

# Digital Storytelling

## Presenter

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## Grade Band

7-12 (younger with adaptations)

## Estimated Lesson Time

Approximately two weeks

## Overview

Students will have read N. Scott Momaday's *The Way to Rainy Mountain* which tells the story of two journeys: Momaday's personal journey to connect with his Kiowa heritage and the journey of the Kiowa people. After discussing the book and the role of the storyteller in society, students will be challenged to become their family's storyteller. They will have written down three personal family stories in three voices as Momaday does in his book, formatting them to resemble the layout of *Rainy Mountain*. From those stories, students select one to create a digital story.

Students will write scripts for the voice-overs, bring in photos and documents to scan, and find appropriate background music to enhance their stories. Once all elements have been saved to a folder, students use Windows Movie Maker to create their stories.

## From Theory to Practice

Kajder, S. B. (2004). Enter here: Personal narrative and digital storytelling. *English Journal*, 93:3, 64-68.

- Sharing personal stories allows students to participate within a literacy community and "to take huge strides in defining themselves as readers and writers."
- When students write their own stories, they demonstrate what they know about texts beyond just reading words.
- Digital storytelling provides a natural way for students to learn how to communicate visually as well as verbally while gaining experience using technology as a powerful communication tool.

## Student Objectives

Students will

- plan and create original digital stories using family stories.
- write original scripts for voice-overs.
- select appropriate images and music to help tell their stories.
- demonstrate their ability to communicate ideas visually as they use Windows Movie Maker to create their project and render it as a movie.
- present their digital stories to the class.

## Resources

- computers with Internet access to view BBC website and search for music and images
- multi-media projector for viewing Robert James' story as a class, as well as for demonstrating Movie Maker
- assignment handout and rubric
- story board handout
- scanners to convert photographs and documents into digital files
- computers: PCs with Windows Movie Maker or Macs with iMovie
- microphones for recording voice-over in Movie Maker

## Instructional Plan

### Instruction and Activities

1. Have students visit the [BBC Capture Wales](http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/capturewales/) website at <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/capturewales/>> and view several digital stories.
2. As a class, view *Steelworks* at <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/capturewales/background/robert-james.shtml>>. Identify and discuss the theme of Robert James' anger.
3. Explain the process of creating a digital story to students.
4. Give students the storyboard handout and plot out James' story.
5. Have students reorganize one of their family stories into a two-page script that will become the voiceover in their digital stories.
6. Have students plan out their digital stories using the storyboard.
7. Have students bring in photographs and documents to scan and/or locate images on the Internet to include in their stories.
8. Make sure each student creates a project folder and saves all files to this folder.
9. Have students find appropriate background music and convert it to a digital file, if necessary.
10. Demonstrate how to use Movie Maker with a multi-media projector.
11. Have students place images into the timeline, place music, and record their voiceovers.
12. Have students render their project as a movie
13. Have students share their stories with the class using the multi-media projector. Have students complete feedback forms for each story.

### Student Assessment / Reflections

- Assess student products using the storytelling rubric.
- Have students complete the rubric as a self-assessment before turning their rubrics in.
- Have students complete a feedback form for each digital story after viewing.
- Have students write personal reflections on the process, the feedback they receive, and implications for future assignments.

### Standards (English 3 TEKS)

The student is expected to

- organize ideas in writing to ensure coherence, logical progression, and support for ideas. (1C)
- develop drafts both alone and collaboratively by organizing and reorganizing content and by refining style to suit occasion, audience, and purpose. (2B)
- represent information in a variety of ways such as graphics, conceptual maps, and learning logs. (4D)
- draw upon his/her own background to provide connection to texts. (7A)
- analyze the characteristics of clearly written texts, including the patterns of organization, syntax, and word choice. (12A)
- present interpretations such as telling stories, performing original works, and interpreting poems and stories for a variety of audiences. (18C)
- describe how meanings are communicated through elements of design, including shape, line, color, and texture. (19A)
- recognize how visual and sound techniques or design convey messages in media such as special effects, editing, camera angles, reaction shots, sequencing, and music. (20D)
- use a variety of forms and technologies such as videos, photographs, and web pages to communicate specific messages. (21B)
- use a range of techniques to plan and create a media text and reflect critically on the work produced. (21C)

## Digital Storytelling Resources

### Print Resources

Lambert, J. (2002). *Digital storytelling: Capturing lives, creating community*. Berkley, CA: Digital Diner Press.

### Internet Resources

*BBC Capture Wales*. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/capturewales/about/>  
What's happening in Wales?

BBC Wales is working with digital storyteller Daniel Meadows from the Centre for Journalism Studies at Cardiff University. We run monthly workshops around Wales, working with members of the public to help them create their own digital stories.

*Center for Digital Storytelling*. <http://www.storycenter.org/>

The Center for Digital Storytelling is a non-profit training, project development, and research organization dedicated to assisting people in using digital media to tell meaningful stories from their lives. Our focus is on developing large-scale projects for community, educational, and business institutions, using the methods and principles of the Digital Storytelling Workshop. We also offer workshops for organizations and individuals and serve as an international clearinghouse of information and resources about storytelling and new media.

*Denali Discovery Guide*. <http://www.teachingstory.com/denali/index.html>

This site relates digital storytelling to standards in science and geography and includes direct instruction, project-based learning, and individual reflections. Lesson Plans included. Links to other digital storytelling resources.

*Digital Storytelling*. <http://www.electronicportfolios.org/digestory/index.html>

Part of Helen Barrett's *Electronic Portfolio* site. Contains numerous helpful links.

*Digital Storytelling Association*. <http://www.dsaweb.org/>

Begun in 2002, its members include representatives from 8 countries, over 25 U.S. states. D.S.A. is located and funded by the Center for Digital Storytelling at Berkley. Site has several links and information for becoming a member.

D.U.S.T.Y. (Digital Underground Storytelling for Youth). <http://www.oaklanddusty.org>

Program is a university and community collaborative between the University of California's UC Links Program, UC Berkeley's Graduate School of Education, and the Joseph-Prescott Center for Community Enhancement. By combining traditional literacy activities with popular culture, D.U.S.T.Y. children/youth build bridges between academically valued types of literacy and powerful forms of self-expression. At D.U.S.T.Y. we support participants through instruction in literacy, spoken word, and multi-media to create powerful accounts of their communities, lives, and futures.

*Tech Head Stories*. <http://www.tech-head.com/dstory.htm>

A comprehensive list of links to information about digital storytelling. It is published by McLellan Wyatt Digital, a media production company based in New York that produces media programs and learning materials.

*Telling Their Story: Oral History Archives Project*. <http://tellingstories.org/about/index.html>

High school students at the Urban School of San Francisco conduct and film interviews with Bay Area Holocaust survivors in their homes. Students then transcribe each 2-plus hour interview, create hundreds of movie files associated with each transcript, and then post the full-text, full-video interviews on this public website as a service to a world-wide audience interested in Holocaust studies.

## Seven Elements of Digital Storytelling

1. Point of View & the So What
2. Dramatic Question
3. Emotional Content
4. The Gift of Your Voice
5. Power of the Soundtrack
6. Economy
7. Pacing

However, we generally are working with projects where the images and scenes exist prior to the script, as in the family album. So the natural approach is to make a visual narrative, to line up the photos on a table, and then figure out what to say about the pictures. The advantage is that you can be very specific about what information you must fill in to make sense of the narrative. The disadvantage is that if there is too big of a gap for the audience to close between images, you are left with holes in your story that you have to invent pictures to fill. We have decided that there is no right or wrong way to compose in this situation—script first or image sequence first. Different people have intuitive skills in the visual or text modes.

Economy is generally the largest problem with telling a story. Most people do not realize that the story they have to tell can be effectively illustrated with a small number of images and video, and a relatively short text. We purposely put limitations on the number of images and video clips our students use. We also suggest that, if they are starting with a script, they create a storyboard with their material and look at every possible way to edit their words prior to beginning the production process. (Page 18)

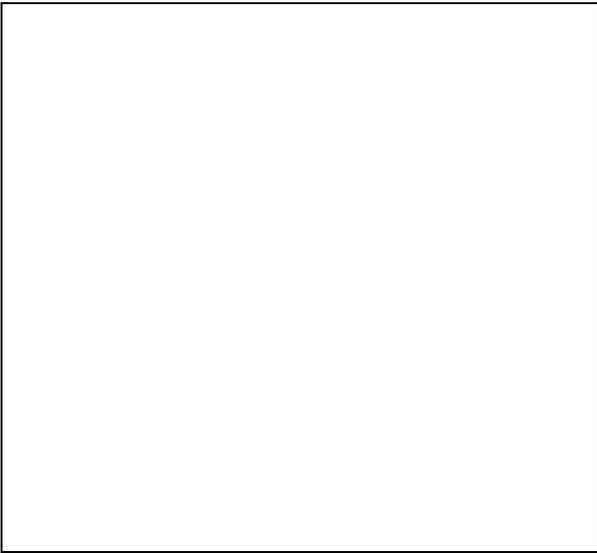
### **These Stories from These Pictures**

Digital Stories often start with the pictures. Our easiest direction to anyone thinking about making a digital story is to look around their house, on the mantle, or the old shoebox, and find some images that provoke stories. Then see if there are other images around the house that are part of that story.

As we talk about storyboarding and structure, the notion of the illustration of the script is emphasized as an outgrowth of the successful drafting of your narration. But we would guess that 20 percent of the people that have come to the workshop have taken the absolutely opposite approach to the process. They pull out the photos, arrange them on a table, and then sort out an order from beginning to end. With the story visually organized, they then start writing. Is this effective? Of course. Some great stories have emerged through this process.

Our only caveat is to consider whether or not by responding to the images alone, you are possibly leaving out parts of a story that never were captured in any images in your archive. If you do imagine an image that is missing, then you can look to an illustration or appropriately implicit or metaphorical representation to capture the sense of the writing. (Page 22)

Source: Lambert, J. (2003). *Digital Storytelling Cookbook and Traveling Companion*. Digital Diner Press. <http://www.storycenter.org>

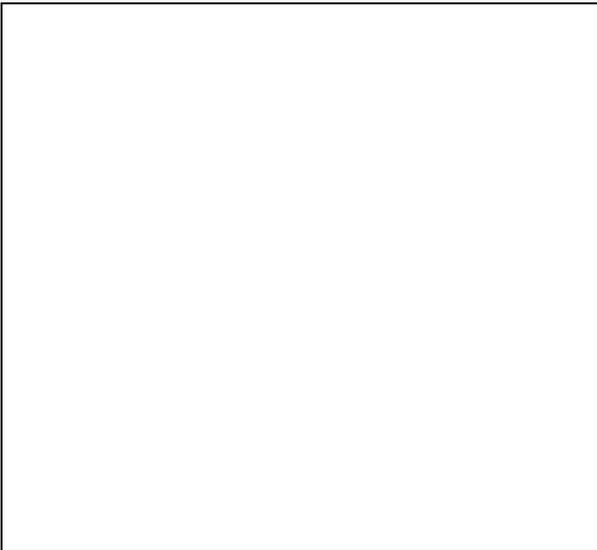


Narration: \_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_

Music: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Special Effect: \_\_\_\_\_

Transition: \_\_\_\_\_



Narration: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Music: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Special Effect: \_\_\_\_\_

Transition: \_\_\_\_\_



Narration: \_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
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Music: \_\_\_\_\_  
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Special Effect: \_\_\_\_\_

Transition: \_\_\_\_\_

Images

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Effects

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Transitions

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Voiceover \_\_\_\_\_  
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Soundtrack

Images

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Effects

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Transitions

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Voiceover

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Soundtrack