

## MEMORY

# How To Create a Personal Story

By Media What

[Click here to access the slides for this lesson](#)

### Lesson Overview\_

How do you take a story from an idea to a fully realized digital story? Understanding the different aspects of digital stories is important in determining the necessary steps to bringing a short personal story to life. This lesson is focused on getting students to structure to plan a short documentary, around a scripted voiceover narration. By examining the structure of the voiceover script, students will brainstorm ideas for visuals and sounds and will get to create a working storyboard for a digital story. Finally, they will reflect on what skills a documentary makers might need in order to find and create a great story.

You can deliver the four-part lesson, by starting with *Let's Get Real*, which is focuses on understanding documentary conventions. Then follow it, with *Telling A Real Story*, which introduces students to journalistic practice, and then *Choosing What Story To Tell*, which focuses on finding a narrative structure for information collected through interviews.

This is the last of a series of lessons developed as part of Your Story project, which was funded by the US Department of State, Alumni TIES and World Learning.

### Lesson Objectives\_

- To analyze the narrative structure in a voiceover narration
- To examine the components of a digital story
- To understand how visual language influences media messages
- To understand how editing influences narrative construction
- To develop skills for pre-production planning
- To nurture a storyteller mindset

### Learning Outcomes\_

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

- Be able to think critically and evaluate the narrative structure of a voiceover narration script
- Understand the elements of a digital story
- Analyze and appreciate the importance of framing, camera angles and editing in shaping the narrative of a video story

- Understand the stages and develop the skills for pre-production planning for short documentaries that are based on voice-over narration
- Recognize the skills needed to think like a storyteller
- Create their own storyboards, based on planning and research

### Vocabulary

**Copyright** = The legal rights is owned by the creator of a media product. It refers to the right to copy a product.

**Storyboard** = A document that includes panels of sketches that illustrate how the story will develop in a sequence. Details such as the type of frame used, movement of the camera using arrows, duration of the shot, and use of sound effects, are also included below each frame.

**Kuleshov effect** = A film editing technique developed by Lev Kuleshov, a Soviet filmmaker. As viewers, the interaction between sequential shots is more meaningful to us, than viewing the individual shots in isolation. We produce meaning by pairing shots together. This editing technique, means that filmmaking can manipulate both space and time, but still keep the story intact.

**Continuity editing** = Putting together sequences of film to create the impression that events unfold seamlessly, as in real life.

**Sound effects** = Sound effects are added as additional layers of sound on a sequence, to make it sound more realistic.

### Lesson Outline

SLIDES	Lesson Plan Instructions	Duration
<b>BEGIN</b> 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.		
<b>How do you create a digital story?</b> [Duration: 10']		
#4-10	<p><b>LIST</b> the seven steps to creating digital stories.</p> <p><b>Note</b> that for steps 1 &amp; 2 you can refer to the Lesson Plan: <i>Choosing What Story to Tell</i>, which focuses on how choose the kind of story you want to create. The following steps will be covered in this lesson.</p>	10'
<b>How can you think like a storyteller?</b> [Duration: 5']		
#12-16	<p><b>SAY</b> the tips provided in each of the slides. This section aims to consolidate ideas that have also been covered in <i>How to Tell A Real Story &amp; Choosing What Story To Tell</i>.</p> <p><b>OPTIONAL</b> you can also give students a fun home assignment / challenge: Find a story from your everyday life. As you go through your day, pay attention to conversations, to sounds, smells, details. Write down story ideas in a notebook, on your phone and be ready to share with the rest of the class!</p>	5'

<b>How do you find the right visuals and sounds? [Duration: 30']</b>		
<b>#18</b>	<p><b>GIVE</b> students the handout that accompanies this lesson plan.</p> <p><b>PROMPT</b> them to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. read the script for voiceover narration</li> <li>2. create an outline by of the story circle by writing a heading for each of the paragraphs</li> <li>3. determine what kind of story this is (if the lesson: <i>Choosing What Story to Tell</i> has also been covered prior to this).</li> </ol>	12'
<b>#19</b>	<p><b>ASK</b> students to brainstorm the types of visuals that the voiceover narration brings to mind.</p> <p><i>Possible answers:</i> meatballs, kitchen scene, scene with clothes and bag, watching TV, etc.</p>	12'
<b>#20-21</b>	<p><b>EXPLAIN</b> how you can add visuals to a short personal story. This can be through using archived images, which is a convention in realist forms such as documentaries, or students' own original photos.</p> <p><b>MENTION</b> that found images online can be used but use this as an opportunity to talk about the importance of finding copyright-free images.</p>	8'
<b>#22</b>	<p><b>EXPLAIN</b> how to find copyright-free image sources online.</p> <p><b>INVITE</b> students to try and source some of the images they mentioned for Slide 19, in any of the copyright-free options provided on Slide 22. The aim of this activity is to illustrate that though they may be able to find what they are looking for, it may not match the style or intended feel of the story being told. Use this opportunity to encourage students to use their own content, and where possible to supplement with archived images or footage, if available.</p>	
<b>#23</b>	<p><b>ASK</b> students to brainstorm the types of sounds that the voiceover narration brings to mind.</p> <p><i>Possible answers:</i> kitchen utensils, sound from the TV, high heels etc.</p>	8'
<b>#24-26</b>	<p><b>EXPLAIN</b> how you can add sounds to a short personal story. This can be through students' own original recordings or from sounds found online.</p> <p><b>EMPHASIZE</b> the importance of check copyright options when selecting materials. Refer to the sound libraries provided and the BBC Sound Effects Archive.</p> <p><b>OPTIONAL</b> You can ask the students to find a suitable soundtrack that matches the personal story provided, or to find suitable SFX that can bring it to life.</p>	
<b>How do you plan for a short personal story? [Duration: 15']</b>		

#28-32	<p><b>EXPLAIN</b> the importance of choosing how you are going to put together a sequence. This is called editing, and the way that this is represented in the pre-production stage is through a storyboard.</p> <p><b>INTRODUCE</b> students to the two filmmakers who influenced editing theory: Kuleshov &amp; Eisenstein.</p> <p><b>EXPLAIN</b> How a storyboard works to communicate how a sequence will unfold.</p> <p><b>OPTIONAL FOR KULESHOV:</b> Ask students apply the Kuleshov effect in order to create a super-short story using a three-frame storyboard.</p> <p><b>OPTIONAL FOR EISENSTEIN:</b> If you would like students to engage with his montage technique, play The Odessa Steps Scene, from Eisenstein's Battleship Potemkin (provided in the resources), and ask them to note down what feelings it evokes in them, and how this is achieved through the juxtaposition of different scenes.</p>	15'
<b>Your turn: Create a storyboard [Duration: 15']</b>		
#35	<b>CREATE</b> six frames of a storyboard based on the voiceover narration handout.	15'

Recommended software:

**For Sound:**

1. **Garage Band:** <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/garageband/id408709785>
2. **Launchpad:** <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/launchpad-make-remix-music/id584362474>

**Additional Resources**

[Note: The images in the link below can be a good illustration to show students the importance of framing.]

Dovas. The Truth Behind Instagram Photos. *Bored Panda*. Retrieved from: <https://www.boredpanda.com/truth-behind-instagram-photos-cropping-chompoobaritone/>

Hellerman, J. (2019, January 30) The Kuleshov Effect: Everything You Need To Know. *No Film School*. Retrieved from: <https://nofilmschool.com/Kuleshov-effect-definition>

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

More examples of editing techniques can be found on No Film's School's <https://nofilmschool.com/tags/montagetheory>

Find more lesson plans at [medialearn.mediawhat.org](https://medialearn.mediawhat.org)



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