

MEMORY

Choosing What Story to Tell

By Media What

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Lesson Overview

After you conduct an interview, how do you select how to structure and frame your story out of all of the possible details you have collected? Choosing what type of story to tell, is the first step to structuring your information into a narrative that places the person you have interviewed at the center. This lesson is focused on the planning stage of creating a short documentary based on an interview the students have conducted. It will allow them to explore the different lenses through which they can focus a story, and enables them to apply that knowledge on a transcribed interview, in order to pick the type of story they would like to tell.

The lesson plan *How To Create a Short Documentary*, is a natural follow-up lesson, that invites students to write a voiceover narration and plan a short documentary focused on the person interviewed.

You can also view the lesson plan *Telling A Real Story*, which works well as an introduction to this lesson since it focuses on developing students' interviewing skills.

This lesson was developed as part of Your Story project, which was funded by the US Department of State, Alumni TIES and World Learning.

Lesson Objectives

- To explore different kinds of personal stories
- To apply the types of stories to existing media products
- To evaluate and select the strong elements of an interview
- To understand circle story structures
- To apply knowledge on the types of personal stories to shape a narrative

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Understand the different kind of personal stories
- Map out how media products use these types of personal stories, especially in realist forms

- Engage and select content from a transcribed interview for the purpose of a digital story
- Evaluate how content selected can inform and help shape the narrative of a digital story
- Appreciate the fluidity between the different kinds of stories and develop their own hybrid versions of personal story structures
- Plan the narrative arc of a personal digital story that is based on an interview

Lesson Outline

SLIDES	Lesson Plan Instructions	Duration
<p>BEGIN by going over what this lesson will cover (Slides 2-3). Each section is broken down so students have a mental map of the goals of the lesson.</p>		
<p>What different types of stories are there? [Duration: 25']</p>		
#4	<p>READ each short sentence and ask students to think about what kind of story each one is.</p> <p><i>Possible answers:</i> 1. adventure; 2. Journey / Loss / War / Discovery ; 3. Career; 4. Character, Success Story</p> <p>Note that all of the statements refer to a real documentary. The names of the films are provided on Slide 5.</p>	5'
#6-14	<p>GIVE students an overview of the different kinds of stories that they can use for personal stories (Slide 6). The following slide (#7) provides the theme of personal stories in bold, and then slide 8 details of the types of stories within that theme. The same follows for the three additional themes provided in the following slides.</p> <p>VARIATION You can personalize each of the types of stories from your own personal experience. This will allow students to connect with you, their teacher, it will create a safe atmosphere of mutual trust, and will also encourage them to speak out about their own examples, if you would like to open it up to the class for their own personal experiences.</p>	10'
#15	<p>Activity</p> <p>APPLY the different kinds of stories to existing documentaries. You can refer back to Slide 5 as an example, to illustrate the activity. Students can work individually, and use examples from their own media consumption, or if they are stuck, they can refer to IMDB's most popular documentary list. Then they can pair up and discuss their choices with a partner.</p> <p>FEEDBACK as a class, and provide discuss examples provided, especially where there might be overlap with other types of stories.</p> <p>NOTE Check the list of documentaries on IMDB to see if these are suitable for the ages you're teaching. Alternately, you can provide students with a list of documentaries to investigate you have</p>	10'

	prepared in advance, and ask them pair them with the kinds of stories covered in the previous slides.	
How do you choose what to include in a story? [Duration: 20']		
#16	<p>GIVE students the handout that accompanies this lesson plan, before they begin on the activity.</p> <p>PROMPT them to find elements of the transcript that follow the golden rule of storytelling: show don't tell.</p>	5'
#17	<p>Activity</p> <p>ASK students to read the transcript individually, and to answer each of the exercises:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. to highlight what they think are the best parts of the person's story 2. To select the type of story they would tell based on this transcript and why. <p>FEEDBACK as a group, and be open to students' different interpretations. It is important to ask students to justify their reasoning for picking specific parts of the transcript.</p> <p>NOTE There are no right or wrong answers for the type of story that can be told. Based on the transcript provided: it could be a character story (focused on the grandmother); it could be a recovery story (focused on overcoming poverty); it could be an identity story (focused on being a women in the 50s) – or indeed a combination of any of these. The point of this exercise is for students to begin formulating a narrative based on collected information, but also to understand the fluidity among different kinds of stories.</p>	15'
Your turn: Plan the narrative arc of the story [Duration: 20']		
#20-21	<p>PLAY the short story created by Dana Atchley.</p> <p>ASK students to note down the key points of the story, and think of how they might connect in a circle story structure.</p>	5'
#22	CREATE a story outline for a voiceover narration based on the interview transcript handout.	10'

Suggested Assignment

Ask students to write up a voiceover narration for a digital story based on the transcript provided in the handout.

Additional Resources

Lambert, J., & Hessler, B. (2018). *Digital Storytelling: Capturing Lives, Creating Community*. Routledge.

Find more lesson plans at medialearn.mediawhat.org



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