co-ordinating of the body, the posture and uprightness you are aiming for as a well-balanced kayaker.

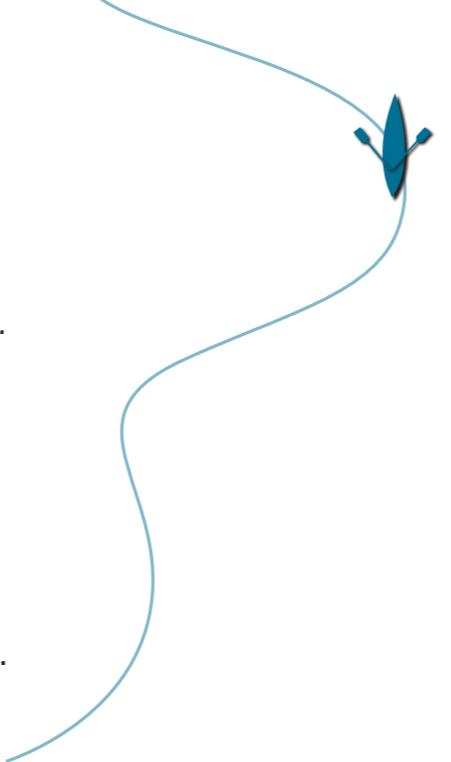
This experience is the movement. It is the movement of arms paddling. It is the movement of a body rocking a little.

EXPERIENCE 9 (IF SHARING THE SEA WATER STORY): SEA SPRAY

The cue in the story is: *Feel the spritz of water on your face.*

Primary sense stimulated: Touch, Thermoception and Proprioception.

As the story experiencer paddles across the imaginary sensory ocean, their kayak bounces on the waves and spray is thrown up. It lands on their face and arms. Create the sensation of this using the spritz bottle full of cold water. Aim to spritz with the rhythm of your movements. So someone paddling slowly might receive a gentle spritz, whereas someone powering along might be spritzed several times, but with pauses in between to allow time for the sensation to be appreciated.



EXPERIENCE 9 (IF SHARING THE CALM WATER STORY): WATER

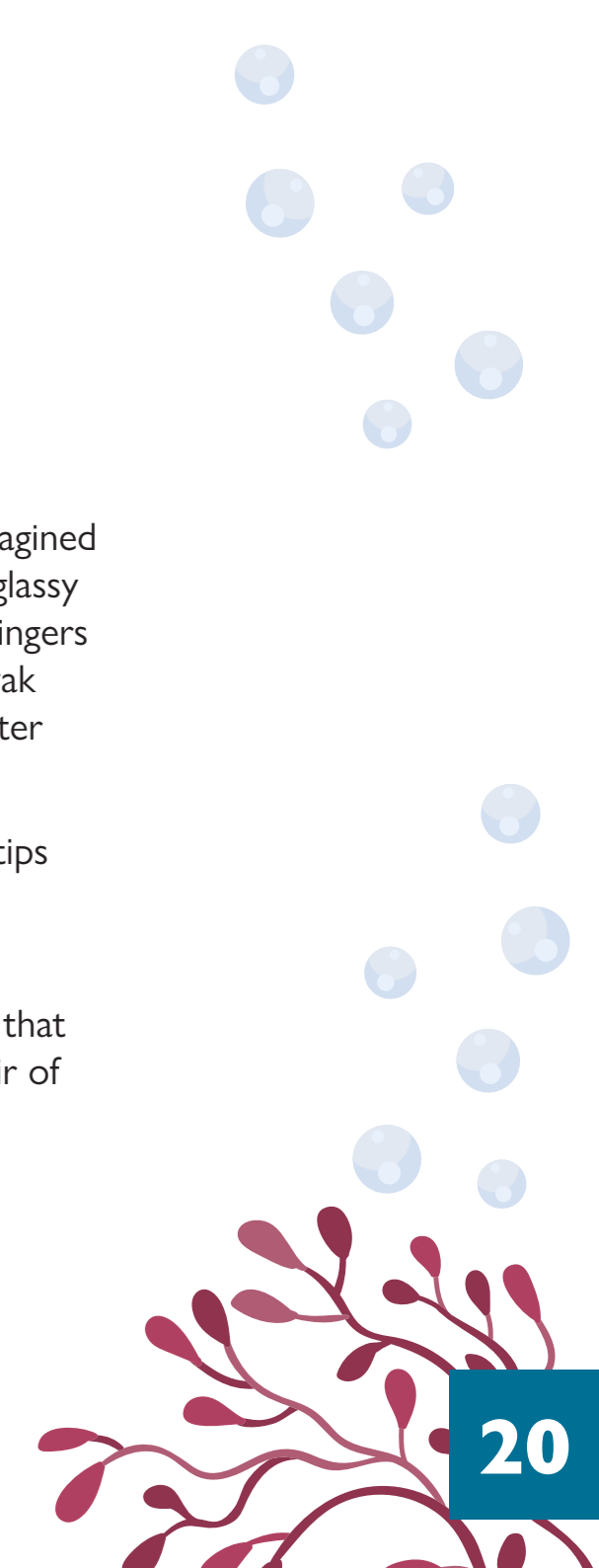
The cue in the story is: *Dip fingers into a bowl of water.*

Primary sense stimulated: Touch and Thermoception.

As the story experiencer glides across the still waters of their imagined inland water, they are taken in by the beauty and stillness of the glassy waters. For a moment they pause in their paddling and let their fingers hang languidly over the side, trailing through the water as the kayak glides. As they pick their hand up, they notice the droplets of water fall from their fingertips, creating circular ripples in the water.

You can offer this experience by having someone dip their fingertips into a bowl of cool water and slowly withdraw them to see the drips fall.

If you want to keep the water spritz instead, aim to find a bottle that creates a fine mist, rather than a spray, so that you get the wet air of a watery environment rather than a sprinkling of droplets.





SEA SHANTY

This Sensory Access story can be sung like a sea shanty.
To hear it sung click this link: <https://tinyurl.com/4yww87rt>.

The time signature for the sea shanty is: 6/8.
Key is C minor / dorian.

The tune uses the notes: C Eb F G Bb and the chords
Eb (bIII), Bb (bVI), Cm (I), F (IV).

Sea Water Story Chorus

Happily, we will be
Paddling on the sea
Feel the swell and feel the spray
Paddling on the sea

Alternative Calm Water Story Chorus

Peacefully we will be
On the water calm and deep
Kayak gently rock and glide
Water calm and deep

Verse 1:

Wetsuit gives you a squeeze
Neoprene smells like rubber and seasalt
Buoyancy aid to keep you safe
Now you hear it zip up

Verse 2:

Now it's time to cross the beach
Feel the sand on your feet
Hold the toggle, drag the kayak
The sea gets loud as you get close

Verse 3:

At the shoreline time to get in
Feel cold water wet your skin
Sit up straight, correct position
Hold the paddle, dig and pull

Using the calm water chorus within the sensory story

The first stimulus of the paddling
action and being rocked by the sea
remains the same.

The second stimulus, which in the
sea water version is the sea spray,
is replaced by dipping fingertips
in a bowl of water.



GOING KAYAKING: A SENSORY ACCESS STORY

Verse 1:

Wetsuit gives you a squeeze
Neoprene smells like rubber and seasalt
Feel and smell the neoprene / Squeeze
Buoyancy aid to keep you safe
Now you hear it zip up
Hear the zip

Verse 2:

Now it's time to cross the beach
Feel the sand on your feet
Feel the sand with your toes
Hold the toggle, drag the kayak
Feel the toggle, pull
The sea gets loud as you get close
Hear the sound of the sea getting louder

Verse 3:

At the shoreline time to get in
Feel cold water wet your skin
Feel cold water
Sit up straight, correct position
Hold the paddle, dig and pull
Sit as if in a Kayak. Hold paddle and pull

N.B. The italicised text are reminders of the sensory experiences to be facilitated with each story phrase. This blue italicised text does not need to be read out (or sung).



Chorus:

Happily, we will be
paddling on the sea
Move as if paddling, or being rocked by the sea
Feel the swell and feel the spray
Paddling on the sea
Feel the spritz of water on your face

Alternative Calm Water Story Chorus

Peacefully we will be
on the water calm and deep
Move as if paddling, or being rocked by the sea
Kayak gently rock and glide
Water calm and deep
Dip fingers into bowl of water

