

LEADERS THAT LISTEN  
PUBLIC SPEAKING CURRICULUM

# Storytelling Guide



This toolkit contains guiding principles for storytelling, background reading on how storytelling can foster inclusion and equity, storytelling templates, storytelling practice activities, activity and project ideas involving stories, storytelling project planner and rubric, and how to start a podcast. Hope these resources inspire you and others to tell more stories!



# Why We Need Leaders That Listen:

## A Note from the Author

**As a teacher and public speaking coach, I have always been drawn to the quirkiest students.**

I love unexpected perspectives that make me think about an issue in a different way and inspire me to care about experiences I never understood. Unfortunately, we are surrounded by images of leadership and models of public speaking dominated by examples that are loud, angry, and driven by ego. Every day, I encounter students from as young as 7 all the way to adulthood who have beautiful voices and incredible stories but do not believe they are important. They have been taught that they aren't leaders because they do not look, act, or sound like the people in power.

It is important to have mentors and a community to help you have the courage of your own convictions; just because you don't look or sound like everyone else doesn't mean you don't deserve to have a voice. Our society needs leaders who know how to facilitate diverse perspectives, learn from different experiences, care about human beings, and listen without an agenda. This curriculum is a starting point for educators, coaches, and emerging public speakers of all ages who want methods for communicating in a way that is authentic and real, empowering their inner leader and encouraging diverse voices through inclusive education. Explore the guides in any order and choose tools that best fit your needs and build your confidence. Gather inspiration and feel free to adapt as you develop your skills and the abilities of those you lead.



*AnnMarie D. Baines, PhD, Executive Director*

### About the Author

As Founder and Executive Director of Bay Area non-profit, The Practice Space, AnnMarie Baines brings 20 years of experience coaching public speaking for youth and adults and currently teaches public speaking at UC Berkeley. As a Filipina leader, Dr. Baines is deeply committed to equity, and was awarded a Deeper Learning Equity Fellowship. In prior work, Dr. Baines was a program officer at the George Lucas Educational Foundation, where she applied her expertise in curriculum, project-based learning, and professional development. She began her career as a high school special education teacher and utilizes the Universal Design for Learning framework. Dr. Baines received her PhD in Learning Sciences from University of Washington, teaching credential from Boston Teacher Residency, and Master's in Education Policy from Harvard Graduate School of Education.

# STORYTELLING GUIDE

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# STORYTELLING GUIDE: RESOURCE 1

## Storytelling: The Identity of a Leader



### Why Stories are Important for Leaders

Stories enable leaders to demonstrate what they believe and where they come from. Instead of only using stories as a way to entertain an audience or hold their attention (although they can be helpful for that too!), stories are particularly effective when they portray a leader's identity. According to anthropologist Dorothy Holland and colleagues, "identities are a key means through which people care about and care for what is going on around them" (Holland, Lachicotte, Skinner, & Cain, 1998, p. 5). When leaders clearly communicate their identities, they can inspire a more authentic connection that goes beyond directives and bullet points.

### When to Use Stories in Public Speaking

In public speeches, storytelling is about developing a relationship with your listeners, using the personal to communicate about the universal themes that connect us. For speakers, the goal of a compelling story should ultimately be to express your identity through powerful illustrations. These illustrations should allow you

to be real, vulnerable, and put yourself out there by describing your choices and the reasons behind them, and not be used emotionally manipulate your audience. At the same time, stories are not always the best choice for communicating some types of content or may not be the best format for a particular audience.

For instance, stories may be a perfect choice for a speech with uninterrupted time when you need to communicate your values, or an opening anecdote to illustrate why you hold certain beliefs.

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On the other hand, when your audience is impatient or motivated more by research, data, and direct responses to targeted questions, another form of communication might be a better choice. So make an informed decision—don't tell stories just because everyone else is!

## The Goals of Purposeful Stories

When a story effectively establishes purposeful connection, listeners:

- Learn lessons and think about similar experiences differently.
- Question their own assumptions and perceptions about the speaker.
- Trust the speaker's remarks.
- Feel moved to act or become part of a similar cause/purpose.
- Seek out follow-up communication.
- Appreciate the story behind the story and the motivations behind decisions.
- Feel a sense of connectedness and familiarity around universal themes.
- Can establish common ground.
- Understand that they are not alone in their struggles and journeys.

While stories are powerful, a speaker's intent matters. An audience can tell when a speaker is using a story to force a connection or masquerade as their kind of people. Instead of thinking about what story is going to be interesting to the audience, first think about what experiences or life moments are deeply important to you. Where did you learn an important lesson that continues to inform your thinking? What struggles changed you? What turning points have you had in your life? What moments serve as an example of important parts of your personality? (For more guidance on how to come up with ideas for stories, see "Getting Stories Started: For Speakers" later on in this guide.) By starting from a genuine place, your story is much more likely to actually connect to your audience. In fact, your authentic passion and feeling will be infectious, even if the audience hasn't had the same experience.

## Technical Elements of Powerful Storytelling

Beyond this mindset shift, developing a relationship with your listeners also involves several technical considerations to ensure that the power of your story isn't diminished by unclear or unstructured thinking.

A few things to keep in mind:

- Stories should be specific and focused around concrete, real moments.
- Provide enough context to be clear: confusion kills a story.
- Adapt your story to build upon familiar themes or build upon analogies to what your audience knows.
- Remember that sometimes less is more—you don't have to say everything to get your point across. Similarly, be mindful of your total air time so you don't lose people.
- Hammer home the central takeaway(s) or moral. Repetition can be helpful.
- Quiet the voices in your head that say that no one will care about your story or that it won't be "good enough."  
If it is important to you, it is an important story to share.

## The Final Takeaway

As with any public speaking, stories help speakers interact with their audience and connect around significant ideas. Stories are distinct in their ability to illustrate emotions, inner thoughts, personal histories, individual values and beliefs, humorous observations, and rationales behind actions and choices. They play an important role in a wide range of purposes, from clarifying information, compelling action, inspiring emotion, and even offering escape through entertainment and humor. But most importantly, stories remind us that every person, regardless of background or circumstance, has a valuable human experience to offer the world.



## STORYTELLING GUIDE: RESOURCE 2

### Making Storytelling Inclusive and Equitable



There is a reason that oral storytelling is one of the oldest forms of communication

**Unlike more structured remarks, stories offer an unparalleled sense of intimacy between storytellers and listeners, developing a personal connection and communal experience.**

In a story, variation is welcomed, creativity is encouraged, and unexpected ways of seeing the world are the foundation. In short, stories are inherently inclusive, breaking down barriers to equity by revealing innate human connections that go beyond external labels. Sadly, it is too easy to take the natural beauty out of a story. When stories are told in contexts that are hyper focused on picking out faults or environments that privilege competition over connection, the listener misses the chance to learn something new from another person's experience. Listening to stories must value connection over critique.

#### How Stories Promote Inclusion and Equity

In most classrooms and workplaces, stories are often either written down or reserved for informal social time. But how can providing space for oral storytelling improve conditions for inclusion, even in the most formal environments? In places where it is possible to speak authentically, stories:

- Help people speak for themselves, showcasing authentic diversity
- Highlight diverse backgrounds and different abilities and viewpoints as positive
- Explore multiple identities, allowing people to take pride in their unique experiences

- Promote friendship
- Inspire questions and sharing of similar experiences to learn about each other
- Help people make connections within and between cultures
- Open opportunities for talking about themes of injustice and power
- Challenge stereotypes, generalizations, and prejudice by helping people express emotions and engage in meaningful dialogue

Stories can promote inclusion by valuing and unearthing real, honest, and personal experience beyond our own. By their very nature, they create a tradition of sharing and connection beyond one-sided interactions. The key is not to force people to share personal stories, but to focus on creating the conditions where stories are welcomed as an important part of the work. When stories are required or even evaluated or judged, the storyteller is forced to tell the story in a way that meets someone else's expectations, instead of feeling safe to share what is actually important to them. Stories under these conditions regress to a perceived norm of what a story is supposed to look like, rather than genuine sharing.

## Equitable Conditions for Storytelling

It is possible to facilitate storytelling in places like classrooms and workplaces, even within more formal structures like meetings or graded assignments. To do so, it needs to be clear that the purpose of storytelling is to strengthen and improve relationships, as opposed to proving how entertaining or vulnerable you can be. Stories strengthen relationships when they enable people to have a window into how others see and experience the world. In this way, the “right” way to tell a story is when the storyteller is able to effectively communicate their world. Like other forms of public speaking, structure, language, and oral delivery play a role in storytelling. At the end of the day, however, the end result is much more about how authentic and intentional the storyteller was able to be, as opposed to how polished they were in their performance.

Facilitators and listeners play an important role in creating inclusive and equitable conditions that welcome diverse voices. When teaching storytelling and integrating it into daily work:

- Create rituals around when and how stories are told and actively welcoming the sharing of personal experiences.
- Leave the storytelling to the storyteller. Don’t control their journey, unless teaching a rough structure to get new storytellers started or providing a specific time frame.
- Prepare any listeners to learn from the story, rather than judge it.
- Respond with remarks that inquire, encourage, and relate to the story.
- Appreciate the story for what it teaches people about that person, not what it teaches people about someone’s speaking skills.

## The Final Takeaway

When teaching people how to tell stories or using storytelling as an activity, there is a fine line between creating the conditions for storytelling and artificially controlling the story itself. Templates, protocols, and rubrics are all still applicable to storytelling, as long as the point is still to open a window into diverse human experiences and outlooks. Structures and tools should be used to enhance the impact that a story has on its listeners and guide storytellers to make intentional decisions about what they say and how they say it. Ultimately, the mark of a good story is its ability to connect the seemingly disconnected in personal, intimate ways.

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## STORYTELLING GUIDE: RESOURCE 3

### Stories About Stories: A Message from the Author



For 13-year old Mistura Bankole and 16-year old Amber Crenna-Armstrong, argumentation and advocacy always seemed to come naturally.

While working with both students, I was constantly struck by their passion for social issues and how much they cared about helping people. Each of them was driven by a personal desire to make the world a better place. As a middle school student originally from Africa, Mistura was keenly aware of the assumptions people would make about her background and frustrated with misperceptions and stereotypes. High school student Amber was already involved in climate change action on her school campus, but often felt limited in her ability to inspire others to actually make a difference. Passion was never an issue, but even their well-organized, outlined arguments somehow missed the mark in terms of communicating the depth of their connection to their topics.

As their public speaking teacher, I knew these students would be able to organize their ideas and structure their arguments effectively. I knew that once they had everything put together, they would endlessly practice because the issues mattered so much to them. Instead, I needed to expand their view of what public speaking had to entail. Traditional presentation outlines were good for some students, but I needed to free Mistura and Amber from the constraints of standard argumentation. They needed to create speech content that portrayed their personal experiences, emotions, motivations, and inner thoughts. They needed to tell stories.


While helping them rethink their speeches, I asked them questions about why they came up with each argument and

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what experiences made them feel like certain arguments were important. They immediately came to life, speaking a mile a minute about examples from their lives that highlighted the need to advocate for awareness and understanding about cultural stereotypes and climate change. As their tales continued, I spurred them on with questions about additional details like where they were, who they were with, what they heard, and how they felt. By the end, I was stunned by the beautiful, intricate, and vulnerable stories they had shared and surprised that none of these details had made it into the original speeches.



When reflecting on why there were no stories in their original speeches, both students expressed their belief that their stories would not be considered credible or important. As Mistura pointed out, “Isn’t it all supposed to be about your evidence and about how many studies you mention?” For Amber, stories came less naturally than arguments and while she recognized how stories might be useful, she needed to practice hard to express vulnerability in a conversational way. The free-flowing arc of a story was different from the structured outlines they used in school, and I had to regularly reassure them at first that it would turn out “right” in the end. We focused on articulating emotions, describing events in great detail, and delivering their stories with a pace and tone that best fit their words. Over time, I observed them relaxing into the process, trusting that their stories were as valuable as any evidence they could cite.

Their final stories resulted in speeches that not only maintained their original arguments but also effectively expressed key parts of their identities. In Amber’s case, she ended up moving away from talking about climate change and instead chose to tell her story about how changing multiple schools influenced her desire to advocate for others. While she maintained that her climate action recommendations would “make it into different speeches” she

felt proud that she could share her origin story and connect to her audience around what drove her to be interested in advocacy in the first place. The experience became more meaningful to her, and unsurprisingly became much more powerful and inspirational when she delivered it for a parent engagement night. For Mistura, talking about African philosophies of child discipline continued to be her focus, but her oral delivery significantly improved when she could start her speech by telling her personal story with her raw, unbridled passion. Stories opened the door for both students to be themselves and communicate more effectively.

My experiences with both students reminded me that students need to be reminded that telling their own personal stories can often be the most powerful way to connect to an audience. Removing the personal from a speech leaves it hollow and makes it harder to speak passionately. Stories communicate motivation, which can give an audience a window into the more human elements of an issue and inspire them to act. Once I gave them the option to tell stories and asked questions to encourage their ideas, I had to do little else except continue to encourage their excitement and ideas. Young people shouldn’t need adult permission to tell their stories, but sometimes, they do.



# STORYTELLING GUIDE: RESOURCE 4

## Getting Stories Started: For Educators and Facilitators

**In life, storytelling often happens organically with friends and loved ones; other times, facilitators and educators have the chance to create opportunities for storytelling!**

As a facilitator, you can help people tell their best stories, where they are able to portray who they are and how they experience the world. Use this guide as a set of reminders for how you can best facilitate storytelling in your classroom or workplace. Note: These suggestions are intended as personal checkpoints rather than used as a formula. Feel free to add steps or skip suggestions that do not work for you or the situation you are in – make it your own!

<p><b>Set Conditions</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Discuss the value of stories and how they contribute to the group culture. Ask participants why they care about people's stories.</li> <li>2) Set up norms for storytelling, including time length for the speaker and audience behavior.</li> <li>3) Create rituals and routines around when and how stories are told.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Cultivate Capacity</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Help people feel prepared. When possible, give prompts in advance and give time to outline thoughts.</li> <li>2) Create low-stakes activities before anything high-stakes, so that people can practice storytelling.</li> <li>3) Be a sounding board for ideas and coach people through their initial thoughts. Validate and encourage.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Identify Goals</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Some people need to know why they are telling or listening to stories before they can proceed. State what they should focus on.</li> <li>2) Many academic standards involve telling clear and organized stories. Explicitly state academic goals.</li> <li>3) Clarify emotional and relational goals for learning about people.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Determine Prompts</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Give people 2-3 options for story topics. More than 3 will lead people to spend too much time on topic selection and 1 is limiting.</li> <li>2) Keep prompts open-ended and free for interpretation (even only one word or phrase is fine).</li> <li>3) Avoid language that makes it seem there's a right or wrong answer.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Communicate Expectations</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Establish what is "fixed" and what is "flexible" – be clear about how free the storyteller can be.</li> <li>2) State the purpose of the story and what it should accomplish.</li> <li>3) State what the storyteller should expect from the situation (i.e. how many people they will speak to and how long they have to prepare).</li> </ol>	<p><b>Model Connection</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Be genuinely interested in the story and demonstrate that interest with your non-verbal behavior.</li> <li>2) State what resonated with you, and what you will remember.</li> <li>3) Help people feel like their story was worth telling by connecting it to future activities or stating how it will impact future work or learning.</li> </ol>



## STORYTELLING GUIDE: RESOURCE 5

### Getting Stories Started: For Speakers

#### It can be hard to come up with ideas for stories!

Even if you tell stories naturally in your everyday life, your mind might go blank when coming up with topics or you feel like you ramble and lose the attention of your audience. Use this guide to get started the next time you have to tell a story. Note: These suggestions can take place in any order that works for you and is intended to inspire ideas rather than used as a formula. Feel free to skip suggestions that do not work for you or the situation you are in—make it your own!

#### Know Your Audience

- 1) Build upon past experiences with this type of audience. What stories have you heard before? What themes did they enjoy? What is your personal take on these themes?
- 2) Read the room and figure out a tone for your story: funny, serious, reflective, emotional.

#### Focus Your Main Idea

- 1) Ask yourself what little moments in life represent you and how you see the world. It is okay if they seem random or insignificant at first.
- 2) Think about a general theme for your story. When in doubt, choose a classic, universal theme like family, change, good vs. evil, transformation, triumph, fear.

#### Reflect on Memories

- 1) Think about memories involving people, places, or events that remind you of the topic or theme. What happened? What was said?
- 2) Think about thoughts or opinions you've had related to the topic or theme and what events made you think that way. What events shaped those thoughts?

#### Sketch the Journey

- 1) Select a memory and figure out whether to describe the central problem or incident in terms of:
  - Past to Present
  - Compare and Contrast
  - Struggle and Resolution
- 2) Map out the beginning, middle, and end. When in doubt, start with time and place.

#### Set Destination

- 1) Memories are extensive, so figure out the best place to end your story before it goes on to become a new story. You don't have to tell everything in one sitting.
- 2) End your story with a takeaway, moral, or connection to a universal theme the audience understands. Keep conclusions short.

#### Find a Twist

- 1) Practice figuring out a "twist", or something unexpected about your story—a turn of events, something surprising someone said, a conclusion you couldn't have predicted at the time.
- 2) Structure your stories around the twist by guiding the listeners one way and then surprising them.



## STORYTELLING GUIDE: RESOURCE 6

### Getting Stories Started: For Listeners

**Listeners have an important role to play in any situation involving stories.**

As a listener, you offer your attention, encouragement, interest, and support to any storyteller. Your face, body language, and words all provide feedback to inform the storyteller. Use this guide to get started on becoming a better listener. Note: These suggestions are intended as reminders and personal checkpoints rather than used as a formula. Feel free to skip suggestions that do not work for you or the situation you are in—make it your own!

#### Get Ready

- 1) Make sure you are ready to be fully present as a listener. Try to eliminate distractions from your mind or environment.
- 2) Be willing to let the story stretch you beyond what you know, expect, or want.
- 3) Demonstrate your attention—take notes, give eye contact, nod.

#### Reset Your Mindset

- 1) Avoid trying to fit someone's story into your agenda. Surrender to the story and don't be afraid of what you don't already know.
- 2) Change your mental questions. Don't evaluate or hurry the story, ask yourself what you can learn.
- 3) Try to commit moments to memory and seek out connections.

#### Listen to Specifics

- 1) Listen for the story's detail and imagine it taking place. Put yourself in their shoes.
- 2) Listen for the structure, including the journey of the story, the conflicts or problems involved, and the universal idea.
- 3) Listen for what the story teaches you about the storyteller.

#### Question Yourself

- 1) As you listen, ask yourself why the person is telling you the story. Appreciate that this story is somehow personally important.
- 2) Question whether you are making assumptions about the storyteller and how you see the world might be different from their experience.

#### Ask Your Speaker Questions

- 1) Ask questions that clarify important characters, details, moments, takeaways. Make sure you aren't getting stuck somewhere. Seek to understand, not to critique.
- 2) Ask questions that encourage the speaker, asking them to elaborate, go back, and follow up on what happened next.

#### Other Feedback

- 1) Only give feedback when solicited by the storyteller or required by the situation; focus feedback on areas important to the storyteller.
- 2) Focus on content, which may include detail, structure, time management, specificity of moment, clarity of theme, and ability to connect personally.



## STORYTELLING GUIDE: RESOURCE 7

### Storytelling Warm-Ups

**Stories come more naturally to some than others, but everyone can benefit from getting their brain going with some targeted warm-ups.**

Preparation is designed to be very limited to practice getting away from the desire to have everything be perfectly planned and written out. Any notes should be limited to a few bullets or sketches and storytellers should remind themselves to resist perfection.

A few adaptations depending on group size:

- If practicing individually, find some way to make the prompts spontaneous (i.e. drawing topics or objects out of a bag).
- If practicing with a group, make sure people are split up into pairs or groups of 3. Larger than that will take longer, but it is sometimes a useful bigger activity for everyone to hear everyone's stories. As a warm-up, it is more important for the speaker to practice than for everyone to hear every story. A

middle ground can be to take volunteers at the end to practice for the whole group.

- To make the exercise more difficult, all of these warm-ups can be adapted to make the next storyteller say something that relates to the previous story before they go on to tell their story (i.e. "my story is similar to...", "speaking of...", "my story is completely different because..."). This helps people practice making connections and listening actively.

Warm-up Activity	Goal and Timing
<b>What am I?</b> Tell a 2-minute story describing an object in the room in great detail without saying what it is. The listener gets 3 guesses to figure out the object. A more difficult version is to describe something not in the room.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Practice describing specific detail.</li><li>• For pairs: 8 minutes total—2 minutes per story, 2 minutes of guessing time, plus some transition time, ideally no preparation time</li></ul>
<b>Tell Me About a Time When...</b> Tell a 2-minute story describing a memory of an event. Prompts should be concrete and short (i.e. it was cold, it was raining, you were lonely, you lost track of time) and stories should be true.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Practice remembering specific moments</li><li>• For pairs: 8 minutes total—2 minutes per story plus transition time, plus 2 minutes of preparation time</li></ul>
<b>Twist It</b> Take a prompt and add on to it to create your own twist. For example, the original prompt might be, "Tell me about a time you were a leader..." and your twist might be "I am going to tell you about a time I was a leader....but didn't feel like one." Tell a 2-minute story about that twist. To come up with twists, it can help to think about the opposite of the prompt or an unexpected way of thinking about it. Note: this warm-up works best when the original prompt is a sentence starter, rather than a word.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Practice remembering specific moments AND thinking about prompts in unexpected ways to engage the audience</li><li>• For pairs: 10 minutes total—2 minutes per story plus transition time, plus 4 minutes of preparation time</li></ul>



<p><b>Ordinary into Extraordinary</b></p> <p>Tell a 3-minute story about something really mundane and unremarkable and make it dramatic, suspenseful, or intriguing (i.e. what you had for breakfast, your journey to class, putting something in your bag). Prompts can either be given or generated by the speaker and should be true (even if there is some exaggeration).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice making something special and interesting, even when it doesn't seem like it.</li> <li>• For pairs: 14 minutes total—3 minutes per story plus transition time, plus 5 minutes of preparation time. Keep these stories on the longer side to achieve goal</li> </ul>
<p><b>Portraits</b></p> <p>Tell a 2.5-minute story about a person you've encountered in your life. The story should be true and at least 1.5 minutes of the story should be spent describing them (i.e. what they look like, what they said, what they smelled like, how they made you feel). The conclusion of the story should be 2 or 3 sentences max about why they stand out in your memory. The person doesn't have to be especially important.v</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice bringing people to life and using the 5 senses to engage listeners.</li> <li>• For pairs: 9 minutes total—2.5 minutes per story plus transition time, plus 2 minutes of preparation time. Make sure the bulk of the time is spent on the person and not why they are important.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Tour Guide</b></p> <p>Guide a group or a partner around the room, telling brief stories inspired by objects in the room (like a tour guide in a museum). The story doesn't have to be a specific length, but can be loosely inspired by the object or a literal story about a personal relationship with that object.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice relating a story to something specific and concrete.</li> <li>• Can be any amount of time and can be done in pairs or as a group, either with one person leading or switching off and taking turns.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Three Words</b></p> <p>Get the group (or a partner) to brainstorm three words. These can be three unrelated concrete words (i.e. cactus, roller coaster, spaghetti) or three unrelated abstract words (i.e. bravery, fear, hope, awe). Tell a 2-minute story inspired by one of those three words. Do not combine the words and it isn't important to necessarily mention the chosen word.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice coming up with a story based on a theme or using simple words as symbols for something deeper.</li> <li>• For pairs: 12 minutes total—2 minutes to brainstorm words, 2 minutes per story plus transition time, plus 3–4 minutes of preparation time. To save time, words can be decided ahead of time.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Camp Fire</b></p> <p>In a group circle, ask the audience to select: 1) a main character; 2) a setting; and 3) a problem. Have the storyteller tell a 2-minute fictional story involving the audience choices.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Practice telling a story in front of a group in a low-stakes, fun environment.</li> <li>• Can be any amount of time, depending on the number of storytellers selected.</li> </ul>



<b>Group Story</b>  In a large circle, create a group story by going around and having each person state a word or phrase that comes next in the story. Saying one word each will result in a more random story, while saying a phrase each can help practice story structure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Practice listening and relating to earlier ideas and laugh about something silly.</li><li>• For one group: 4–6 minutes. There is no set time because you can end the activity whenever you want, but it should be long enough to create a viable story and short enough so it doesn't get old.</li></ul>
<b>Speaking of...</b>  Have people go around and tell a story about something themselves. The next person has to say "speaking of..." and relate back to the storyteller before them. Prompts can be adapted to be more specifically about certain events or details about a person.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Practice relating and connecting to people as opposed to only thinking about what you are going to say next—also, get to know one another.</li><li>• For one group: timing depends on the group size, but don't spend longer than 10 minutes total. Timing can be shortened by splitting up into smaller groups or even working in pairs.</li></ul>



# STORYTELLING GUIDE: RESOURCE 8

## Storytelling Cheat Sheet

**It can be difficult to put limitations on stories because they come from our lives—there are endless possibilities of what you can talk about and how you can talk about it, which can be overwhelming.**

These tips are designed to jog your brain if you find that you are struggling with telling particular parts of a story, like how to get it started or how to find the right ending.

### Ideas for Beginning a Story

- Tips: The beginning should be as specific and concrete as possible, avoiding talking about the story and instead diving into the details of the story itself.
- Examples:
  - Specific time and place (“It was 1989 in Richmond, CA, and I....”)
  - Memory of what someone told you (“My mother always told me to....”)
  - Surprising statement (“You may not know this about me, but I...”)
  - Referencing an object or something tangible (“Whenever I see a bus, it reminds me...”)
  - Describing actions that say something about you (“Every morning, I....”)
  - Introducing something significant (“My life took a completely different path when...”)
  - Asking the audience a related question (“Have you ever.....?”)

### When You Reach the Middle of a Story....

- Dive into even more specific detail.
- Bring some action, dialogue, and inner thoughts into the scene.
- Use your senses—tell us what events felt like, smelled like, looked like, sounded like.
- Keep things unresolved. Don’t give us the answer—let us get into the messiness of the story.
- Highlight struggle, conflict, drama, or uncertainty.
- Transition to the ending section by stating what you were thinking to yourself at the time (“In that moment, I thought to myself...”)

### Ideas for Ending a Story

- Tips: Don’t use all of these example endings! Work with what you have—try to avoid bringing in new details or developments, unless it is an intentional twist or surprise for the audience. Keep your endings shorter than the middle of the story to avoid sounding preachy or repetitive.
- Examples:
  - State a moral, lesson, or takeaway.
  - Mention something that the story says about you.
  - State how the story inspired something for you.
  - Mention what the story reminds you to do or think.
  - Say how the story is a symbol of something bigger that is relevant to everyone.

### Tips for Delivering Stories

- Get into a comfortable position. If standing, shrink the room with your mind and focus on specific people. If seated, get into a position that allows you to feel energized and in the moment (sometimes the edge of your seat helps, unless that makes you more uncomfortable).
- Be conversational—talk to your audience, not at them.
- Use gestures and face to enhance drama or paint the scene. Let us “see” your reactions.
- Establish a speaking style that is most true to you. It’s okay if it isn’t super polished—be you.
- Slow your overall pace. Let us sink into the story.
- Have a clear endpoint for your thoughts. It’s okay to stop. When you stop, commit to the ending, land your voice, and hold your eye contact. Don’t trail or say, “...so yeah, that’s my story.”



# STORYTELLING GUIDE: RESOURCE 9

## Storytelling Speech Template

**The most effective and enjoyable story to tell are the ones that come from the heart.** Instead of concentrating on the fact that you have to tell a story, start from a place of excitement and care: What are you really excited to share with people? What moments are special to you? What memories bring strong emotions for you, whether they be motivation, pride, shame, longing, or even regret? Don't get in your own way by thinking about how a particular memory might be too small, too insignificant, or too boring. Instead, remember stories should be a reflection of you, not what you think others want to hear. The following template can be used

in more formal storytelling situations, where you are telling a story uninterrupted for an audience, often as a portion of a speech. As with any template, you might not need this tool; in fact, if it interferes with you being authentic, please disregard! That said, if it helps you get unstuck or get the ideas flowing, use this template to organize your ideas. Note: the sections in this template can also be placed in any order, depending on what makes sense for your speech. For additional help, go to our website (<https://practice-space.org>) and watch the video example of 16-year-old Matteo giving a speech on arts education.

### “Personal-Universal-Application” Format

Section	Description	Example Options
<b>Personal</b>	1. In great detail, describe a memory that symbolizes or represents an important theme, without directly mentioning the theme.	<p>“I remember a time when....”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Time and place</li><li>• What happened</li><li>• What was said</li><li>• What you were thinking</li><li>• What it felt like</li><li>• What you were thinking</li></ul>
<b>Universal</b>	2. Connect your memory to a larger theme, lesson, or question that is relevant for your audience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “I will never forget that experience because...”</li><li>• “That moment made me think about...”</li><li>• “From then on, I asked myself....”</li><li>• “I’m not the only one with a memory like this. Each one of us has....”</li></ul>
<b>Application</b>	3. Give the audience a call to action, stating ways they can act on the theme you’ve described. End by connecting back to you and how you are personally applying the lessons from your story, demonstrating humility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• “This idea is especially important when...”</li><li>• “Once we leave here today, I hope that...”</li><li>• “As for me, I am still...”</li></ul>



## STORYTELLING GUIDE: RESOURCE 10

### Self-Advocacy Story Template

**Self-advocacy is a challenging task because it requires us to be vulnerable and express what is most important to us, often at the risk of negative consequences or backlash.**

Sharing an example or a story about something that illustrates why it is so important to you can be an effective way of helping your audience understand where you are coming from. The following template can be used as a guide for situations where you need to give a concrete example of a specific personal need or accommodation you need from people you work with. It also is designed to be used

with people who are willing to listen to you, but may not understand where you are coming from (as opposed to a hostile audience). Depending on the situation, you may need to shorten the story portion and just provide an example, but the key purpose is to make sure you highlight a need that is important to you personally and that you need others to respect, if not understand.

Description	Example
1. One sentence describing what we need in the world and what you need in order to contribute to the conversation.	"Hi, my name is _____, and today, I will be talking to you about _____. We need _____. I therefore personally need _____."
2. Describe the need and why it is important to you.	"This is particularly important to me because _____."
3. Tell a story about when that need was not fulfilled, using details about yourself, what you went through, and how it made you feel.	"Here is one example where this wasn't fulfilled _____."
4. Describe an alternative reality and what you would have rather happened instead in that situation.	"Instead of this happening, I would have rather _____."
5. Explain why this need is important in this particular context.	"It is especially important in this situation because _____."
6. Conclude by telling us what we should consider moving forward to best serve this need for you.	"Moving forward, I hope _____."



# STORYTELLING GUIDE: RESOURCE 11

## Sharing the Stories of Others Template

**Telling stories is one of the most powerful ways to engage an audience and share our experiences.**

In some cases, this involves spreading the message of someone else's experience. To be both effective and ethical, stories need to be authentic representations that help the audience visualize a scene, feel the emotions, and relate to the message. They should not be an over-exaggeration or a manipulation to use someone else's story to serve your own ends. The following template can be used as a guide for situations where you are depicting a story or experience of another person or group (i.e. youth and

other underrepresented voices). The purpose of this type of talk is to inspire the audience (rather than persuade or inform) by highlighting themes or lessons that we can learn from that story as well as your own personal relationship to that story. The key with this type of speech is to retell the story in sufficient detail while periodically stopping to synthesize lessons, takeaways, themes, or essential questions for the audience in a way that connects them.

Description	Example
1. One sentence describing what we need in the world and what you care about.	"Hi, my name is _____, and today, I will be talking to you about _____. We need _____. I therefore personally care about _____."
2. Describe your personal relationship to the topic/message/theme.	"I have/haven't always cared about this issue because _____."
3. Explain how/why you came upon the example or story.	"I came upon a useful example of _____, when I was _____. He/she told me about _____."
4. Tell the story, using details about the person, what he/she said or went through, and what he/she felt.	"Here is what he/she said: _____."
5. Describe your own reaction and thought process.	"When he/she told me this, my first reaction was _____. "It made me wonder _____."
6. Conclude by telling us the takeaway message, theme, or question.	"What this story teaches us is _____."
7. Tell us why this message is significant and relevant to our lives or work and what the world would look like if we learned this lesson.	"This is especially relevant to us because _____. "If we learned this lesson, _____. "Moving forward, we should _____."



# STORYTELLING GUIDE: RESOURCE 12

## Seven Tips for Talking About Yourself in Interviews

**It is hard not to dread the question, “Tell me about yourself...”**

... especially at the start of a job interview when we are particularly nervous. Even when we’re genuinely proud of our accomplishments, it can be difficult feeling like we’re bragging or we may be afraid of rambling. A few tips for these stressful moments:

- **Reset your mindset.** Remind yourself that people genuinely want to learn more about you. It isn’t a quiz on your life—thinking about it this way will be more stressful and make you sound defensive. Worry less about what you think they want to hear and think of your story as an opportunity to offer a small window into who you are.
- **Treat your answer as a story, not a list of accomplishments.** The ways that stories are structured (with an arc, a journey, with a beginning/middle/end) is a much more engaging and informative way to portray your values, choices, and emotions than listing off your experiences.
- **Get excited.** Stories need to be driven by emotions, so talk about something that excites you, motivates you, drives you, or interests you. Let the story come from the heart.
- **Commit to a clear message that is genuinely important to you.** You can avoid rambling if your story has a destination and final takeaway. Instead of letting listeners make their own conclusions about you, be clear about the message you want them to take away.
- **Don’t cover everything.** Sometimes, less is more, so make sure to keep your story compact and as specific as possible. The less you cover, the more detail you can include and the more engaged listeners will be. Be okay with leaving them wanting to know more.
- **It isn’t bragging, it’s sharing.** As you’re talking, quiet the self-doubt demons that are telling you that you sound full of yourself. If the story comes from a genuine place, then it is more about sharing who you are to hopefully build a connection with another person.
- **Frame your story.** Many storytelling templates are just about one thing: making sure your story has a structure that listeners can follow. Instead of immediately launching into an example, start off with a simple main idea and end with a universal connection—this places your specific story or example in a context that is relatable. As an example structure, consider the following:

Section	Description	Options
<b>Main Idea</b>	1. State the main idea of your story. This can be a thesis sentence related to a belief statement, a theme, or a broad quality about yourself.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “I am someone who....”</li> <li>• “When I think of _____, I think of...”</li> <li>• “Throughout my entire life/professional experience/education, I have always...”</li> </ul>
<b>Illustration</b>	2. Describe a specific story that connects to the main idea.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One specific example</li> <li>• Mentioning a range of related experiences (“from this...to this...to this...I have always....”)</li> <li>• Give a sense of dedication over time (“when I was in high school I....fast forward to today, I still....”)</li> </ul>
<b>Link</b>	3. Connect your story to what it means for you in the future and why the story is a relevant portrayal of you.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “This story is only one example of...”</li> <li>• “I will take these lessons in to my future work by...”</li> <li>• “In the future, I will...”</li> </ul>



## STORYTELLING GUIDE: RESOURCE 13

# Small Steps for Educators: Using Storytelling in Schools

**Stories are powerful ways to build community in the classroom, encourage genuine connection, and help students get to know each other beyond what they are like in class.**

In English/Language Arts classes, it may make sense to have an entire unit on storytelling; in other classes, stories may work better as a routine or warm-up activity (especially when there is limited time). These ideas are intended to illustrate a few ways to imagine storytelling playing a greater role in everyday classroom activity and overall school culture.

### In Class...

- **Warm-ups.** Many storytelling activities can make quick 5–10 minute warm-ups, especially if you make the prompts into something that relates to the upcoming lesson.
- **Get-to-know-you routine.** Make a routine out of having 1–2 volunteers share their personal stories over the course of the entire term—these can be prepared ahead of time and can be delivered in person or as an audio recording.
- **Alternative to icebreakers.** In place of an icebreaker, try a simple storytelling exercise, like telling the story of an object in the room, or choosing topics out of a hat, or using an Apples to Apples game set for story topics.
- **Student leadership opportunity.** For any of the above, students can lead the activity, especially if it is a regular routine. Have a student choose the topic or select a warm-up from a list of possible story activities.
- **Connection to creative writing unit** (or other existing genre study related to stories). Oral storytelling is a nice accompaniment to teaching writing, especially with fictional stories. Have students tell personal stories inspired by something in a piece of literature.
- **Self-contained unit in a public speaking or leadership class.** When combined with final public speaking assignments like podcasts, keynotes, storytelling speeches, or monologues, you can build students' public speaking skills over time.

### In School...

- **Student story “keynotes” in assemblies and school functions.** Stories are a great way for students to be lead presenters in school-wide events, telling their unique experience and sharing something important about themselves.

- **Talent show or school exhibition.** Stories can be incredibly entertaining, especially when there's humor! Encourage more students to treat stories as an acceptable art form in a talent show or school event.
- **Student-led storytelling club.** Stories are an intuitive way to communicate and students can use stories as a way to express their identities, struggles, and cultural background.

### In High-Stakes Situations...

- **Job interview simulations and practice.** By creating a job interview simulation, students can practice the question “tell me about yourself” by telling their personal stories of strengths and educational/professional experience.
- **Student-led conferences with families.** In conferences, students can be leaders by starting meetings with a story of a specific moment and connecting it to broader themes, takeaways, and questions (these can also be audio recorded and played at the meeting). These examples can then be used to help the student facilitate the meeting.
- **Practice for Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meetings.** For special education students and parents, it can be helpful to practice and rehearse how to tell self-advocacy stories about their experiences, what is working, and what should be changed.
- **Preparation for drafting personal statements for colleges.** When students are stuck with their personal statements, try telling stories out loud to a partner about college application prompts and then audio record them as inspiration for written drafts.



## STORYTELLING GUIDE: RESOURCE 14

### Activity Examples: Facing the Fear Podcasts and StorySlams

Becoming a strong public speaker requires courage, vulnerability, and self-awareness, which students can build through regular reflection on their past performances. These assignments highlight reflection skills by asking students to look back on their journey as a public speaker and honestly communicate their new strengths and what still rattles them. These presentations will also depict the class journey of developing strong public speaking skills, helping students develop empathy and feel like they aren't alone in their fears.

#### What is the purpose of these assignments?

1. Students reflect on their journey as public speakers and work in teams to tell true stories about their process of developing communication skills, either through a podcast or a class story slam.
2. In a shorter form, these assignments can serve as a fun reflective activity after a major presentation assignment. The longer version of these assignments can serve as a reflective "part 2" of their presentation grade.



#### How do these assignments connect to Common Core Speaking & Listening Standards?

- Regardless of grade level, the anchor standards for "Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas" require students of all ages to make strategic use of digital media (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.5).
- Starting in Grade 1, the anchor standards for "Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas" require students to be able to express their ideas and feelings clearly (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.1.4).
- Starting in Grade 2, the anchor standards for "Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas" require students to be able to tell a story or recount an experience with appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.2.4).
- Starting in Grade 4, students need to be able to add audio recordings to presentations when appropriate to enhance the development of main ideas or themes (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.4.5).
- Starting in Grade 8, students need to engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions, building on other's ideas and expressing their own clearly (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.1).
- In Grades 11 and 12, students need to integrate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media as well as present a clear and distinct perspective appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.2 and CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.11-12.4).

#### What do students need to prepare?

For both assignments, students must understand the basics of how to tell an engaging detailed story and need previous experience telling stories in class. The classroom culture also needs to be safe and supportive enough to invite reflection and vulnerability without fear of ridicule.

## Facing the Fear Podcast

In small groups of 3, students work together to create a podcast episode on a focus of their choice related to themes such as “equity,” “public speaking,” “fear,” “awkwardness,” “making mistakes,” “self-improvement,” “speaking up,” “silenced.”

The teacher can provide them with a bank of possible theme choices or the class can generate topics. To give students freedom as well as focus, themes should be short (1 word or a phrase) and open-ended. Students can create a podcast that showcases personal stories (e.g. Moth-style), interviews (e.g. news style), free-form discussion, or even a fictional mystery/story based on a true story. Regardless of student choice, groups should make sure that their podcast is based in their truth. This assignment can be a portion of the overall presentation grade or even its own graded assignment (see rubric).

**Short version (ungraded activity):** Instead of in groups, students can work individually to audio record their 2–3 minute reflections on their presentations, like an audio journal. Student volunteers can then edit excerpts from the class reflections into one podcast about the class journey.

### Students need:

- ☐ **Examples:** Students need previous experience listening to a few different examples of podcasts (Moth, Serial, or This American Life can be good places to start for this type of assignment).
- ☐ **Ability to record their audio:** Students can record their podcasts on their phones and upload them to a class Google folder. For a lower tech version, each group can also use a few cheap audio recorders.
- ☐ **Music:** Students should also select music that fits the tone of their podcast and should make sure they only choose from royalty-free, open source music (see websites such as [www.bensound.com](http://www.bensound.com)).
- ☐ **Ability to edit their podcast:** To edit the podcasts, reference how-to blogs on “how to edit a podcast” and download free audio editing software (such as Studio One, Audacity, Garage Band, or Twisted Wave). It depends on the class whether students should just focus their time on constructing stories and recording them (and leaving the editing task to volunteer students or the teacher). To make editing easier, students should be encouraged to record their stories in one take and the teacher should emphasize that the best podcasts have an authentic feel that can include mistakes.
- ☐ **Submission System:** The process of putting together a podcast is a lot easier if students have a system for naming files, uploading them to a group folder, etc.

## Facing the Fear Story Slam

On a class day following a major presentation, students work together in small groups as part of a storytelling contest. With each round, students receive a theme to focus their stories and then have ten minutes to prepare their team presentation. Each group has 5 minutes of total presentation time to tell personal stories related to the theme. While everyone needs to speak, students can decide how to connect their stories to one another and how their stories can provide diverse perspectives on the theme. Each round focuses on a different theme and can include abstract concepts like, “courage,” “pushing your limits,” “awkwardness,” issue-oriented topics like “prejudice” or “youth voice”, or topics that provide a single sentence starter like “you would never believe this, but I....” Students perform in two to three rounds of stories, which are judged on a point system by the teacher or a panel of outside visitors (see point system).

**Short version (ungraded activity):** On a class day following a major presentation, students can sit together in small “storytelling circles” and tell personal stories related to themes that touch on the fear of public speaking or on areas they feel like they’ve improved about their speaking.

### Students need:

- ☐ **Spontaneous Speaking Experience:** Students need previous experience with preparing talking points in a limited time frame (i.e. not scripting out a speech but instead coming up with ideas on the spot).
- ☐ **Point System:** Students also need to be clear about the point system for the story slam.
- ☐ **Fun Environment:** It also helps to make a show out of it, putting comfy chairs or stools at the front of the room and having a few students act as hosts or emcees. It is recommended for the teacher or outside visitors to act as judges, instead of students, so they can focus on their stories and not get overly competitive.

## Facing the Fear Story Slam Point System

*(Can be adjusted depending on the purpose of the assignment and students' prior preparation)*

- Interpretation of the Topic/Theme: **20 points**
- Clear Structure for Each Story: **20 points**
- Specific Detail: **20 points**
- Moral of the Story: **10 points**
- Variety and Mixture of Perspectives: **5 points**
- Storytelling Delivery: **15 points**
- Teamwork: **5 points**
- Use of Time: **5 points**

### Story Slam Ballot

**Group Name:**

**Topic:**

**Total Presentation Time:**

Interpretation of the Topic/Theme	/ 20 points
Clear Structure for Each Story	/ 20 points
Specific Detail	/ 20 points
Moral of the Story	/ 10 points
Variety and Mixture of Perspectives	/ 5 points
Storytelling Delivery	/ 15 points
Teamwork	/ 5 points
Use of Time	/ 5 points
	GRAND TOTAL POINTS: _____

## Facing the Fear Podcast Rubric

	Questions (To what extent...)	Rating
<b>Authenticity (15%)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Were the presenters at ease in front of the audience and able to be themselves? <input type="checkbox"/> Did the presenters describe their journey as a public speaker in a way that was intended to be personal and meaningful?	
<b>Content Quality (15%)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Did the content of the podcast include specific examples to illustrate their journeys as public speakers? <input type="checkbox"/> Was the podcast content based on personal reflection and true experiences?	
<b>Overall Content Effectiveness (25%)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Was the podcast content clear, easy-to-follow, and well-organized? <input type="checkbox"/> Did the presenters manage their episode time effectively? <input type="checkbox"/> Did the podcast content offer a unique, memorable interpretation of the topic/ theme?	
<b>Speaking Delivery (20%)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Was each story delivered using clear and specific choices about language and style? <input type="checkbox"/> Was each story delivered using clear and specific choices about vocal delivery (volume, speed, pauses, emotion, etc)?	
<b>Teamwork and Collaboration (25%)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Did all group members equally contribute to the podcast? <input type="checkbox"/> Did the podcast clearly build on the ideas from each group member? <input type="checkbox"/> Was it evident that the team practiced and rehearsed together? <input type="checkbox"/> Was the podcast cohesive and were individual presentations were made better as a result of the team	



## 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!



# STORYTELLING GUIDE: RESOURCE 16

## Final Storytelling Rubric

*To emphasize the subjectivity of public speaking, have multiple graders for each story (i.e. teacher and peer) and ask for a self-assessment.*

	Questions (To what extent...)	Rating (2–3: Still developing, 4: Meets standard, 5: Exceeds expectations)
<b>Risk-Taking &amp; Effort (20%)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Did the storyteller challenge his/her comfort zone? <input type="checkbox"/> Was it evident that the storyteller went through multiple stages of preparation, practice, and feedback? <input type="checkbox"/> Did the storyteller commit to his/her performance?	
<b>Content Focus (15%)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Did the content clearly portray an element of the storyteller's identity? <input type="checkbox"/> Did the content explore the complexity of an identity issue or dilemma?	
<b>Content Effectiveness (10%)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Was the content well-organized and clear? <input type="checkbox"/> Was the flow of the content compelling?	
<b>Delivery Intentionality (25%)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Were the delivery choices clear and apparent? <input type="checkbox"/> Were there distinct emotions and vocal colors/tone? <input type="checkbox"/> Was there variation in volume, pitch, and speed?	
<b>Delivery Effectiveness (10%)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Were the delivery choices convincing and believable? <input type="checkbox"/> Were we drawn in by the overall performance? <input type="checkbox"/> Were we swayed by the message? <input type="checkbox"/> Was the overall performance refined and focused?	
<b>Authenticity (20%)</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Were we able to get a sense of the storyteller as a person, in terms of his/her beliefs, background, or concerns?	

Speaker Name:

Feedback Person's Name:



Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

Overall Comments:

<b>What was effective and/or memorable about the <i>content</i> of the story?</b>	
<b>What was effective and/or memorable about the <i>delivery</i> of the story?</b>	
<b>Areas to focus on next (both content and delivery):</b>	

Speaker Name:

Feedback Person's Name:

## STORYTELLING GUIDE: RESOURCE 17

### Community Change Idea: Youth Voice Podcast

#### A Note to Teachers

**Podcasts are a great opportunity for youth to reach a wide audience with their stories and personal experiences.**

A school-wide podcast focused on youth perspectives on education, identity, and a range of other pertinent issues like bullying and climate change can enhance or replace other youth leadership offerings at school. On an even bigger scale, a podcast can be a way to connect students from other schools and across grade levels to promote dialogue about issues facing all students in a given district or region. With a few key structures, podcast teams can

be led by students, with some guidance from community mentors, teachers, and other adults. There are many great blogs and books on setting up a podcast, so this resource is intended only as a list of steps to keep in mind. Don't worry if this looks like a lot of steps: most of them are only involved in the initial set up stage, and the rest of them make it so you have to have a functioning team (a great life skill!).

## Set Up

- ☐ Buy supplies: high-quality microphone(s), sound set-up, laptop, recording software
- ☐ Figure out a place to record: the best recording is done where there is carpet and padding. Closets are great—anything that isn't echo-y, which is hard in schools.
- ☐ Come up with a name.
- ☐ Create artwork for profile image (required to launch a podcast).
- ☐ Secure podcast hosting site to house your content.
- ☐ Set up podcast website (most podcast hosting sites come with a free website).
- ☐ Set up your podcast RSS feed—this makes your podcast available on the main podcast directories.
- ☐ Sign up on iTunes Connect (if you want it to be on iTunes)

## Content

- ☐ Define your topic.
- ☐ Figure out your target audience.
- ☐ Write the main description of the podcast as a whole.
- ☐ Plan episode topics.
- ☐ Figure out the frequency of episodes—make sure it is a schedule you can keep up consistently, so be realistic.
- ☐ Figure out the length of each episode.
- ☐ Figure out the style of the podcast and what type of content goes into each episode (i.e. interview style, free-form discussion, stories)
- ☐ Select openly-licensed music to set the tone.

## Processes

- ☐ Decide how often to meet as a team.
- ☐ Decide roles for each member of the team (which can also rotate every few episodes).
- ☐ Figure out how to best collect the raw content for each episode.
- ☐ Create a raw audio submission system.
- ☐ Create folders and naming conventions to keep everything organized.
- ☐ If interviews and guests are involved, decide who to invite and what questions to ask.

## Publishing

- ☐ Record all components as .wav files and edit together with the music using your selected software—the completed edited version should then be exported as an .mp3.
- ☐ Before you can publish a new podcast episode, you need:
- ☐ Finalized episode as an .mp3 file
- ☐ Episode title
- ☐ Episode description text (2–3 sentences)
- ☐ Artwork file
- ☐ Sign on to hosting site and fill out required fields for adding a new episode, including labeling the season and episode title with a number, adding any links to blog material or other resources, and making sure the RSS field says it has been scanned successfully.
- ☐ Click publish!
- ☐ Sign on to iTunes connect and enter the RSS feed (which you get from your hosting site) and click validate.
- ☐ When everything is up and running, you should be able to see the published episode on your hosting website. It takes approx. 10 minutes to appear on the hosting site and about 30 minutes to appear in various apps (iTunes takes the longest, so don't worry).

## Sharing

- ☐ Decide methods for sharing your podcast, including:
  - ☐ Create bite-size versions of your podcast, like images with quotes or 15-sec soundbites
  - ☐ Putting it up on YouTube
  - ☐ Sharing links
  - ☐ Making promo videos about it
  - ☐ Creating live stories about each episode launch on Instagram and Facebook
  - ☐ Adding links to your podcast in any email signature
  - ☐ Making it easy for any interview guests to share it by creating images or quotes/snippets they can share
- ☐ Assign specific people for different publicity roles

## STORYTELLING GUIDE: RESOURCE 18

### Project Sketcher

**This tool is to help you map out a plan for your public speaking project, beginning with the big picture idea, the anticipated struggles and needs, the milestones and activities, and finally the specific timeline and actions.**

#### I. Overall Description

Summary of Change Idea: What do you want to change through your voice project or activity?

What work is public?

What are your speaking/listening goals  
(or required standards)?

## II. Skills and Struggles

What communication skills, techniques, or capabilities are the focus of this work? (while they are all relevant to strong public speaking, choose a few areas for more targeted focus)

Content-Related	Delivery-Related	Process-Related
<input type="checkbox"/> Brainstorming <input type="checkbox"/> Selecting content relevant to audience <input type="checkbox"/> Outlining <input type="checkbox"/> Organizing and sequencing content <input type="checkbox"/> Explaining complex ideas clearly <input type="checkbox"/> Speech writing <input type="checkbox"/> Use of compelling language and memorable phrases <input type="checkbox"/> Ability to be succinct and to-the-point when needed <input type="checkbox"/> Persuasive speech construction <input type="checkbox"/> Story construction <input type="checkbox"/> Slide design <input type="checkbox"/> Spontaneous speaking <input type="checkbox"/> Argumentation skills <input type="checkbox"/> Identifying and using credible sources <input type="checkbox"/> Research skills <input type="checkbox"/> Strong beginnings that capture audience attention <input type="checkbox"/> Strong transitions between ideas <input type="checkbox"/> Strong endings that definitively conclude and leave audience wanting more <input type="checkbox"/> Summarizing or recapping ideas	<input type="checkbox"/> Breath support and control <input type="checkbox"/> Strong posture and stance <input type="checkbox"/> Ability to balance being relaxed with being energized <input type="checkbox"/> Using gestures to highlight content <input type="checkbox"/> Volume: Appropriate use and variation <input type="checkbox"/> Using voice to strengthen content (including sounding confident and using the right tone) <input type="checkbox"/> Appropriate use of eye contact <input type="checkbox"/> Speed: Appropriate use and variation <input type="checkbox"/> Using facial expressions to highlight emotions <input type="checkbox"/> Movement and use of stage <input type="checkbox"/> Correct use of a microphone and/or other sound equipment <input type="checkbox"/> Ability to avoid distracting movements and fiddling <input type="checkbox"/> Ability to avoid distracting filler phrases or words	<input type="checkbox"/> Anxiety-coping <input type="checkbox"/> Listening <input type="checkbox"/> Asking clarifying questions <input type="checkbox"/> Asking probing questions <input type="checkbox"/> Note-taking <input type="checkbox"/> Time management <input type="checkbox"/> Collaboration with others <input type="checkbox"/> Facilitation of discussions and/or teamwork <input type="checkbox"/> Ability to be authentic (true to self, style, and beliefs) <input type="checkbox"/> Ability to be connected with the emotions behind the content <input type="checkbox"/> Ability to get “in the zone” and be fully focused on the material <input type="checkbox"/> Adapting to different audiences <input type="checkbox"/> Relating to others <input type="checkbox"/> Coaching others <input type="checkbox"/> Providing constructive feedback



Out of the skills, techniques, and capabilities, what high-priority needs do you anticipate taking longer to address?

III. High-Level Plan

Public Speaking Milestones

Activities to Include

Materials Needed

People Involved and Help Needed

IV. Calendar

The calendar on the following page is intended to be used as a hard copy to be used with small post-its to color code and/or move around different milestones and activities. After mapping out the plan for each month, use any system you usually use for planning out specific daily activities and their timing.

Color Key: (suggested categories: 1) learning new content; 2) preparation day; 3) practice day; 4) performance day; 5) reflection day.

					MONDAY
					TUESDAY
					WEDNESDAY
					THURSDAY
					FRIDAY



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