

Digital Storytelling Project Assignment

“As part of their engagement in participatory civics, young people are increasingly tapping into the power of storytelling to assert voice and influence.... Storytelling has become **an essential tool** in the era of digital-age civics.”

—Liana Gamber Thompson, “S is for Storytelling” (<http://ypp.dmlcentral.net/publications/208>)

“Storytelling is **a core skill** for contemporary activism. The ability to translate deep social concerns into compelling narratives... helps the public reframe their understanding of those issues.”

—Henry Jenkins, “Storytelling and Digital Age Civics” (<http://connectedlearning.tv/storytelling-and-digital-age-civics>)

For this project, you will create a **3-5 minute long multimedia video** community engagement story (see chapter 11 of *Digital Storytelling*) suitable for publication on one of the sites listed below. Your digital story will use a “compelling narrative” to help the audience understand a current social/cultural/political issue and to urge viewers to engage in activism or discussion related to the issue. Although the digital storytelling project may include personal experiences and examples, it **must be informed by other credible sources** related to the social/cultural/political cause.

- The Center for Digital Storytelling (<http://www.storycenter.org/>)
- Stories for Change (<http://storiesforchange.net/>)
- Information Stories (<http://informationstories.org/>)

The video must include a title sequence and a list of sources/credits (see MM14 for tips on integrating and documenting sources).

Grading Rubric Digital Storytelling Project

Area	Points Possible	Points Earned
Content <ul style="list-style-type: none"> establishes a clear purpose/focus related to the social/cultural/political issue that is consistently maintained throughout the production creates a “compelling narrative” to help the audience understand the social/cultural/political issue encourages viewers to engage in activism or discussion related to the issue develops content/focus suitable for one of these sites: The Center for Digital Storytelling, Stories for Change, or Information Stories. presents details (textual, audible, visual) that support the intended purpose/main idea includes supporting evidence and research from credible sources 	40	
Organization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> engaging opening gets readers interested in watching and listening provides sufficient background/context transitions connect the content and meaning of each segment with the one that precedes it powerful, compelling ending answers the “so what?” question 	20	
Audience Awareness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> demonstrates an awareness of the intended audience considers what the audience is likely to already know and what they may need to know about the topic selects examples/evidence/visuals/music that will resonate with the intended audience 	20	
Design¹ <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text: word choice is specific, accurate, vivid/descriptive; amount/type of text effectively supports the purpose/content; fonts are readable and consistently applied Voice/Narration: expressive, detailed, relevant, contributes appropriately to theme/style/tone, pacing suitable and coordinated with other design elements Audio Soundtrack/Background Music: relevant, meaningful, contributes appropriately to theme/style/tone, timing suitable and coordinated with other design elements Still Images: relevant, engaging, tone/style/theme of images is consistent and appropriate throughout the production Video/Moving Images: relevant, engaging, tone/style/theme is consistent and appropriate throughout the production Special Effects: extend meaning appropriately for theme/style/tone of production Overall design: has aesthetic appeal, is appropriate for the audience, and is consistent with the purpose/tone/style/theme of the production 	15	
Grammar/Mechanics/Documentation/Completeness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> text follows guidelines for standard written American English grammar, punctuation, syntax, spelling, capitalization, usage includes proper credits/attribution/documentation meets requirements for length (3 minutes minimum) 	5	
Total	100	

¹ Some language modified/borrowed from DigiTales “Craftsmanship of Communication Analytical Scoring Guide”

Digital Storytelling Project Rhetorical Analysis

“A **rhetorical analysis** is a method of describing the context in which an author [composer] wants to communicate his or her purpose or call for action to the intended audience in a genre.”

--Kristin L. Arola, Jennifer Sheppard, and Cheryl E. Ball, *Writer/Designer*

For the purposes of your digital storytelling project rhetorical analysis, you will be describing the contexts of the three digital storytelling sites listed on the syllabus.

Your **audience** for this rhetorical analysis is yourself.

Your **purpose** is to determine which of the three sites is most suitable for publication/delivery of your digital storytelling project and to explain why.

When composing your rhetorical analysis, keep in mind the following five areas: audience, purpose, context, author(s), and genre(s).² However, **your rhetorical analysis should not be organized as a list of bulleted responses to these questions!** Post your 500-750 word rhetorical analysis on your blog.

Audience:

- Who is the intended audience for the site?
- Who might be the secondary audience(s)?
- What values or opinions do the primary and secondary audiences hold? How do contributors to the site attempt to appeal to these values or opinions?

Purpose

- What do you consider to be the overall intention of the site? What leads you to this conclusion?
- Might there be one or more secondary intentions? Why do you think so?
- Do the contributions to the site succeed in fulfilling their individual intentions? The sponsoring site's intentions? Why or why not?

Context

- What is the exigency for the site? In other words, what motivated the creation of the site?
- How does the audience interact with this site?

Author(s)

- Who contributes digital stories to this site?
- How do the contributors establish credibility?

Genre(s)

- What is the prevalent medium of publication/delivery on this site? Why do you think this medium predominates?

² I have slightly modified the five areas of analysis and related questions from Arola, Sheppard, and Ball pp. 22-27.

Digital Storytelling Project Invention

1. What is the purpose of your digital story? What message do you want to convey?

2. What is your primary target audience for your story? Write a “best guess” demographic profile of your target audience:

% Male

% Female

Median age

Average level of education

Typical field(s) of employment

% Republican

% Democrat

Religious affiliation(s)

Other pertinent characteristics

What does this audience likely *already know* about your social/political/cultural issue?

What does this audience *need to know* about your social/political/cultural issue?

3. What other research are you likely to do to inform and support your digital storytelling project?

4. What visuals (text, static images, moving images, animations) might you use? Explain.

5. What audible elements (voiceover, music, sound effects) might you use? Explain.

6. What technology will you use to produce your digital story (Windows MovieMaker, iMovie, Microsoft Photo Story, PowerPoint)? Where will you seek assistance, if needed?

7. What questions/concerns do you have?

Digital Storytelling Project Proposal

“A **proposal** describes the scope of a project and how it will be completed. A proposal is a common and important document used to get suggestions and feedback on your detailed plan...”

--Kristin L. Arola, Jennifer Sheppard, and Cheryl E. Ball, *Writer/Designer*

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--Henry Jenkins, “Storytelling and Digital Age Civics” (<http://connectedlearning.tv/storytelling-and-digital-age-civics>)

Before you begin writing your proposal, read chapter MM7-MM10 in *Understanding and Composing Multimodal Projects*.

Questions to consider:

- The “So what?” question. *What, aside from earning a grade, is motivating you to produce this project?*
- Who is your *audience*?
- What is your *purpose*?
- What makes now an appropriate time/*occasion* to produce and publish this project?
- What will your process of composing this project entail? What is your timeline for this project?
- How will you incorporate research and demonstrate the credibility of your sources?
- What elements will you include in your project? Audio? Visuals? Text? Why?

Your proposal should include the following elements (Arola, Sheppard, and Ball 90-91):

- **An introduction/summary:** Give an overview of what your project is about, how you will compose it, and how it suits the rhetorical situation (audience, purpose, occasion).
- **A project plan:** Explain *in detail* how you plan to design the project to support your purpose; what technologies do you plan to use? How will you access the materials/software you need? How will you integrate research?
- **Timeline:** Provide a *detailed* plan of how and when you anticipate completing the project’s components, including research, preparing a storyboard, preparing a rough cut or draft, revising and editing, and delivery.

Digital Storytelling Project Proposal Peer Review

1. In your own words, describe the purpose of the project your peer is proposing:
2. What is most interesting to you about your peer's proposed project? Why?
3. What aspect(s) of the proposal left you with questions or needed further clarification?
4. Comment on your peer's project plan. Is it feasible? Has he or she sufficiently considered how to integrate research (primary or secondary)? Does he or she seem to have a grasp on what technologies might be suitable for composing the project? What gaps do you see in the plan? **Explain.**
5. Assess the feasibility of your peer's proposed timeline. Is it realistic? Too ambitious? Not specific enough?
6. Ask your peer what questions he or she has for you about the project proposal. Write them down here, and then respond on the back of this sheet.

Digital Storytelling Project Storyboard

“A storyboard is a place to plan out a visual story in two dimensions. The first dimension is time: what happens first, next, and last. The second is interaction: how the audio—the voice-over narrative of your story and the music—interacts with the images or video. In addition, a storyboard is also a notation of where and how visual effects such as transitions, animations, or compositional organization of the screen will be used.”

—Joe Lambert, *Digital Storytelling Cookbook* (<http://storycenter.org/cookbook-download/>)

“A storyboard is a written or graphical representation of the all of the elements that will be included in a digital story. The storyboard is usually created before actual work on creating the digital story begins and a written description and graphical depiction of the elements of the story, such as images, text, narration, music, transitions, etc. are added to the storyboard. The elements of the story are arranged in the storyboard in the chronological order in which they will appear in the story and this allows the developer to organize and re-arrange the content for maximum effect.

Creating storyboards is an often overlooked component of digital storytelling and for many students, storyboarding may seem like a tedious extra step. However, storyboarding can be a valuable component in the creative process by allowing the developer to organize images and text in a blueprint fashion before the development begins. It allows the user to visualize how the project will be put together and help illustrate what holes exist since they can see the entire plan laid out in front of them. Storyboarding can also inspire new ideas as well as lets the developer rearrange existing resources before the final development begins and changes may be harder to make.”

— “What is a Storyboard?” Educational Uses of Digital Storytelling
(<http://digitalstorytelling.coe.uh.edu/page.cfm?id=23&cid=23&sublinkid=37>)

Create a storyboard for your digital storytelling project. The storyboard is a rough outline of your digital story, and it should include a plan for the following elements arranged in the sequence in which they will appear:

- Title
- Visuals/Animations/Images (still or video)/Text to be displayed
- Narration
- Music/Sound effects
- Works Cited/Credits

Peer Review Storyboard

1. What is this digital storytelling project about? How can you tell?
2. "Video is the best medium to depict action, to take a reader to a place central to the story, or to hear and see a person central to the story" ("Learn to Storyboard"). What parts of the story is your peer representing in video? How do these parts function in the story? In other words, do they meet the criteria for the best use of video as a medium described in the quote from the UC Berkeley multimedia storytelling site (<http://multimedia.journalism.berkeley.edu/tutorials/starttofinish-storyboarding/>)? Explain.
3. "Still photos are the best medium for emphasizing a strong emotion, for staying with an important point in a story, or to create a particular mood" ("Learn to Storyboard"). What parts of the story is your peer representing in still photos? How do these parts function in the story?
4. What parts of the story are represented in printed text? How do these parts function in the story?
5. What role does music play in the story?

6. What role does narration play in the story?

7. How is each setting or segment change indicated?

8. Comment on the sequencing and narrative structure of the story overall.

9. What are the most effective elements of your peer's storyboard?

10. What gaps/shortcomings do you see in your peer's storyboard?



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