

STORYTELLING GUIDE: RESOURCE 15

Class Project: Me As a Speaker

A Note to Teachers

The instructions on the following page are geared towards students and can be handed out as an assignment sheet.

This assignment is intended as a longer 2–3 week class project, ideally as early on in the year as possible. The purpose of this project is to help students feel more comfortable with public speaking by having them focus on what they want to communicate about themselves and what storytelling format will be the best vehicle for communicating their identity to the audience. This changes the narrative that there is one way to be a good public speaker and shifts the attention to the importance of making decisions that best fit the speaker and the message.

As you facilitate this project, encourage creativity and freedom, emphasize the word “variety”, and frame it as a “performance” as opposed to a “presentation”. Depending on your class size and length, you will need to plan ahead about the best ways to make it through all the presentations —ideally, do not try to do all performances at once in a row, but spread them out over a longer period of time, even throughout the quarter or semester. Adapt the length, but ideally do not shorten to less than 3 minutes. The podcast option helps with overall time, as you can assign the class to listen to the podcasts outside of class (if you want, you can also have an in-class discussion about all the podcasts, once people listen to them). If possible, try to keep this as an individual assignment to communicate personal identity, instead of assigning groups.

Identity Performance Assignment Sheet

The first section of this course is focused on self-expression. For the Identity Performance Piece, you are responsible for performing a 5-minute individual storytelling piece in a communication “variety show” during class. You can select from any style of public speaking that best expresses your identity out of the kinds of oral storytelling formats covered in the class, including a podcast, monologue, or an original story with a lesson. For the purposes of this assignment, “identity” is defined as “self-understandings and imaginings produced through sociocultural relations, developed and lived through everyday activity.” For more information, please see the rubric and performance guidelines distributed in class. After your performance, you are also responsible for writing a short 300–500 word blog-style reflection on your personal experience with public speaking, which will be submitted to a class folder.

What is the purpose of this assignment?

- To use a storytelling format that best suits your personal style and interests in order to express a topic that is personally meaningful to you.

What should you get out of this assignment?

- You should use this experience to help you focus on your specific public speaking goals.
- You should be able to focus on a project that will push your comfort zone, while also being something that is still manageable and doable for you.
- You should communicate a perspective that is important enough that you can really commit to the ideas, despite any nerves or anxiety you might have during the performance. You should feel like you used your voice to express something that is personally meaningful.
- You should feel like you are able to communicate your identity in a way that helps the class get to know you a bit more, even if it is just getting to know your style of speaking.
- You should feel like you are able to more precisely define your style of speaking.

How long is the presentation and what should the content include?

- The performance should be a minimum of 3 minutes and a maximum of 5 minutes. Please time your performances during practice time to ensure that it does not exceed the maximum time.
- **Monologues:** If you are doing a monologue, you should be close to memorized or at least able to do the majority of the

performance off-book with some notes. You should choose a piece of content where the themes and central characters relate to you. You should also prepare an introduction of 30 seconds to 1 minute, telling us why you chose the piece and how it relates to your identity.

- **Podcasts:** Podcasts should include at least one personal story (in addition to any interviews or guests you might have). This can be about something that actually happened to you, or it can be a fictional story, as long as it still communicates your personal interests and point of view. All podcasts should have a title and include an intro, a closing, and music that matches the tone of your story.
- **Original Stories with a Lesson:** Stories with a lesson are the most flexible format, but should include at least one true story (broken up however it makes sense for your speech). These speeches should also make universal connections to what the audience should take away from the speech. Stories should be true, but do not have to be personally about your life. They can also include stories about research or stories from other people that you might relate to.

When is it due and how will we prepare?

Final presentations will take place during class time on:

The order will be decided randomly, and will be announced on:

You will spend time practicing in class with feedback from peers and teachers. To take advantage of individual feedback, please have some content ready to practice by the class sessions on:

Good luck!

