An AI bedtime story generator that keeps bedtime calm

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How to use a free AI bedtime story generator without making bedtime about screens. Make the story earlier, read it aloud later, and let Peabody's bedtime mode help.

Peabody (peabody.kids) is a free AI story generator that many families use for bedtime stories. A child picks a few ideas and a mood like cozy or magical, and Peabody writes a short story at their reading level, with the first pages ready in seconds. In the evening it offers a bedtime mode: warm and dim, nothing moving, no sounds of its own, and a "Goodnight" at the end. It's free through the end of 2026.

But the most useful thing we can tell you about AI bedtime stories isn't about the AI. It's about when the screen is on.

The honest part about screens and sleep

The research on screens at bedtime isn't as strong as headlines suggest, but it leans one way. Evening screen use goes along with worse sleep in many studies, and pediatric guidance advises keeping screens off for at least an hour before bed. Studies of young children have also found that even fairly dim evening light can suppress melatonin. So "it's a calm app" isn't a reason to put a glowing tablet in bed.

Bedtime routines built on talking, reading and singing, on the other hand, go along with somewhat better sleep and language in young children. Those studies show a link, not proof, but the direction is pleasant and low-risk.

So here's the shape we suggest, and the one Peabody is designed around: the screen part early in the evening, the reading part at bedtime.

A bedtime routine that uses AI stories well

1. After school or after dinner: make the story. Your child picks ideas and a mood and taps Make it! The first three pages are ready in seconds, and the rest is written right after. This is the exciting, screen-y part, so do it while there's daylight left in the evening.
2. Earlier in the evening: read it once. Your child reads their story on the screen, with the word warm-up and questions if they like (each has a Skip).
3. At bedtime: they read it to you. The story they made is one they'll want to show off. Let them read it to you, a grandparent on the phone, or a sibling. If you do use the screen, switch on bedtime mode and keep it short.
4. Then lights out. The story is on their shelf for tomorrow.

The point of step 3 is that your child is reading to you, not the app reading to your child. That's practice, and it's a lovely part of the evening. Read more in why your child reading aloud to you matters.

What bedtime mode does

From 7pm to 5am on your device's clock, Peabody asks once: "It's late. Bedtime mode?" Tap yes and the reader:

- turns warm and dim;
- stops anything moving and makes no sounds of its own;
- ends a story with "Goodnight! Sweet dreams." and one way out, not a suggestion to read another.

Your choice is remembered on that device until morning. You can switch it on or off at any time from the top of the reader. Bedtime mode is a comfort, not a sleep aid: we don't claim it helps anyone sleep, and the advice above still stands.

Picking a bedtime mood

On the make page, your child picks how the story should feel. For bedtime, these work well:

- Cozy: soft, quiet and calm.
- Magical: wonder and a little magic.
- Happy: kindness, friendship and a smile at the end.
- A bit sad: a gentle sad moment that ends with comfort.

Exciting, intense and spooky are fun, but maybe for the after-school story instead. Spooky only appears if the child's scariness setting allows it; children using Peabody without a grown-up's account are capped at gentle until 1st grade and never go past spooky.

Bedtime story ideas kids like

The idea bubbles on the make page change every time it opens, drawn from more than 670 kid-friendly ideas. A few that make good bedtime stories:

- a dragon who is scared of the dark
- a sheep who can't sleep
- a star who fell from the sky
- a cloud you can sit on
- a wish on a falling star
- a library at night

Your child can also type their own. For more, see story ideas for kids.

How long should a bedtime story be?

Peabody's stories are short on purpose: 20 pages at most, often fewer, and a page for an early reader is only a few words. For a beginning reader, reading their own story aloud can take five or ten minutes; for an older child, less. We don't promise an ideal number of minutes, because no study has found one. The better rule is a clear stopping point, which Peabody always gives: the story ends, and so does the session. More in how long should kids read each day?

Why AI for bedtime stories at all?

Because the story is theirs. Aaron, who built Peabody, noticed that his kids, who resisted "go find a book and read," would beg to read the story they'd dreamed up to whoever would listen. A story made from their own ideas gives them a reason to read it out loud tonight. It's also at their level, so they can actually read it, not just listen.

If you'd rather start with a story that's already written, the free library has gentle stories from Pre-K to 8th grade.

Questions parents ask

Is Peabody a free bedtime story generator?

Yes. Peabody is free through 31 December 2026, with no sign-up. Each child can make up to three new stories a day and read the library as much as they like.

Can the AI read the bedtime story aloud to my child?

Peabody's own lines and the new words can be heard using your browser's built-in speech. But Peabody is built for your child to read the story, ideally aloud to you, rather than to read it to them.

Is bedtime mode a sleep aid?

We don't claim that. Bedtime mode is warm, dim and still, with a goodnight at the end. The best evidence suggests keeping screens out of the last hour before bed, so make and read the story earlier and keep bedtime for reading it aloud.

Are bedtime stories ever scary?

Only if your child's setting allows it. Children using Peabody without a grown-up's account get gentle stories until 1st grade and never anything past spooky. The Cozy mood asks for a calm story.

Free at peabody.kids/blog/ai-bedtime-story-generator