



ROCK YOUR WORLD

Inspiring Students to Change Their World
— A program of Creative Visions —

Storytelling for Change



Creative Visions believes that storytelling is one of the most powerful tools we have for social change. Stories communicate beliefs and attitudes and can help people develop a better understanding of global issues. Stories can change the way people think, feel and act.

Creative expression using arts and media can add power to the stories we tell. Some forms of creative expression include drawing and painting, dance, various types of writing including poetry, music, animation, video, podcasts, social media, photography and film.

This toolkit is intended to help you create and share impactful stories that reach deep into our hearts and minds, using creative expression and human connection to inspire hope for a more caring, just and sustainable world.

1. The History of Storytelling
2. The Making of Great Stories
3. Tell a Story/Convey a message that no one can forget
4. Social Impact Storytelling – A Force for Change

THE HISTORY OF STORYTELLING



Storytelling began with visual stories when cave dwellers used pigment to paint on walls with their hands. It then shifted to oral stories that were passed down through generations. Then it moved to narratives that were written, printed and typed.

Today we are surrounded by stories. They are in the news, in song, in pictures and in the movies. Stories can teach us, entertain us and make us think of things in a new way.

Think of a recent story that you heard. Did you learn something new or were you entertained? Did the story make you empathize with someone? Were you inspired to act?

Through storytelling, you can use your unique talents and skills to create new narratives, change hearts and minds and inspire people to take action on the pressing needs in our world today.

THE MAKING OF GREAT STORIES

Are you ready to convey your message through storytelling? Want some extra pointers about how to make it memorable? We've got you covered with six great rules from Pixar!

Pixar, you know--that Academy Award, Golden Globe and Grammy winning film studio--they've identified Six Rules for Great Storytelling. We've summarized their [original post](#) below. They may come in handy as you figure out what story you want to tell!

1. Great stories are universal:

The best stories tap into things almost all human beings go through--things like birth, growth, emotions, change, conflict, etc.

2. Great stories have clear structure and purpose:

Professional playwright and improviser Kenn Adams made the greatest graphic to help figure out how a story can unfold. Pixar uses it a lot and so can you!

Give your story a backbone!

THE STORY SPINE

THE STORY SPINE	STRUCTURE	FUNCTION
Once upon a time...	Beginning	The world of the story is introduced and the main character's routine is established.
Every day...		
But, one day...	The Event	The main character breaks the routine .
Because of that...	Middle	There are dire consequences for having broken the routine. It is unclear if the main character will come out alright in the end.
Because of that...		
Because of that...		
Until finally...	The Climax	The main character embarks upon success or failure
And, ever since then...	End	The main character succeeds or fails, and a new routine is established.

Published at aerogrammestudio.com, ©Kenn Adams

3. Great stories have a character to root for (an underdog):

Who doesn't want to root for the character with mountains to climb to reach the top?

4. Great stories appeal to our deepest emotions:

"No tears in the writer, no tears in the reader," as the saying by poet Robert Frost goes. If you're feeling it (whatever emotion you want to convey) when you write it, there's a strong chance your readers will feel it too!

5. Great stories are surprising and unexpected:

Great stories aren't boring. It's the little things that can make for the biggest surprises, yo! Birds singing may not seem like a big deal. Birds singing in a war zone creates an image that feels loud.

6. Great stories are simple and focused:

K.I.S.S.= Keep It Simple, Silly! Don't make your plotline so complicated that your reader gets trapped in a vortex. Great stories are easy to follow.

[Check out the 6 Rules of Great Storytelling Handout](#)

Alright – the time has come to get down to it. Think about your own stories regarding the issue of your choice. What do you need to tell? How are you going to tell it? If your story is super close to the heart, make it fictional. Create characters who say and do what you wish you or someone else could or would have.

TELL A STORY THAT NO ONE CAN FORGET

Storytellers often use their own lives, the experiences of friends, as well as use their understanding of the world for inspiration. Choices, choices, choices--great storytellers make lots of decisions. You might want to spend some time thinking through the following:

- What do you want to leave your audience thinking and feeling? Is there a moral or lesson that you're trying to get across, or do you want to plant ideas for your audience to work out even after your story ends?
- How do you want your audience to feel as your as your story unfolds? If you are using multimedia to enhance your story, what images or sounds can you use to help make your audience connect to your story and feel deeply?

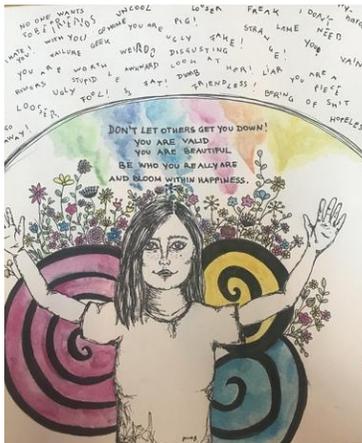
Do you know the medium you want to use in telling your story?

YES How might this affect choices you make as you develop your story?

-or-

NO What are your options? Consider your talents, resources, and the time you have.

Choose an art form!



Visual Arts: animation, cartoon, collage, digital art, drawing, graphic design, infographic, mask, mosaic, painting, papier-mâché, photography, poster, sculpture, etc.

Performing Arts: dance, documentary, public service announcement (PSA) song, short play, spoken word, recycled instruments, video, etc.

Language Arts: advocacy letter, article or essay, children's book, poem, short story, script, etc.

Get Ready to Tell Your Story

Storytellers often use their own lives, the experiences of friends, and their understanding of the world for inspiration. You might want to spend some time thinking through the following:

1. What are the central issues that you want to address in your story?
2. What do you want to leave your audience thinking and feeling? Is there a moral or lesson that you're trying to get across, or do you want to plant ideas for your audience to work out even after your story ends?
3. How do you want your readers to feel as your story unfolds? If you're making a painting or another form of visual art, what are you going to do to make the viewer feel deeply?

In fact, narrative stories (in print or orally conveyed) are going to work differently than visual forms in storytelling.

Think about how your chosen form is going to get the job done. We've got you covered on this--read on!



Telling Narrative Stories

Here are some questions to help you work out your plans for characters and conflict (the struggle or what needs to be overcome) since they're at the heart of all stories!

1. Who is/are the character(s) in your story? What are the roles of the heroes, the villains, the bystanders, or upstanders?
2. Who will be telling the story? One (or more) of the characters? Or an outside narrator?
3. What is the central conflict or problem of your story?
4. How will that conflict be introduced?

5. How will the conflict be resolved?

The Storyboard

Filmmakers often use storyboards to plan their stories. We think that storyboards are a great tool for any storyteller to plan out their narrative by putting illustrations and images in a sequence for visually telling a story.

Project Name: _____ Page _____ of _____
By: _____ Date: _____

[Blank Storyboard Link](#)



NEED MORE INSPIRATION?

- 1 To learn more about using persuasive writing for change:
<https://www.rock-your-world.org/writing-persuasively>
- 2 To learn more about making films:
<https://www.rock-your-world.org/making-films1>
- 3 Writing a song? Visit:
<https://www.rock-your-world.org/writing-songs>

TELLING VISUAL STORIES

Sometimes a film aims to focus on emotions more than a plot line. Visual stories tend to focus on feelings. Instead of planning out a story with a beginning, middle, and end, you have other things to consider.

- What is the story or feeling you want to suggest through your art?
- How do you want people to feel when they look at your piece? How can you create the right mood and tone to get that feeling? (colors, composition, details, texture, size).
- Don't forget the power of a title! A great title is a north star - it guides your audience to the right reaction! Titles can come to you before or after you create your work. You're the boss!

TELLING DIGITAL STORIES

Digital storytelling uses computer-based tools to tell stories. It uses multimedia such as video, audio, images, and text to convey stories, information, and ideas.

The 7 Elements of Digital Storytelling

The Center for Digital Storytelling in Berkeley, California is known for developing and

disseminating the Seven Elements of Digital Storytelling, which are often cited as a useful starting point as you begin working with digital stories.

1. Point of View

What is the main point of the story and what is the perspective of the author?

2. A Dramatic Question

A key question that keeps the viewer's attention and will be answered by the end of the story.

3. Emotional Content

Serious issues that come alive in a personal and powerful way and connects the audience to the story.

4. The Gift of Your Voice

A way to personalize the story to help the audience understand the context.

5. The Power of the Soundtrack

Music or other sounds that support and embellish the story.

6. Economy

Using just enough content to tell the story without overloading the viewer.

7. Pacing

The rhythm of the story and how slowly or quickly it progresses.

The specific requirements of an educational digital story differ slightly from the original Seven Elements for Digital Stories. Working with the Seven Elements that CDS developed, the College of Education at the University of Houston added a few new items to make them more applicable to the types of digital stories created by students. The modified elements are shown below.

1.The Overall Purpose of the Story

2. The Narrator’s Point of View

3. A Dramatic Question or Questions

4. The Choice of Content

5. Clarity of Voice

6. Pacing of the Narrative

7. Use of a Meaningful Audio Soundtrack

SOCIAL IMPACT STORYTELLING – A FORCE FOR CHANGE

In recent years, there are many examples that show the power of the purposeful use of story to educate and inspire people to act.

Climate Change

Artists can play a critical role in communicating climate change. Viewers can connect with a place that they have never had a chance to visit or learn about the effects of human actions on the planet.

Zaria Forman



Zaria Forman’s art conveys beauty as opposed to devastation. If people can experience the splendor of these landscapes, perhaps they will be inspired to protect and preserve them.

Svalbard #33, 60" x 90", Soft Pastel on Paper, 2014
Courtesy of the artist Zaria Forman

Check out these short films by students who participated in Planet 911.



[Be Part of the Solution](#)



[Make a Change to Turn the Page](#)

Diversity and Inclusion



Another great example is *Sesame Street* which debuted in 1969 with the express purpose of using stories to educate and influence preschoolers. On Thanksgiving Day, 2021, *Sesame Street* introduced their first Asian American Muppet to the neighborhood. Ji-Young, a Korean American 7-year-old who loves rock music and skateboarding, plays a role in countering anti-Asian bias and teaching kids to be “upstanders”.

Sesame Street has tackled difficult stories over its 50 years of educational programming. The team at *Sesame Street* continues to be an excellent example of how to use beautiful storytelling to help children and adults move forward in a positive way.

Bullying

The #WhoCaresIDo Challenge presented by Creative Visions was a global call for young people ages 5-18 to stand up to bullying and to stand for a more caring and inclusive culture. Students shared their creative response to the issue through arts and media such as creative arts such as film, music, dance, painting, artwork, or words.



Grand Prize - Visual Truth
15-18
Dominic Jackson – Australia

"I made a work which tries to reimagine the overwhelming feeling of being judged and bullied in a group. I tried to

show that something as simple as a hug and some understanding can make all the difference in this situation."



Makena Parker – Visual Arts
11 – 14, United States



Steven Hernandez – Visual Arts
5 – 10, United States

We can't wait to read, see and or hear your stories!