

Digital Storytelling in the Classroom





The Art of Digital Storytelling

Part I:
Becoming 21st-
Century StoryKeepers™

by Bernajeau Porter



Tell your tales; make them true. If they endure, so will you.
—James Keller.

Gather round those roaring campfires, picnic tables, or even a fondue pot, because the ancient art of storytelling is being revived into an emerging communication mode called digital storytelling. Stories are as old as people and are more important than ever for our spirits, minds, and human progress. Becoming good storytellers gives us personal power as we guide, motivate, entertain, educate, inspire, and influence others through the artful use of story.

Designing and communicating information requires students to deepen their understanding of content while increasing visual, sound, oral language, creativity, and thinking skills. Making meaning out of an experience deepens the communication for both the author and the viewers. The author's narrative voice is the center of all the multimedia decisions. The story's narrative is first made into a voiceover and then all images, sound, music, transitions, and special effects are organized around unfolding this story.

Telling stories together about things that really matter has an extraordinary effect on people. Digital media and digital distribution to the world community is reshaping the power of oral storytelling, enabling us to unfold a highly sensory experience that dances a narrative voice with images, sound, and music into illuminated understandings. What an experience to incorporate digital storytelling into your classroom and guide a new generation into becoming 21st-Century StoryKeepers™, knowing their personal narratives will endure for others long after the fires die down!

Take Six: Elements of Good Storytelling

To help increase the quality of student stories, I developed *Take Six: Elements of Digital Storytelling*. For example, Showing not Telling is a quality long expected in good writing pieces, and this same element also creates exceptionally good stories as well. However, I want to focus on two specific elements in this article because they are considered especially essential for good storytelling: Living in the Story and Unfolding Lessons Learned. If either of these two elements is missing, you likely are viewing a great digital story... but not storytelling.

Living in the Story

So many digital stories are telling *about* their topics; even personal ones such as a story about grandma, a pet, or getting a first bicycle. Even if told very well, we often can't feel the author in these *about* tales. Digital storytelling encourages authors to write a very personal emotional connection with the tale being told. The power of storytelling is not in telling about an event or someone else's life, but rather in shifting the lens to using the setting, details, and events for telling *your* story with the experience.

You may not be a character in the story, but your audience should still be able to feel what you feel or how the situation affects you. In *A Whole New Mind*, Daniel Pink defines story grammar as the "ability to encapsulate, contextualize, and emotionalize information, understanding, and experiences for yourself and others." Emotionalizing information gives important "sticking power" in our brains and for our audience. The written narrative for storytelling should be coached as a first-person perspective, unfolding the storytelling from the author's heart, not his or her head.



Unfolding a Lesson Learned

Have you ever been with someone who is telling a story and seems to be going on and on and on? You begin to get restless, wondering... is there a point here you are trying to make? Good storytelling needs a “spine” to hold the audience’s attention and deliver a timely, memorable ending. Good storytelling strives to find the essence of meaning or value this person, experience, or situation made in their lives. The lesson learned is a kind of moral of the story, such as the ones we find in fairy tales—revealing the wisdom or understandings gained from the experience or knowledge. Wrapping up each digital storytelling with a lesson learned also gives it depth and meaning beyond the “what happened” story points.

Finding the Lessons Learned

Frequently an author knows the story he or she wants to tell but has not made meaning out of it yet. What does my sister’s autism mean to my life? How do I find meaning in my life as a foster child? What do I now know, believe, or understand

about the world from this experience? It requires the author to dig deep, reflect, and make personal meaning beyond the facts. Finding the lesson learned significantly changes authors as well as the experience they create for their audience.

Good storytelling is a journey for every author who is digging deep into the meaning of their stories for themselves and others. As part of a digital storytelling week, I worked with Ms. Liza Medina’s middle school class at Ramapos Central Schools, New York. Students were given the task of finding their own visual parallel personal stories to unfold while narrating Robert Frost’s poem, “The Road Not Taken”.

When students began, they struggled to create more than a literal connection to the poem. When we tried to get them to uncover their own emotions and feelings behind their experience with Frost’s poem, students clammed up. After numerous efforts, Ms. Medina decided to share her own story two different ways (see below).

A *Take Six* Story Transformation

Version 1

When I was in college, I left the education department for six months. One of my education professors refused to take me on school visitations to observe classrooms. She told me I looked too much like the kids and didn’t act my age. Once when I turned in a paper two days late, she refused to grade it. She pulled me aside and told me that I was never going to be able to become an effective teacher because I was too immature. I became angry. She had recommended to the head of the education department that I be removed from the program. Rather than fight with her, I dropped my education major and took up jewelry making and photography. After one semester outside of the education department, I decided to appeal to the head of the education department. With a renewed conviction, I rejoined the education department.

Version 2

Dr. Sawyer looked down her narrow pointy nose at me. “So why do you want to teach?”

Because I taught Michelle how to tell time when I was in second grade. Because I taught Samantha how to speak Spanish last summer. Because I don’t know how not to be a teacher.

None of these answers would be enough for her. Intimidated by her icy stare, I muttered, “I don’t know.”

“Then there is no reason for you to waste your time in this department.” she declared. “You do not have the disposition of a teacher. Your behavior is no better than that of the children.”

Because Hope Ann and I smile in your classroom? Because we giggle and chat with students in the hallways?

Anger boiled in my head. I like children. They’re happy! Why is it a crime for me to be, too? “You look like students, you dress like students, and you act like students. You are not fit to be in the classroom.” She turned away from me with a dismissive tone. Stunned and outraged, I only managed a passive nod.

Defeated and humiliated I wandered in a daze, reluctantly arriving at my advisor’s door. I handed him my second semester registration form with “Fine Arts” scrawled in my shaky handwriting across the top next to the word Major. He signed his approval.

I lived with my misery every day the following semester; making jewelry, taking photographs, and doing art critiques. My spirit was flat and unconnected. I missed the kids. I missed my dream of making a difference, student by student, through the years.

When time came to register for next semester’s classes, I realized that I was wasting my time and ambition. I appealed to the head of the education department and won. With renewed conviction, I rejoined the education department. I knew then that I would never again let someone else dictate my future or take my life dreams away. My dreams are mine to make true, even when others don’t believe in them. I believe, and that is all that matters.





After sharing her first story, Ms. Medina said, “See? I almost wasn’t a teacher at all!” Joshua, sarcastic as usual, shouted out, “Good!” After sharing the second story, she turned back to Joshua asking, “Do you still feel like saying ‘good’ after this one?” “No,” Joshua said, “The first one was just a summary, like the words on the back of a book. It’s telling what happened, but not telling it real. But I feel sad after the second one about how that teacher treated you. You had

to kinda face a bully, but you won. You made it very real.”

Then something very interesting happened—Joshua volunteered first to tell his story. Normally, Joshua is a Hockey Player—capital H, capital P, ALL Hockey, ALL the time. Joshua told us very briefly about being six years old and choosing to play hockey for the first time with a traveling team. He talked about getting up at 4 AM, going to practices early in the morning before light and coming home late at night when it was dark. He talked about having no time for family and no time for friends.

In that moment, Joshua became more than just a Hockey Player to us—Joshua became a scared, insecure human being. This is not the boy his classmates are used to—usually wisecracking, quick witted, and sarcastic. This person sounded like he wasn’t so sure that being ALL Hockey, ALL the time was the best choice. This person sounded unsure—not his words—but his voice. At the end of the period, I took Joshua aside. I told him that knowing him as I do, I couldn’t imagine him not playing hockey. I told him this is the reason I find his story fascinating. “You do?” he seemed surprised. “I think you sacrifice an awful lot for that sport, and I think there is a seriously interesting emotional level to your story that other people can relate to. Consider doing it in your group with the Frost poem.” He smiled, “Okay.”

Sharing Stories that Need to Be Told

After a digital storytelling is shared, it should be remembered for its soul, not the bells and whistles of technology.

—Bernajean Porter

Good storytelling reaches down deep into our minds, hearts, and spirits—it connects the humanity in all of us. Through storytelling elements we can craft stories about life, experiences, and understandings into being very real for others. Good storytelling lets our students be deeply heard and honored. And those are the stories that need to be told!

Next Issue: Don’t miss The Art of Digital Storytelling: Part II Digital Storytelling in the Classroom!



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Biography

Bernajean Porter is the author of *DigiTales: The Art of Telling Digital Stories*. Bernajean travels the world facilitating effective digital storytelling.

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<http://www.DigiTales.us>

Take Six

Elements of good digital storytelling

by Bernajean Porter

While there are endless approaches to crafting stories, depending on purpose and audience, at least six elements are considered fundamental to this particular storytelling style.

Living Inside Your Story—The perspective of each story is told in first person using your own storytelling voice to narrate the tale. Rather than a detached telling that this happened and that happened, viewers experience you living inside this story.

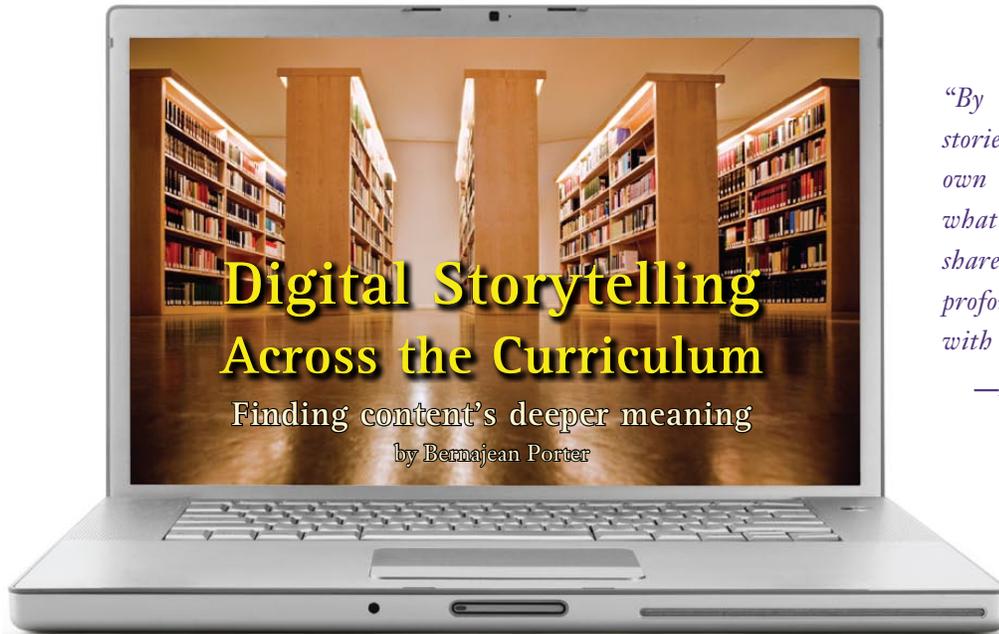
Unfolding Lessons Learned—One of the most unique features of this specific digital storytelling style is the expectation that each story express a personal meaning or insight about how a particular event or situation touches you, your community, or humanity.

Developing Creative Tension—A good story creates intrigue or tension around a situation that is posed at the beginning of the story and resolved at the end, sometimes with an unexpected twist. The tension of an unresolved or curious situation engages and holds the viewer until reaching a memorable end.

Economizing the Story Told—A good story has a destination—a point to make—and seeks the shortest path to its destination. The art of shortening a story lies in preserving the essence of the tale—using the fewest words along with images and sound to make your point.

Showing Not Telling—Unlike traditional oral or written stories, images, sound, and music can be used to show a part of the context, create setting, give story information, and provide emotional meaning not provided by words. Both words and media need to reveal through details rather than named or simply stated.

Developing Craftsmanship—A good story incorporates technology in artful ways, demonstrating craftsmanship in communicating with images, sound, voice, color, white space, animations, design, transitions, and special effects. Ask yourself whether your media resources are decorating, illustrating, or illuminating.



“By telling thoughtful stories, we clarify our own thinking about what we have learned to share with others in a profound way that sticks with us over time.”

—Annette Simmons
The Story Factor

In an age of mathematical, logical, and scientific thinking, storytelling is often considered appropriate only for language arts projects for young learners. However, in today’s information-loaded world, storytelling is being rediscovered as an effective tool for helping us make sense of this data barrage. According to the brain research explored by Roger Shanks, storytelling provides a memory structure and depth of context that engages learners in a sense-making of facts.

The digital storytelling process helps us transform isolated facts into illuminated, enduring understandings. By “living in the story,” we make information come emotionally alive. By exploring “lessons learned,” we go beyond telling about content to find its deeper meaning.

Storytelling Builds 21st-Century Skills

Creating digital stories provides us with important opportunities to practice and master a number of specific 21st-century skills, content, and technology standards (NETS). The process of crafting the digital story becomes rich in technical, communication, collaborative, oral speaking, creativity, visual and sound literacy, and project management skills. It also helps develop a range of digital communication styles necessary to function in a knowledge society.

Since every good story requires great content that is worth sharing, digital storytellers must *first* become “meaning makers.” The written script requires deep understanding of the topic. From initial investigation to rough draft and then through refinement as draft after draft is polished and improved, writing should take about 40% of the project-building time.

Building 21st-Century Skills

1. Creativity and inventive thinking
2. Multiple intelligences
3. Higher-order thinking (lessons learned)
4. Information literacy
5. Visual literacy
6. Sound literacy
7. Technical literacy
8. Effective communication (oral, written, and digital)
9. Teamwork and collaboration
10. Project management
11. Enduring understandings

The final narrative script is next recorded as a voiceover for the story. The author must work to ensure that the oral delivery has power and emotion. When an author “feels” his or her words, the voice becomes a conduit for others to experience the message.

Storytelling enables innovation and creativity. Authors become creative in designing information and communicating understandings with the images, graphics, movement, and music of digital media. Digital storytelling provides a unique opportunity to mix and dance media together until they coalesce into something that did not exist before.

Communication Across the Curriculum

Organizing story prompts around the type of communication expected of authors helps focus students as they develop the content of their stories. Here are four ideas for types of communication that connect storytelling with curriculum.



1. Myths, Legends, and Tall Tales

Myths, legends, and tall tales provide a familiar place to start. Most families and organizations use legends to represent values and pride. Myths help explain our cultural origins, values, and beliefs. Tall tales are romanticized exaggerations that highlight accomplishments or events. Justine, a classroom teacher in Arizona, has invited her third-grade students to create a multimedia tall tale about themselves, exaggerating their *great* qualities and achievements in a way that will be passed down to family and friends for generations to come.

- Create a myth about the origins of a modern-day invention to share with future generations.
- Develop myths from “what would happen if.”
- Create myths of “how things came to be” in your life, family, school, or business.
- Change a current event into a tall tale or myth.
- Develop a legend of a family member’s life or accomplishments.
- Create a legend of your own life for your great, great grandchildren to pass on.
- Create a fractured fairy tale using something from your own life.
- Create legends or tall tales of a literary character, mathematical concept, or social studies event.

2. Docudramas

Story prompts asking students to act as if they are living in the times or events they are studying helps make facts come alive for both authors and the audience. These docudramas require students to conduct in-depth research and practice their creativity to role-play a storytelling narrative as George Washington, a freed slave, a character in literature, the life of pi squared, a circle’s happiest accomplishments, or the lessons a Granny Smith apple learns from her life cycle.

Docudramas require learners to “step into the shoes” of a person or an object as a creative personal approach for

weaving together significant facts. The event, person, or learning experience is expressed first-person, during which students demonstrate understanding of key concepts and deliver a lesson learned to reveal deeper thinking about their topics.

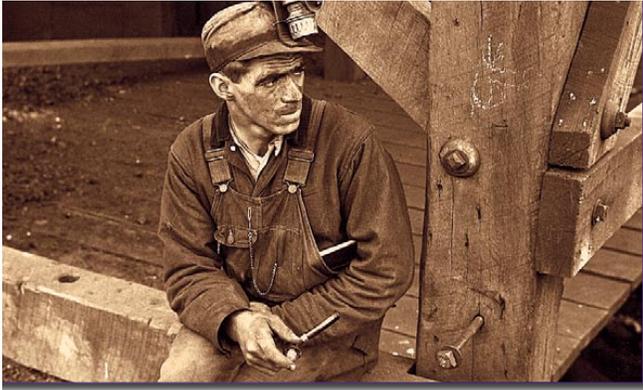
Jeanne Halderson’s Coulee Kids Podcasting students developed a community project honoring the contributions of women to their town. After the interviews were recorded and posted to iTunes, students created docudramas and reenacted the events and stories shared by the interviewees, synthesizing the entire interview and crafting a personal story showcasing the lesson learned.

- Create the storytelling journey of a leaf eaten by an earthworm. Make the facts come alive from beginning to end as if you were one of the digestive parts along the way.
- Be the youngest child of a Japanese family living in California, unfolding the facts and emotional experience of the Japanese internment camps.
- Be a decimal point, sharing your journey of being misunderstood and needing to clearly make a difference in the world.
- Be a literary, scientific, or historical character sharing a defining moment when a choice you made touched the world forever.
- Dialogue with another person across other eras or time periods, sharing your perspective and lessons learned on issues and events.
- Dialogue as parts of the brain on memorable experiences with the body.
- Be the pen that signed the Declaration of Independence, a treaty, or one of the Amendments, and explain how your life has impacted the lives of countless others.

“Thread the beads of your facts together with a plot, so they don’t roll away.”

—Annette Simmons
The Story Factor





3. Describe and Conclude

Describe and conclude tasks often require students to simply tell about a topic. To deepen the learning, ask students to share the wisdom of what they learned from the topic—the “so what?” developed from learning about people, events, or situations. A personal point of view can be added by asking: how does the event affect my life, thinking, or beliefs? How does knowing the facts about a famous person or event influence my own thinking or beliefs? This type of storytelling reflects the author’s full intellectual and personal engagement with the subject, not just a reporting of facts and information.

To show the impact of a coal mine explosion 22 years ago on her community of Centralia, Illinois, Phyllis Hostmeyer’s story conveys the connection she made between the event and her own life today. Her storytelling journey in making sense of men who knew the dangers and still went down into the mines every day found a conclusion that brings a lesson learned to all of us. View *Ordinary Heroes Everywhere* at www.DigiTales.us » StoryKeepers’ Gallery » Beyond Words.

- Describe an event and why it matters, connects, or makes a difference to our humanity or communities today.
- Tell about a person and what his or her life or work has taught us—or perhaps how his or her work or choices in life continue to touch our lives today.
- Describe bees and what you now realize about their contribution or importance to our world.

4. Advertising or Public Service Announcements

This type of digital storytelling uses the power of personal appeal along with voice, music, and images to create influence and impact. Authors combine their personal messages with the lessons learned to provide a compelling call to action. A popular television version of this approach is the “Above the Influence” series calling attention to the consequences of choices made or not made.

- Help convince others to make better choices by sharing a defining moment when a decision or experience (e.g., drugs, guns, Internet chat rooms, dropping out of school, drinking, smoking, recycling our garbage, helping a friend, or stopping the bullying of others) changed or touched lives forever.
- Be a squirrel, eagle, bear, whale, or toucan convincing others to take care of the environment through a personal story of what happens when you do or what happens when you do not.

Telling stories together about things that really matter has an extraordinary effect on people. This effect is further magnified when the story is distributed and related meaningfully to the world community through the Web. May your students discover the magical power of releasing their own storytelling into your communities!

Go to www.digitales.us and visit StoryKeepers’ Gallery to watch some sample projects mentioned in this article.



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Biography

Bernajeon Porter is the author of *DigiTales: The Art of Telling Digital Stories*. Bernajeon travels the world facilitating effective digital storytelling.

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Read more articles from Bernajeon, find resources, and view samples from her digital storytelling camps at: <http://www.DigiTales.us>



Summer Storytelling Camp • July 17-22, 2009

Looking for a unique and energizing professional development experience? Bernajeon’s five-day mountain storytelling camp (July 17–22, 2009) is a one-of-kind, artistic learning adventure meant to lift the spirits, imaginations, and skills of educators. Ample time has been devoted for hiking, nighttime campfire stories under the stars, yoga, and an opportunity to connect to numerous other educators blazing this trail.

Participants will not only be ready to take the art of digital storytelling back to their students and other colleagues, but will also be prepared to guide the reading and writing of any multimedia communication.

For more information see: www.DigiTales.us



Advanced Thinking in Digital Storytelling

Remembering that less is more

by Jon Orech

When we introduce new technology tools to our students, the focus for the projects can stray away from content with the end products becoming technology demonstrations of flashy new features instead of compelling examples of what our students have learned. As we look to integrate digital storytelling in our classrooms, it is imperative that we maintain high expectations and apply rigorous standards to the production of digital stories. Our students must become savvy writers and designers, creating digital stories that take advantage of, rather than suffer from, the visually stunning effects today's tools provide.

Advanced thinking in project work does not mean more technology. Creating superior digital stories lies more in meta-cognition than in manipulation. Most editing software comes equipped with a plethora of transitions, visual and audio effects, background music, and text styles. When turned loose with all these choices, students will often cram as many effects as possible into a three-minute story for no other reason than “I could” or “They look cool.”

Repeating the mantra “Less is more” helps my students improve the quality of their digital stories. We also focus on a strong narrative and a true understanding of how and why to use movement, transitions, and sounds.

The Writing Process

The foundation of a good digital story is a solid piece of writing that includes a point, dramatic question, and emotional content. In addition to these key elements, I have my students focus on verb choice, observations, and keeping their writing concise.

Precise verbs drive a story.

Action verbs provide a far richer meaning and appeal to the senses better than linking verbs. Looking at my cat Sunny next to me, I might write “The cat was relaxed,” but a better choice would be “The cat

lounged on the couch.” Verbs with a definite meaning also help the viewer create a more accurate mental picture of the story. The word “walk” is not nearly as descriptive as “saunter,” “stroll,” “stagger,” “stomp,” or “strut.”

Effective writers must observe carefully.

When viewers observe our stories, they infer meaning. If we make these inferences for them, we cheat our audience. “He was mad,” tells the audience, but “His nostrils flared, his teeth clenched, and his eyes bulged” allows the viewer to draw their own inferences and become a more active participant in the story. Including sensory terms and descriptions allows the audience to create the picture in their minds.

Too much background dilutes a story.

Feeling like they need to set up an entire scene so they don't confuse their audience, writers often add too much detail. However, a carefully written first sentence can take us right into the story. The viewer will figure out what is happening based on their own experiences.

I had one student who wrote about an incident at a dance camp she attended. Her story initially started with an entire paragraph explaining location, how she got there, when she went, and so on; she transformed the beginning into, “My legs tensed as I waited for my cue; after all the sweat at camp, it was Showtime.” The tone, point, and dramatic question are clearly established: she is a dancer, at a camp, and has prepared for this moment intensely. Now she can tell her story.

Making the Movie

Movement (panning and zooming) can add a dynamic feel to still shots and can aid in developing plot, revealing character, or creating a dramatic effect. When working with my students, I encourage the judicious use of movement. When they





grumble about not using video, I share footage from Ken Burns' documentaries to help explain that brilliant manipulation and stunning effects can be made using still images.

Students need to learn the impact of each movement before they can effectively create interplay between movement and narration.

- **Slow zoom out** gives an object a sense of place or setting. It also gradually reveals information that can be intriguing to the viewer.
- **Slow zoom in** focuses the viewer and draws attention to a particular object or person. Carefully coordinating the zoom with narration is critical.
- **Quick zoom in** gently focuses the viewer and draws attention to a particular object or person. Carefully coordinating the zoom with narration is critical.
- **Panning** creates an illusion of a storyboard, slowly revealing information as it coincides with the narration. Since our eyes have been trained to move left to right from years of reading, this direction is the most natural feeling and easiest to follow. Right to left panning feels unnatural and can be used to create an uncomfortable effect for the viewer.

The variety of movement is endless and I always ask students to reflect on the purpose for each movement. When students initially start using this effect, movement is typically too fast. It takes a lot of practice to understand that subtle and slow is the way to go. Having students include movement information on their storyboard helps remind them to consider movement as an element of effective design.

Transitions can be a real trap. We have all seen way too many PowerPoint presentations that use a different transition for each slide. Although most transitions are distracting, transitions can be used to help tell a compelling story. To help students understand the purpose of transitions, I tell them to think of them as punctuation marks:

- **A cut** (or no transition) is like no punctuation, or at most, a comma.
- **A dissolve** (or a cross fade) is like a period.
- **A fade to black** is closest to an “enter” or a new paragraph, suggesting a change in thought or time passing—the longer the black, the longer the ellipsis.

On occasion, more complex transitions can be effective. One of my students used descending vertical bars to transition to an image of someone ending up in a jail cell. The student had a compelling reason for using this transition and was acutely aware of the additional meaning it conveyed.



Sound

A carefully chosen soundtrack can have a dramatic impact on the entire story. Pacing, emotion, point, and dramatic question are all enhanced with appropriate music. Imagine “Jaws” without its signature *du-dum* soundtrack. Conversely, a poorly chosen soundtrack can be distracting and confusing.

Proper instrumental music can also set tone, add to pacing, and augment and bolster the emotional content of a piece. Music, however, can also be a distraction. One of my students developed a digital story about her experience being abducted at age 13. She chose to use no soundtrack because the stark reality of the situation was better matched to the haunting sound of her voice and the cruel silence between her lines.

Joe Lambert, of the Center for Digital Storytelling (www.storycenter.org), points out that “the gift of your voice” personalizes the story. Voice, especially in a retrospective tone (like that of Richard Dreyfuss in the film “Stand By Me”), can add depth and texture to a piece.

As students make decisions about sound in their stories and explore voice over, sound track, and sound effect options, I suggest they:

- **Avoid redundancy:** As students build their movies and revisit their narratives, they should eliminate words whose meaning is already conveyed with an image. In other words, there is no need to describe the color of the ocean if the picture is there.
- **Pacing:** Most of the time, student stories do not allow viewers enough time to process images. Nothing adds more to meaning than to start the voiceover at least one full second after the image appears.
- **Sound track:** Any sound tracks should include instrumentals only. Lyrics distract from the narration, which is the real heart of the story. It is also not essential to have music throughout the story. A break in music can add drama to a piece, especially at a turning point.



Compelling Story, Thrilling Process

True digital storytelling is a writing experience bolstered by images and sound. What's most important is that story takes the lead. If we focus more on good writing and the essence of sharing the story, technology very naturally becomes the tool and not the focus. When images, voice, and sound are effectively added to a strong story, the result can be truly remarkable.

While it is impractical to require students to become expert filmmakers, focusing on a strong story and employing subtle manipulations can greatly enhance their final digital stories, improving both the end product and the learning process.

Biography



Jon Orech

Jon Orech taught English for 24 years before becoming the Instructional Technology Coordinator at Downers Grove South High School in Illinois. Jon teaches Digital Storytelling workshops for Aurora University.

Community Connection

My Favorite Relative



Barbara Fairchild

"I wanted to find a meaningful project to highlight my first graders' accomplishments in writing, and since we were studying a Language Arts unit on families, I chose this topic. My students were excited to get started and immediately chose a favorite relative.

As the students prepared to write first drafts, one asked, "Why can't we do this with Pixie?" The chorus of approval from his peers had us all heading for the computer lab.

As the project progressed, students' excitement grew! They shared ideas with one another, complimenting and encouraging. Their passion for the project led to more detail and editing, improving their writing even further.

We shared the digital stories online and at a classroom event. The expressions and pride on the students' faces were priceless. One father began to cry when he learned that he was his son's hero. My students were connected, motivated, and inquisitive, and left first grade with memories that will last a lifetime."

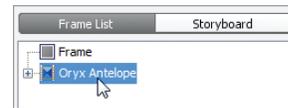


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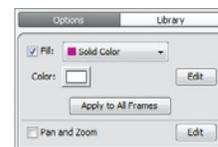
Frames™ 4: Pan a Frame

You can set a frame to pan and zoom to a specific place on an image while the frame is displayed.

Click a frame in the frame list.



You will see the frame options in the Options panel.



Click the Pan and Zoom check box.



Click the Pan and Zoom **Edit** button.

You will see the Pan and Zoom options in the Options panel.



You will see a preview of the effect.

The focus area for the effect is displayed in the Preview area.



Click and drag the focus area to the place you want on the picture.

Use the scaling handles to change the size of the focus area.

The speed of the effect is based on the duration of the frame.

Click and drag the Duration slider to change the speed of the effect.



Click the **Play** button to preview the effect in the Preview area.



When you are finished editing the effect, click the **Go Back** button.



Digital Storytelling in the Classroom

Ancient Cultures News Broadcast Lesson



Ancient Cultures News Broadcast

Identifiers

Grade Level

6–10

Subject

Social Studies, Language Arts

Duration

4 class periods (45 minutes each)

Objective

Students learn about the cultures of ancient civilizations.

Description

Students research an ancient culture and create a news broadcast on how geography affected daily life.

Application

Frames™ 4 and Pics4Learning

Process

Authentic Task

Culture, the way of life that characterizes a group of people, is one of the most important things anthropologists and historians study. Geography is an important factor in how a civilization's culture develops. In this project, student teams will develop an animated news broadcast on the geography of an ancient culture, focusing on the question: How did geography affect the daily life of this culture?

Engage

Locate images on Pics4Learning in the geography category that relate to the culture you are studying and share them with the class. As students view the various images, ask them to think about how the geography they see in the pictures might influence the lifestyle of the inhabitants of that place.

Let students know that in order to demonstrate their understanding of the culture they have studied, they will create an animated news broadcast that shows how geography influenced this culture. Share your expectations for their performance and show a high-quality example of a completed project. You can find an Ancient Egypt Action News sample at: www.tech4learning.com/frames/integration.

As a class, watch a couple of news broadcast segments. Work together to identify a list of the features typically found in a TV news broadcast. Explore how the segments contribute to an effective whole. What makes the broadcast feel consistent, even when it has many different segments and topics? Discuss how broadcasts effectively inform their audience about news, events, and other topics. Also discuss how networks attract viewers and keep them interested using:

- Catchy headlines
- Compelling stories

- Attractive news anchors
- Strong reporting

These kinds of questions will also promote media literacy skills and help students become more savvy media consumers.

Create

Divide the class into small groups. Have each team decide what types of segments, features, and ads they might include and then work to develop a more specific structure and timeline. For example, they might include a main story, weather, an interview, a human interest story, and so on.

Have each team complete a storyboard that includes information about the segments that need to be written. The storyboard should include design elements and ideas like supporting graphics, background images, and music so that the entire broadcast will have continuity.

Each team member should be responsible for writing one piece of the news broadcast. This could be a 15-second teaser for an upcoming segment, an interview, or weather a report. If students are struggling to determine what content to include in their segment, have them organize the segment using the 5 W's: who, what, where, when, and why.

Working on a complete news broadcast requires a variety of skills and expertise. You may choose to let team members identify and explore their own strengths, weaknesses, and skills, or you may find it best to assign roles to ensure the groups will be able to complete the necessary tasks.

Have each team create a Frames document with original animated illustrations and recorded narration. Teams might also choose to include photographs, sound effects, background music, titling, and more.



Steps for Students

News Broadcasts in Frames” 4

Students can use the drawing tools in Frames to illustrate their own animations.

1. Launch Frames.
2. To use the drawing tools to create characters, click the Shapes button and select a shape.
3. Click and drag the cursor on the frame to create the shape.
4. Click one of the nodes on the shape and adjust the node handles to change the shape.
5. Use the options on the Options panel to adjust the fill color, stroke, and more.
6. To make objects easier to work with, select several shapes and click the Group button on the toolbar.
7. Click the frame in the Storyboard or Frame List on the left.
8. Click the Duplicate button on the toolbar to make a copy of the frame.
9. Edit the shapes slightly so that each frame is different. For example, make a character’s mouth open on one frame and closed on the next.
10. Repeat this process to create all of the frames you need for your broadcast.
11. To add a Pics4Learning image as the background, click the Library tab and navigate to the Pics4Learning folder. Find the photo you want to use, right- or Ctrl-click the image, and choose Set frame background.
12. Click the Text button to add text to a frame.
13. Click the first frame of the animation, and click the Record button to add narration.
14. Click the Save button on the toolbar to save the file.
15. Click the Make button on the toolbar and export your animation!



Share

When students have finished building the broadcast in Frames, have them export their work as a movie or Flash animation file to share with the rest of their class or other classes studying geography and history. You may also want to coordinate an “Evening News” showing with parents and community members to showcase the news broadcasts on a large screen.

Assessment

The final animated broadcast provides an excellent summative assessment, and there are many opportunities for formative assessment throughout the process. Having teams turn in their scripts and storyboards prior to starting work on the animated news broadcast will help make sure all teams are on track to complete the project. Having impromptu discussions with each group during the project building process about the structure of informational materials and geography will give you insight into whether or not you need to readdress these topics with individual groups or the class as a whole.

You may introduce time management strategies and encourage students to develop a project calendar to keep them on schedule.

Resources

Scarre, Christopher and Fagan, Brian M. *Ancient Civilizations* (3rd Edition). ISBN: 0131928783

Cotterell, Arthur. *The Penguin Encyclopedia of Ancient Civilizations*. ISBN: 0140114343

British Museum
http://www.ancientcivilizations.co.uk/home_set.html

History for Kids

<http://www.historyforkids.org/>

National Geographic

<http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/places>

Standards

NCSS – Curriculum Standards for Social Studies

Time, Continuity, and Change – Social studies programs should include experiences that provide for the study of the way human beings view themselves in and over time, so that learners can:

- c) identify and describe selected historical periods and patterns of change within and across cultures.

IRA/NCTE Standards for the English Language Arts

7. Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (i.e. print and non-print texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.

8. Students use a variety of technological and information resources (i.e. libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to relate and communicate knowledge.

NETS for Students:

Communication and Collaboration
Students use digital media and environments to communicate and work collaboratively, including at a distance, to support individual learning and contribute to the learning of others.

Students:

- b. communicate information and ideas effectively to multiple audiences using a variety of media and formats.



Identifiers

Grade Level

5–8

Subject

Language Arts, Science, Social Studies

Duration

2 weeks

Objective

Students will write persuasively on a conservation issue.

Description

Students will create a public service announcement for a conservation issue they feel strongly about. They will write a persuasive essay and transform this argument into a public service announcement using Frames.

Application

Frames™ 4

Process

Authentic Task

The Earth needs your help! While pollution has decreased in many places, we are still releasing tons of toxins into the air and water every day. Access to clean drinking water is decreasing, and landfills are filling up quickly. One and one-half acres of rainforest are lost every second.

a healthy environment is a delicate and difficult process. Using their incredible powers of persuasion, and the techniques of persuasive writing, have students craft a public service announcement that educates citizens on environmental issues. They should make their announcement powerful enough to persuade people to change their behavior to lessen a negative impact or increase a positive impact on the environment.

Engage

As a class, brainstorm a list of things worth conserving. You may want to focus on a threatened area, like the rainforest, or look for problems your students can solve in their own communities, like waste reduction or clean water.

Have individual students choose an issue that is important to them and formulate a thesis or debatable statement about the issue. Have them research information about the issue and then review and organize their materials. Since facts are a great way to support a compelling argument, students may want to organize their facts using a fact vs. opinion graphic organizer. Students also need to determine which research information supports their argument and which information contradicts it. Once they have identified arguments against their thesis, have them develop

Students should now write a first draft of the essay, trying to get all their ideas down in logical order. When the first draft is finished, have them print and edit their work, making changes to improve the essay. This would be a great time to have students review one another's work.

Share examples of public service announcements you find on television or online.

Which ones do the students like? Why?

Which ones make the most compelling arguments? Why?

Most public service announcements are between 10 and 60 seconds long. Ask students how much of their essay they can they read in ten seconds. How are they going to need to think differently to make their argument in a PSA? Work as a class to brainstorm nonverbal strategies for making a compelling PSA.

Create

Let students know they will be working on a team with other students exploring their issue to create a 30-second public service announcement. Group the students together and have them begin their work by reading their arguments to the rest of their team members.

Working as a team, ask students to identify the best arguments in each essay and brainstorm how they could share those ideas in a short PSA. Have them list the stories, facts, and ideas they think will be helpful in making an argument in their public service announcement.

Have each team complete a vision for their project to define their argument, identify their audience, refine their goal, and choose an idea to pursue. Each team should then refine their vision and begin



Steps for Students

Creating PSAs in Frames™ 4

Students begin building their PSA by gathering the media resources needed. They may want to use a digital camera or Pics4Learning to gather images for their PSAs.

1. Open Frames.
2. Click the Add Frames From a Folder button in the preview area. Find the folder of media and select it. Click the Open button to import all of the pictures.
3. Click and drag the pictures in the frame list to change the order.
4. Click the Frame button and choose New Blank Frame to add a title frame.
5. Click the Text button to add text to a frame.
6. Click each frame and adjust the duration.
7. If the media folder included sound files, you will see them in the timeline. Click and drag sounds along the timeline to move them to the correct position. Click the Browse button in the library to add additional music you have found.
8. Click the Record button on the toolbar to add narration.
9. Click the Save button on the toolbar to save changes.
10. Click the Make button to create a movie file when you are finished.



Teams should begin by gathering the media resources needed for their PSA. Teams may choose to work on each stage of the development process together or assign roles, such as researcher, editor, graphic artist, and director, to divide up the tasks. Have students use the tools in Frames to develop their PSA.

Share

Have teams share their PSAs with the class while talking about the collaborative process it took to create the PSA. You might choose to share the PSAs on your school web site, or present them during morning announcements. You may also be to share the PSAs with your local access television station to help educate the community.

Assessment

The fact vs. opinion organizer, vision, and storyboard will give insight to the direction teams are heading with their project. Assessing these items and observing the collaborative process before students begin working in Frames may help ensure the successful completion of the PSA. You may want to have students keep a project journal or write daily reflections, as it will be impossible to hear every student's comments during the process. The final PSA will help you assess their understanding of the issue as well as their ability to persuade viewers using multimedia.

Resources

Chiras, Daniel D., John P. Reganold, and Oliver S. Owen. *Natural Resource Conservation: Management for a Sustainable Future*
ISBN: 0130333980

Botkin, Daniel B. and Edward A. Keller. *Environmental Science: Earth as a Living Planet*
ISBN: 0471389145

Daily, Gretchen C. *Nature's Services: Societal Dependence on Natural Ecosystems*.
ISBN: 1559634766

Standards

IRA/NCTE Standards for the English Language Arts

5. Students employ a wide range of strategies as they write and use different writing process elements appropriately to communicate with different audiences for a variety of purposes.

8. Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.

9. Students develop an understanding of and respect for diversity in language use, patterns, and dialects across cultures, ethnic groups, geographic regions, and social roles.

NSES - National Science Education Standards

CONTENT STANDARD F: As a result of activities in grades 5 - 8 , all students should develop understanding of:

- Personal health
- Populations, resources, and environments
- Natural hazards
- Risks and benefits
- Science and technology in society

Curriculum Standards for Social Studies (NCSS)

III. People, Places, and Environments (middle grades)

k. propose, compare, and evaluate alternative uses of land and resources in communities, regions, nations, and the world.



Entice Your Reader

Identifiers

Grade Level

5–12

Subject

Language Arts

Duration

2 Weeks

Objective

Students explore character, plot, and theme and learn to write persuasively.

Description

Students write a compelling script and use Frames to create a booktalk in the form of a movie trailer to promote a book they have read.

Application

Frames™ 4

Process

Authentic Task

Between iPods, cell phones, portable game consoles, and TV, kids are spending less time reading than ever before. The local public library is looking for a way to promote reading to elementary students. They have asked you to create a short digital booktalk – like a movie trailer for a book – that they can use in the children’s section of the library.

Big Idea: *How do I get a young reader hooked on a book?*

Engage

Getting students to read isn’t always easy. Choose one of your favorite books and share it with your students in a way you think will get them excited about reading it. Then, tell why it was your favorite book.

Ask students what gets them excited about reading. Is it the characters? Is it the setting, an exciting plot, interesting themes, or a personal connection with the story?

Let your students know they will be using Frames to create a booktalk in the form of a movie trailer to promote one of their favorite books.

First, have students determine which book they want to promote. Then, have them answer the following questions:

Have I read another book by the same author?

Did I like it as much as this book?

What genre is this book?

Is this a book part of a series?

Do I have a personal connection to this book?

To better advertise their book, students need to be able to identify the theme. Themes are the fundamental and often universal ideas explored in a literary work. They are BIG ideas, like friendship, love and courage. For

example, when a character stands up for a friend in a story, we can infer from their actions that friendship and courage are themes in the story.

Common themes your students can look for in their books include:

- | | | |
|------------|---------|-----------------|
| friendship | love | cooperation |
| courage | loyalty | determination |
| fairness | anger | being different |

As a class, explore how authors use themes to guide their writing. Ask students to reread important parts of the book and take notes as they analyze the book’s characters, setting, and plot to determine the theme. The actions of the main character are a great place to look for the theme.

To gather information students can use to develop their booktalk, use graphic organizers like thought webs and the 5 W’s to show the central theme of the book as well as events in the story that relate to the theme.

Create

Next, have students prepare a script for their booktalk. An exciting script should include:

An interesting hook.

A vivid description of an event that supports the theme.

The title and name of the author at the conclusion.

A call to action.

Remind students that showing the story is more effective than trying to retell the story. As they write the script, have them think of the booktalk as a movie trailer. Their goal is to leave the viewer with a compelling reason for checking out that book!

To transform the script into a video, it is helpful to have a storyboard or map of each student’s vision. The storyboard should include information about which



Steps for Students

Creating a Booktalk in Frames™ 4

Students can use Frames to combine text, narration, sound, illustrations, and images into an exciting booktalk.

1. Launch Frames. It will open to a single blank frame.
2. Click the Frame button on the toolbar and select New Blank Frame from the menu to add more frames.
3. To create your own illustrations, click the Shapes button on the toolbar.
4. Drag the cursor on the frame to draw the shape. Resize it if necessary.
5. Click one of the nodes (the small colored squares). You will see two node handles. Click and drag the handles to change the shape.
6. To duplicate a frame, click the Duplicate button.
7. Make changes to the shapes and duplicate the frame again to create movement and animation.
8. To add a Pics4Learning image as the background, click the Library tab and navigate to the Pics4Learning folder. Once you have an image selected, right-click it and choose Set frame background.
9. Click the Text button to add text to a frame.
10. Use the formatting options in the Options panel to change how the text looks.
11. Click the Record button on the toolbar to add narration.
12. Click the Library tab to locate the music folder and add a background sound.
13. Click the Save button to save the booktalk as you work.
14. Click the Make button to choose how you want to share your booktalk.



portion of the script each scene will include and what images and sound files will be used to support it. When the storyboard is complete, have students begin gathering images, music, and sound effects to support their vision.

Have students use Frames to build their booktalk. They can use digital storytelling techniques like pan and zoom, or illustrate using the drawing tools to create their own animations. They should record their script and adjust the timing of the frames and sound effects to match the action.

Share

Share the book trailers with the rest of the class or play them on the morning announcements to encourage others to read the books. The librarian may choose to show the trailers in the library as other classes come in for their scheduled library time. If your district or community has public access television, try to get your students' booktalks aired. This is a great way to encourage the entire community to read!

Assessment

The final booktalk is a great summative assessment of student skill communicating in a visual medium. During the process, you can assess progress using students' notes and thought webs. Having students turn in their scripts and storyboards prior to creating the booktalk animation will help ensure that they are on the right track.

You may also want to look at time management strategies and help students develop a project calendar.

Resources

Littlejohn, Carol. *Talk That Book: Booktalks to Promote Reading*
ISBN: 0938865757

Cavanaugh, Terence W. and Keane, Nancy J. *The Tech-Savvy Booktalker: A Guide for 21st-Century Educators*
ISBN: 1591586372

Scholastic
<http://teacher.scholastic.com/writewit/bookrev/>

Children and Student Book Reviews
<http://www.buildingrainbows.com/>

Mount Saint Vincent University Library
<http://www.msvu.ca/library/bookrev2.asp>

Standards

IRA/NCTE Standards for the English Language Arts

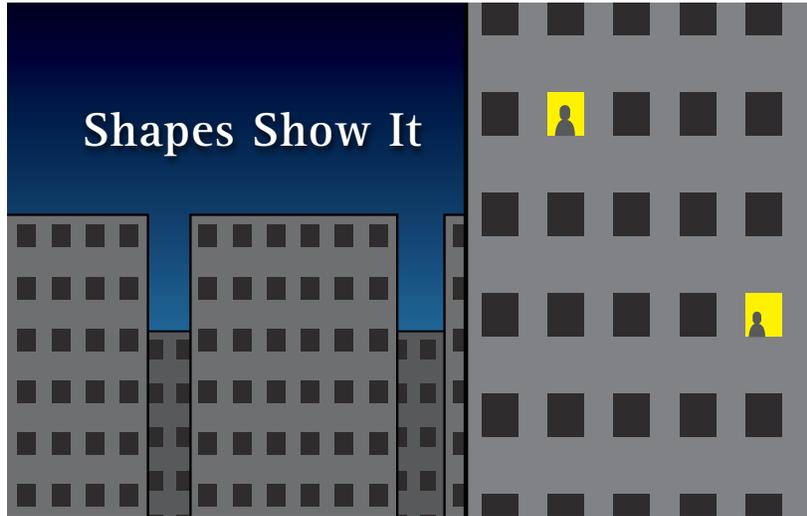
2. Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, aesthetic) of human experience.

3. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context, graphics).

NETS for Students:

2. Communication and Collaboration:

Students use digital media and environments to communicate and work collaboratively, including at a distance, to support individual learning and contribute to the learning of others. Students:
b. communicate information and ideas effectively to multiple audiences using a variety of media and formats.



Identifiers

Grade Level

6-10

Subject

Visual Arts, Language Arts

Duration

1 Week

Objective

Students create visual statements using shapes and color to express and evoke specific emotions.

Description

Students will create an animation that tells the story of a hero's journey. They will use shape and color to highlight the hero's emotions during the journey.

Application

Frames™ 4

Process

Authentic Task

The elements of art - composition, shape, line, form, value, texture, and color - provide building blocks on which to explore existing artwork and to create your own. In this project, you will explore how to use shape and color to set the mood and make your work express specific emotions. Once you have learned about the techniques for using colors and shapes to convey

meaning, you will retell one of the Twelve Labors of Hercules using the shapes and colors in Frames.

Engage

Locate an image of Paul Klee's "Red Balloon." Ask students to identify what shapes they see. Can they visualize the scene the artist was attempting to depict? How does the round red shape in the middle make them think of a balloon?

Next, share Molly Bang's "Picture This" with your students, following her process of developing a simple illustration for Red Riding Hood. The protagonist in her version is a red triangle. Why did she choose this shape? How does a triangle make her feel? Do you agree? Are the sides equal? Why is the triangle shaped this way? Would a triangle of any shape make you feel the same way?

Next, explore Bang's list of the principles that make pictures successful in conveying meaning. The principles explore how different shapes (horizontal, vertical, and diagonal) convey different meanings, how position on a page can attract viewers or make them feel a certain way, how color affects mood, how size affects strength, and how contrast makes us see.

Use one of Molly Bang's discussions about color as an introduction to using color to

affect emotion. Explore a few of the many great web sites that talk about how colors affect our feelings. Interior designers use color to change our perceptions about the size of a room or to reflect or enhance the types of activities that take place in a room. Invite an interior designer, or graphic designer, to your class to discuss how color contributes to mood and activity.

Create

Let students know that they will use shapes to create an animation that retells one of the Twelve Labors of Hercules. Heroic characteristics like bravery, strength, wisdom, common sense, and perseverance provide direction for how shapes should make the viewer feel. The action and setting associated with the journey also evoke strong emotions. The intention is not to use shapes to build a realistic illustration, but to use shape and color to evoke emotions in the viewer that are central to the character of the hero and the events in the heroic journey.

Assign each student one of the Twelve Labors of Hercules, such as slaying the Nemean Lion, capturing the Golden Stag of Artemis, or cleaning the Augean stables. Provide them with multiple versions of the Twelve Labors. Have students use a cluster diagram or character trait organizer to brainstorm additional adjectives and descriptions as they develop their own narrative version of one of the Twelve Labors of Hercules'.

Have students use the drawing tools in Frames to illustrate a crucial scene in their labor. Have students use their cluster or character trait organizers as they develop the details. You may want to limit your students to using the Shape tool to ensure that they only use simple shapes.

When students have finished creating this frame, have them use the Print Current Frame feature to create a hard copy of



Steps for Students

Animation in Frames™ 4

Students can use the drawing tools in Frames to create their own illustrated animations.

1. Open Frames
2. Click the Shape button on the toolbar. You will see a box with different shape options.
3. Click the shape you want to use and click and drag to draw it on the frame.
4. Use the Fill box on the Options panel to fill the shape with color.
5. Uncheck the Stroke box to remove the line around the shape.
6. Repeat this process to add more shapes and complete the scene.
7. The Group button makes it easier to move objects around.
8. Press and hold the Shift key on the keyboard. Click to select all of the shapes that make up an object or character. Click the Group button on the toolbar.
9. To lock objects that you don't want to accidentally move, select them, go to the Options menu, and choose Lock.
10. Go to the File menu and choose Print to print a copy of the frame.
11. To duplicate an object or frame, click the Arrow tool on the toolbar. Click the object in the frame or the frame in the Frame List.
12. Click the Duplicate button on the toolbar.
13. Move the shapes appropriately to show progression through the story.
14. Repeat this process to create all of the needed frames.
15. Click the Record button to record narration for the story.
16. Click the Make button to create the animation.



their work. Partner students together and have them exchange their images, completing a peer review of the use of shape and color in the scene.

Have students edit the scene based on the peer evaluation and then begin transforming this still scene into an animation. Teach them to group and lock items on a frame as well as how to duplicate a frame to save time as they are building their animated stories. When the frames in the animation are complete, have students narrate the story and use the Make button to create an animated video of their work.

Share

Arrange the student videos in the order of the Labors of Hercules. Showcase the videos from each of the Labors, commenting on each student's interpretations and use of shape and color.

Using a web authoring tool like WebBlender, create a web site that retells the story of the Twelve Labors of Hercules. Share this with a class studying mythology and heroes. Have students in this class evaluate the use of color and shape in your students' videos.

Assessment

The initial discussion of Paul Klee's work will help you establish prior knowledge. As you explore the story of Little Red Riding Hood, listen to students' responses to your questions about Molly Bang's use of shape and color.

The final animation should be a clear assessment of how well the student understands and employs the use of color and shape to evoke emotions.

Resources

Bang, Molly. *Picture This: How Pictures Work*
ISBN: 0613300912

Artist's Toolkit

<http://www.artsconnected.org/toolkit/index.html>

Meaning of Color

<http://www.color-wheel-pro.com/color-meaning.html>

Twelve Labors of Hercules (Herakles)

<http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/Herakles/labors.html>

<http://www.mythweb.com/hercules/>

Standards

National Standards for Arts Education Visual Arts Content Standard 1:

Understanding and applying media, techniques, and processes

Students select media, techniques, and processes; analyze what makes them effective or not effective in communicating ideas; and reflect upon the effectiveness of their choices.

National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) - Culture

Early Grades: C. describe ways in which language, stories, folktales, music, and artistic creations serve as expressions of culture and influence behavior of people living in a particular culture.

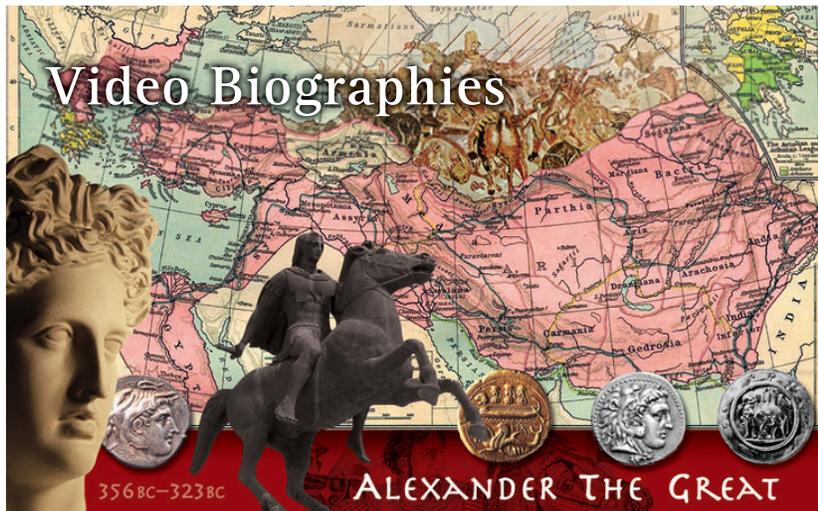
Middle Grades: C. explain and give examples of how language, literature, the arts, architecture, other artifacts, and traditions, beliefs, values, and behaviors contribute to the development and transmission of culture.

NETS for Students:

1. Creativity and Innovation:

Students demonstrate creative thinking, construct knowledge, and develop innovative products and processes using technology. Students:

- a. apply existing knowledge to generate new ideas, products, or processes.



Identifiers

Grade Level

4–12

Subject

Language Arts and Social Studies

Duration

2 weeks

Objective

Students complete research on a historical figure. Students write a biography of a famous person.

Description

Students study a historical figure such as a scientist, politician, inventor, or explorer, and use Frames to create a video biography of that person.

Application

Frames™, Pics4Learning

Process

Introduction

Many students are familiar with Ken Burns' groundbreaking documentaries. While many students dread writing biographies, asking them to transform their writing into a compelling digital documentary about a person's life helps motivate them to write.

Procedure

Step 1: Read and Discuss Biographies

Introduce your students to biographies by reading a few of them first. Jerry Spinelli's *Knots in My Yo-Yo String: The Autobiography of a Kid* or Daniel Dyer's *Jack London: A Biography* provide insight into an author's background and help students learn how personal experiences affect a writer's voice.

Discuss the factors that make a good biography. A great biography is also a great story, and while a biography needs to include facts, a simple listing of them may not be compelling. Have students brainstorm questions they can ask to make a biography more interesting. You might prompt their thinking with questions like:

- Did the person's background influence what he or she believed in or how the person acted?
- What personal qualities helped or hindered this person?
- Was this person admirable or simply famous?

Step 2: Select a Historical Figure and Research Their Life

Introduce the project to your students by sharing the biography examples and giving each student a copy of the project rubric. Provide a list of historical figures

for students to choose from or have your class brainstorm a list. You could focus on presidents, famous people from your state, inventors, or authors.

Have students select a figure and complete research on this person and the time period in which he or she lived. When their research is complete, have students write a biography for their figure.

Depending on student writing ability, you may want to give them an outline for what information should be included in each paragraph of the biography. Have them partner with another student to edit and revise their rough draft before publishing the final version.

Step 3: Team Planning

Form teams of 3–5 students who have studied the same person or are interested in making a video of a particular person. After reading each team member's biography, the team should use the parts that they like the most to write a compelling screenplay for their video. Next, have the teams translate their screenplay into a visual map or storyboard.

Step 4: Create the Biography

Student teams should locate media that supports the various scenes in their biography. They can search for copyright-friendly images on Pics4Learning to show locations or objects important to the story, or search the Library of Congress web site for music from that time period. They could also create original costumes and take photos of themselves with a digital camera.

Teams should then use Frames to create a biography that includes information that explains the impact of their character on history.

Step 5: Present the Biographies

Have the teams share the movies with the rest of the class, at a school assembly, or even on local access television station.

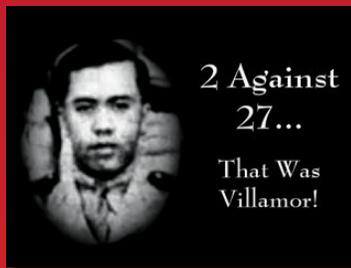


Steps for Students

Creating a Video in Frames™

Once you have all of your images collected, use Frames to combine them into a video biography.

1. Open Frames.
2. Click the Add Frames From a Folder button in the preview area. Find the folder of media and select it. Click the Open button to import all of the pictures.
3. Click and drag the pictures in the frame list to change the order.
4. Click the Blank Frame button to add a title frame.
5. Click the Text button to add text to a frame.
6. Click each frame and adjust the duration.
7. If sound files were in the folder of images, you will see them in the timeline. Click and drag them along the timeline to put them in the correct position. Click the Audio button and click From File to add additional music.
8. Click the Audio button and click Record Sound to add narration.
9. Click the Save button on the toolbar to save changes.
10. Click the Make button to create a movie file when you are finished.



Assessment

Make sure to evaluate the rough draft of the biography and the productivity of the team discussions before you assess the final biography. You will also want to evaluate the process the team uses to identify topics and well-written sections of the initial biographies as they write their screenplay. The screenplay serves as another tangible example of understanding and skill, as does the storyboard of the screenplay.

The video biography will serve as the culminating project and summative assessment. You may also want to assess team work, responsibility, organization, and problem solving.

Resources

Jerry Spinelli, **Knots in My Yo-Yo String: The Autobiography of a Kid.** ISBN: 0679887911

Daniel Dyer, **Jack London: A Biography.** ISBN: 0590222171

Denis Ledoux, **The Photo Scribe—A Writing Guide: How to Write the Stories Behind Your Photographs.** ISBN: 0961937343

The Biography Maker
www.bham.wednet.edu/bio/biomaker.htm

Writer's Workshop: Biography
teacher.scholastic.com/writewit/biograph/

Standards

NCSS— Curriculum Standards for Social Studies

Individual Development and Identity— Personal identity is shaped by one's culture, by groups, and by institutional influences. ...Examination of various forms of human behavior enhances understanding of the relationships among social norms and emerging

personal identities, the social processes that influence identity formation, and the ethical principles underlying individual action.

IRA/NCTE – Standards for the English Language Arts

7. Students conduct research on issues and interests by generating ideas and questions, and by posing problems. They gather, evaluate, and synthesize data from a variety of sources (e.g., print and non-print texts, artifacts, people) to communicate their discoveries in ways that suit their purpose and audience.

8. Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to relate and communicate knowledge.

NETS for Students—2007

2. Communication and Collaboration

Students use digital media and environments to communicate and work collaboratively, including at a distance, to support individual learning and contribute to the learning of others. Students:

- a. interact, collaborate, and publish with peers, experts or others employing a variety of digital environments and media.
- b. communicate information and ideas effectively to multiple audiences using a variety of media and formats.



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