

From Community Building
to Youth Employability

DIGITAL STORY

GUIDE

FOR

YOUTH



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DIGITAL STORY

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ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This publication forms part of the DIGITAL STORY project, supported under Key Action 2: Small-Scale Partnerships in Youth, and co-funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union. The project aims to foster the social inclusion, civic engagement, and employability of young people, particularly those from rural or remote areas, through the use of cultural heritage and digital storytelling. The guide is structured in four modules and is designed to support youth workers and young people in developing storytelling and digital media skills relevant to participation, identity, and the labour market.

Guide Modules

1. **How to Tell the Story**
2. **Audience**
3. **Digital Storytelling**
4. **Ethics of the Story**



Project Partners

This material was developed collaboratively by the following partner organisations:

- **Balsių bendruomenė**, Lithuania – Project Coordinator
- **TATICS GROUP SRL**, Italy
- **Teach Solais Community Development**, Ireland
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HOW TO TELL THE STORY



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HOW TO TELL A STORY

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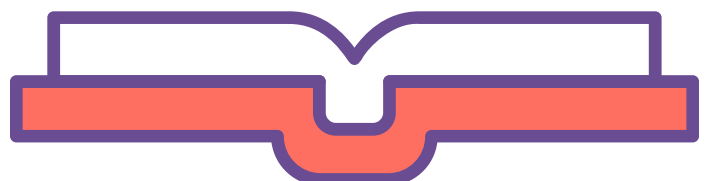
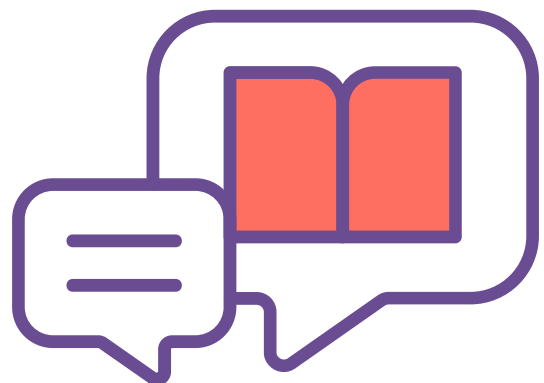
INTRODUCTION:

Stories are a universal form of communication. Nikita Obukhov, founder of Tilda website builder, has said that he believes a new age is coming – the age of digital storytelling, similar to the Golden Age of literature, but on the internet. This new kind of storytelling is high-minded; it is gradually becoming a skill like beautifully written text.

But how can you use the power of digital options to create more memorable stories that resonate with your audience? In this paragraph, you will find simple information about how to tell a digital story, which includes step by step process of researching and delivering a compelling story, as well as tips and examples from successful storytellers. It also includes activities and exercises that can be used individually to practice and improve storytelling techniques.

This paragraph will cover topics as:

- **Idea developing**
- **Format of your story**
- **Story planning**
- **How to tell? How to deliver?**
- **Tips & Tricks**
- **Successful Storytellers**
- **Activities & Exercises**



1. IDEA DEVELOPING TO GET TO THE STORYTELLING, FIRST, YOU NEED TO DEVELOP IDEAS



Every story begins with a spark, an image, a question, a feeling.

Ideation is the collaborative process of creating and developing ideas. It serves as the starting point for idea management, allowing you to expand on abstract, concrete, or visual concepts to find solutions or discover new opportunities.

It's really amazing if you already have great ideas for your digital story, but if not, seek in, to search for the best way to develop ideas for the whole story or only for some details that are still unclear.

HERE ARE SOME TECHNIQUES FOR DEVELOPING OR FINDING IDEAS FOR YOUR DIGITAL STORY.

First, you can always start with the basics. Understanding step by step, what it is that you might possibly want to create your story about, or what's missing:

Imagine your target audience.

What they are interested in, what they like, enjoy, do in their free time, are proud of, etc.



Find your passion or theme for your story.

What makes you really happy or passionate about it? What is it that you could talk about for hours or tell great stories every day?

Be sure about the purposes of the story you want to tell.

Is it to inform, to entertain or maybe have fun yourself?

Second, you can choose some creative ways for the idea-making process.

Talking it out! - Sometimes, it helps to "bounce ideas back and forth" with someone. Try talking out themes or topics that you like with a person you feel comfortable with. It can really do magic!

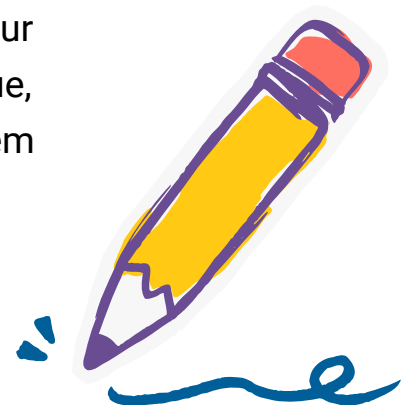


Short group sessions - Give your friends a topic, word, letter, and just play an association game or brainstorm about a topic you like.

Get inspiration from nature, animals, weather, people, culture, places or other incredible inspirational things. Do you happen to often pay attention to birds on the street? If you start watching them for hours, you will be surprised by their day routine, habits, and movements.

Write down your ideas. Do you know that time before you fall asleep, when your thoughts and ideas fly through your head? Aren't there sometimes ideas of something unique, smart, interesting, creative? Maybe it's worth writing them down!

Of course, there are many more tools for creative thinking, but maybe the simple ones are the most effective.



Third, think outside the box!

If the simple idea-making process starts to get boring, there is always the option of thinking in non-traditional ways. Here are some examples of tasks to get your brain thinking outside the box:



Brain Dump - You write down your thoughts as fast as you can and they come without worrying about grammar. This tool helps you to write down ideas that you might dismiss as silly if you took the time to think them through.

Broaden your scope of relevance - Imagine you need to sharpen a pencil, but the sharpener is broken. If you focus only on fixing the sharpener, it might take too long. However, by expanding your perspective, you go from looking for a sharpener to looking for a sharp object. That's the moment when you start noticing scissors, a knife, or other household tools that can serve as a sharpener.

Talk to kids -Young children make all sorts of connections that adults might not consider, especially when they're playing and having fun. Without the same assumptions adults have, they can notice things that would seem unconventional or unusual to an older perspective.

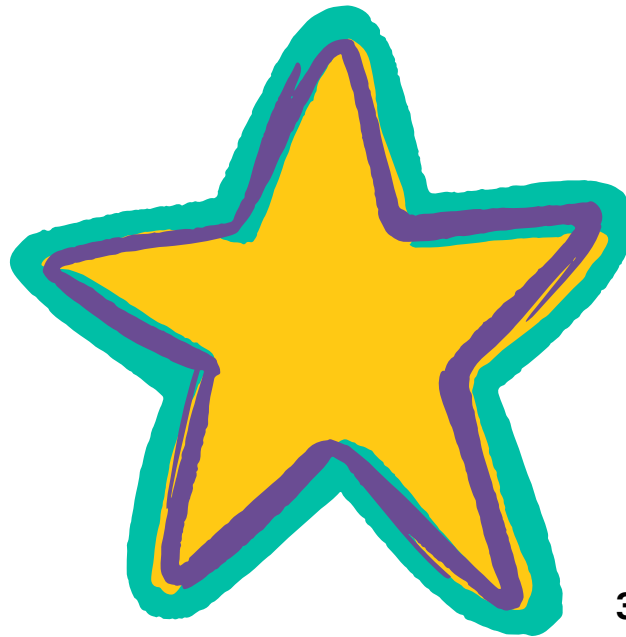


If you already have an idea, you can try out this self questioning method, to be sure and more confident about your story!

1. What you want to share?

6. Why do you want to tell this story?

5. Who are the important people, events, and things in this story? What helped to make your story?



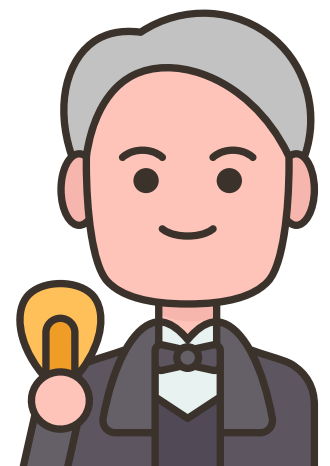
2. How would you explain this to a person who doesn't know anything about it?

3. How did you find out and learn about this?

4. How did finding out about it make you feel or how did it change your life?

Think about Thomas Edison, who would have believed a light bulb was possible? Yet, by thinking outside the box, innovators like him were able to change the world in ways that seemed unimaginable at the time.

Remember that there won't be one successful way for idea making for everyone. You need to find YOUR way of doing it, because only you know what approach works best for you, even if you don't know it yet!



2. FORMAT OF YOUR STORY



Digital storytelling can be in different forms, each offering unique ways to engage and immerse an audience. So, after you have an idea, you probably also will have a format in mind for your story.

Simply, it can be anything. Audio, photo, video, text, but if we look for the latest trends, then you already probably know these:

- **Posts on social media (video, picture, stories combined with text)**
- **Short videos (reels, TikTok videos, etc.)**
- **Memes & GIFs**
- **Podcasts**
- **Interactive content**

All of the formats will be great for storytelling, but you need to remember some things.

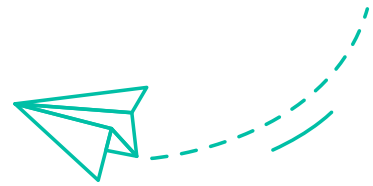
Tips & Tricks for choosing a format:

- Understand and know your audience. It can change the format choice. Gen Z will definitely like all the trendy formats, but older people, such as seniors, might prefer simple, understandable content, like beautiful pictures with descriptions.
- Know the purpose of your story, if it's, for example, to inform about serious topics like health facts, then do research and provide data, to be and to look like a reliable source to your audience.

3. STORY PLANNING



1. Think about **the message or purpose** your story is supposed to convey.



2. **Plan a “hook”** that will grab the attention of the audience. It captivates the viewer right from the start, so it should be bold, intriguing, and dramatic! The opening sentence could be a question or statement such as: “You can’t believe what happened to me...”



3. **Do a prep** before creating a story. Consider whether you need materials to create content, or where you can get technology to create a story in a way you really want.

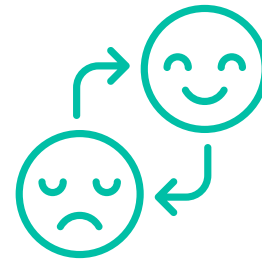


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4. Plan **special elements** and be careful with music and audio elements, as they tend to create a mood for your story.



5. **Plan how you will use elements.**

Visual elements enhance the story in ways words can't describe. They are not for telling a story but for enhancing it to evoke the emotion you want the audience to feel.



6. Think also about **the rhythm of the story**. Plan appropriate movements, music, or other elements that create the desired rhythm. For example, an emotional proposal story will probably need slow music, which also relates to the feeling you want to give your audience.



Tips & Tricks for planning a story:

- Instead of telling the audience what they are feeling, an effective narrator shows emotions through body language.
- While these visual effects can convey relationships between ideas, creators should keep in mind that effects should serve to enhance the story. The overuse of visual effects such as transitions and panning effects can distract from the narrative and the story itself.



4. HOW TO TELL? HOW TO DELIVER?



#1 Telling a story isn't describing what happened, it's how that moment felt emotionally, how you were affected, what you thought etc.



#2 To make people experience what you experienced, the best way to tell a story is in a chronological timeline.



#3 A great approach is to focus on mastering the opening and closing of your story, while keeping the middle section as bullet points. This way, you can smoothly connect the dots, ensuring the key moments are clear while allowing for a natural flow.



#4 You want to provide a starting point that encourages others to share their own story as well. For example, you can use interactive tools or encourage the audience with the phrase "Share your stories as well or comment below" etc.



#5 Your story should gradually build to a climax. Keep the audience engaged by adding small details, conflicts, or unexpected twists that lead to a powerful moment or revelation.

#6 Create a vivid image by describing the setting, characters, and mood in detail, establishing a clear sense of place and time.

#7 Rather than telling the audience what you are feeling, a skilled storyteller conveys emotions through body language.

#8 Although visual effects can help illustrate connections between ideas, storytellers should remember that they should enhance the story. Overusing effects like transitions and panning can distract from the narrative and overshadow the story itself.



While your personal stories are always unique to you, there's no better way to learn how to shape and share a story than by observing storytellers you admire and share their own.



5. SUCCESSFUL STORYTELLERS



“Good stories stay with us.”

Here you will find some of the world's greatest storytellers' quotes, facts about them and storytelling for inspiration.

Walt Disney

Disney recognised that crafting an unforgettable experience involved paying attention to even the smallest details and how they contributed to the overall narrative. The lesson we can learn from Disney's magic is that carefully chosen details can enhance an immersive experience. However, it's important to ensure these details don't overshadow the story you're aiming to tell.



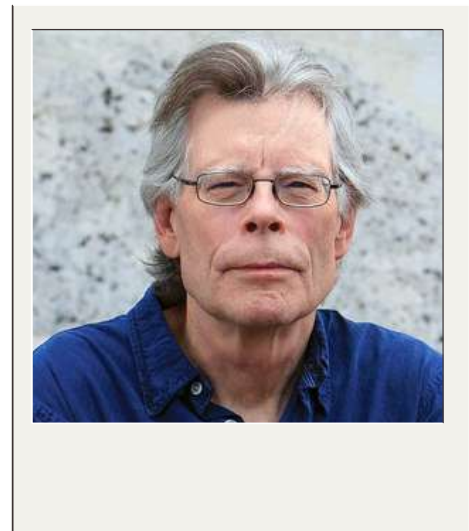
Steve Jobs



Steve Jobs has said, "The most powerful person in the world is the storyteller. The storyteller sets the vision, values, and agenda of an entire generation that is to come." Steve Jobs is one of the greatest storytellers. Instead of just showing a new product, he made a perfect story which contains three parts: Hook: "Today we're introducing a revolutionary product that changes everything." Problem: Other phones were complicated and unfriendly. Solution: "An iPod, a phone, and an internet communicator... This is one device!".

Stephen King

Stephen King is a legendary writer and storyteller. A true master of suspense, he excels not only in crafting best-selling novels but also in telling captivating stories through his spoken words. His stories are packed with unexpected twists and turns that keep readers excited, and he has a remarkable talent for building suspense and tension in a way that is both gripping and rewarding. One of the key elements that makes King's storytelling so compelling is his skill in blending various genres seamlessly.





Oprah Winfrey

Oprah is one of the most iconic talk show hosts in history. Through her stories and interviews, she has inspired millions of people. Oprah's talent for storytelling lies in her consistency and relevance. Over the years, she has used her platform to not only shape her own voice but also amplify the voices of countless others. The key takeaway is that being a great storyteller inspires others to share their own stories. This creates an environment where more ideas emerge, unlocking a world of endless possibilities.



6. ACTIVITIES & EXERCISES

There are a few exercises that you can integrate into your daily routine to improve your storytelling skills.

#1 Story Spine

The story spine is a technique from improvisational theatre developed by Kenn Adams. You choose a random topic and instantly create a story. To help develop your understanding of story structures, you can follow a standard story prompt:

Once upon a time, there was ___.

Every day, ___.

One day ___.

Because of that, ___.

Because of that, ___ (and so on)

Until finally ___.

And every day after that ___



#2 Picture Prompt Story Creation

Teamwork! All of the team takes an image and creates a short story inspired by what they see. Sharing these stories can spark discussion and expand perspectives.



#3 Taking story walks

Let the images arise on their own in your mind, then follow them mentally to see where they go. Sometimes they are familiar characters, sometimes they are more symbolic. This activity improves visual thinking, which can help in the storytelling process.



#4 Write without stopping for a minimum of 10 minutes

This exercise helps to get more creative and boosts vocabulary.



Some more simple activities:

- Watch and critique public speeches, storytellers and think about what was good, what was bad.
- Identify moments or events that could be turned into a story, to tell great stories.
- Read books or stories aloud and focus on delivery—tone, pacing, and emphasis.
- Use visual aids like mind maps or storyboards to plot out your stories.



ACROSS EUROPE: STORYTELLING IN ACTION

National snapshots from Lithuania, Ireland, Latvia, and Italy

Telling a good story takes practice – shaping ideas, finding the right voice, and connecting with your audience. These short examples show how young creators and communities across Europe are bringing stories to life in creative and meaningful ways.

Lithuania

Kristina Petrauskė, known as @chistorike on TikTok, is a Lithuanian historian who proves that history can be both exciting and modern. With a background in museum work and a passion for storytelling, she brings the past to life through short, engaging videos on social media. Whether she's debunking common myths about ancient pagans or explaining the historical roots of traditional Lithuanian dishes, Kristina knows how to turn facts into fascinating content.

What makes her stand out is her ability to combine solid historical research with creativity. Every video she posts is carefully prepared—she doesn't just repeat facts, she checks sources, digs deeper, and always finds a fresh perspective. Her content is not only educational but also entertaining, using humour, popular trends, and relatable language to capture the attention of younger audiences.

Kristina's mission is clear: to make history accessible and enjoyable for everyone, especially youth. She encourages viewers to think critically, ask questions, and see history not just as dates and events, but as a part of our everyday lives. Through her TikTok channel, she builds a bridge between the past and the present, proving that cultural heritage can thrive in digital spaces.

If you're curious about Lithuanian culture, love fun facts, or want to see how history can shine on TikTok, @chistorike is the storyteller to follow.



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Ireland

In County Clare, the "Telling Tales" initiative, launched by Clare County Library in collaboration with Clare Youth Service, invites teenagers to create and share their stories. Facilitated by renowned storyteller Clare Muireann Murphy, the project emphasises key storytelling techniques, including narrative structure, audience engagement, and voice and body language. The initiative also connects youth with local cultural traditions through storytelling events, where elders share Irish myths, legends, and personal experiences. Teenagers are encouraged to draw inspiration from their surroundings, fields, animals, and landscapes rich in cultural significance—while learning to craft compelling stories. The program teaches skills such as developing a strong "hook," planning the rhythm and pacing of the narrative, and using imagery effectively. It culminates in a public event where participants present their stories, showcasing how storytelling can foster confidence, creativity, and a sense of community.



Latvia

The YouTube channel "16+" is a great example of Latvian digital storytelling for young people. It covers topics like mental health, relationships, and social pressure. The channel stands out with personal stories, emotional depth, and strong visual elements that connect with the audience. It helps youth better understand themselves and others while encouraging social engagement and open dialogue.



Italy

WikiPedro (@wiki.pedro) is an Italian digital storyteller who specialises in bringing local history and cultural heritage to life, particularly focusing on Florence and the broader Tuscan region. With over 212,000 followers on Instagram, he engages his audience through short, dynamic videos that blend historical facts with humour and personal anecdotes. His content often highlights lesser-known stories and curiosities about local landmarks, traditions, and historical figures, making the rich tapestry of Italian heritage

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accessible and entertaining for a younger audience. By combining engaging storytelling with visual elements, WikiPedro effectively fosters a deeper appreciation for local history and culture among his followers.

Gian Marco D'Eusebi, known on social media as @azzykky, is a Roman content creator who has gained a large following by telling engaging stories about Rome's history and cultural heritage. Active on Instagram and YouTube, he uses short, accessible videos to explore local legends, traditions and expressions rooted in the Eternal City's past. What sets him is his ability to explain historical facts and curiosities in a clear, relatable, and often humorous way, making history appealing to younger audiences. He frequently unpacks the origins of Roman idioms like "fare il giro di Peppe" or "non c'è trippa per gatti," linking them to real historical events in the city. His passion for history is deeply personal, inspired by stories passed down from his grandmother, which gives his storytelling an authentic and intimate tone.



SHARE YOUR STORY



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AUDIENCE OF THE STORY



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INTRODUCTION:

Every story is created with an audience in mind. Whether you are crafting a personal narrative, a fictional tale, or a digital storytelling project, understanding your audience is key to making your story effective. A great story doesn't just express your thoughts; it connects with people, makes them feel something, and keeps them engaged. Identifying the right audience allows you to:

- Tailor your content to their interests.
- Choose the best platform for sharing.
- Maximise engagement and emotional connection.

When you know who you're speaking to, you can make your story relatable and meaningful. Understanding your audience also helps you choose the right style, structure, and emotional depth.

This section will guide young storytellers in defining their audience, engaging them, and making sure their stories leave a lasting impact. By the end, you will know how to craft stories that resonate and inspire.



1. THE IMPORTANCE OF KNOWING YOUR AUDIENCE



Understanding your audience helps you craft a story that resonates with them. A well-targeted story:

- Captures interest and keeps them engaged.
- Builds emotional connections through shared experiences.
- Ensures lasting impact by making the story memorable.

Ignoring your audience can lead to a lack of interest. **Tailoring your message, language, and themes makes your story more meaningful and relevant.**

Think about the difference between a bedtime story for a child and a motivational speech for teenagers. Each requires a different:

- **Tone** (playful vs. serious).
- **Language** (simple vs. thought-provoking).
- **Structure** (linear vs. engaging twists).

When you recognize your audience's emotions, struggles, and interests, you create a connection that makes your story stand out. Consider the topics they care about and the experiences they relate to. A well-crafted story makes the audience feel seen, understood, and inspired.



Activity:

Pick a short story or personal experience you want to share. Write it in two different ways—once for a child and once for a teenager. Compare the differences in tone, language, and structure. What adjustments did you make, and why?



2. DEFINING YOUR TARGET AUDIENCE



To define your audience, ask yourself:

- Who are they? (Children, teens, young adults?)
- What interests them? (Adventure, real-life struggles, humor?)
- What are their challenges? (School pressure, career goals, relationships?)

For example:

- If you are telling a motivational story to students, focus on overcoming school struggles with a fun, animated approach.
- If your audience is aspiring entrepreneurs, share real-world stories of success and perseverance.

The more precisely you define your audience, the better your story connects with them. Knowing their values, fears, and ambitions allows you to craft a message that speaks directly to them. This will make your story feel personal and impactful.

Activity:

Write a short paragraph describing your ideal audience. What do they enjoy? What challenges do they face? How can your story help them? Now, adjust your paragraph to make it relatable to two different groups.



3. RESEARCHING AUDIENCE PREFERENCES



To ensure your story appeals to your audience, research what they enjoy. You can:

- Observe trends in books, movies, and social media.
- Use surveys, social media polls, and online forums to ask what topics interest them.
- Listen to feedback from previous stories to improve engagement.

For example:

- If your audience loves fantasy stories, create an exciting world with unexpected twists.
- If they enjoy self-improvement, include real-life lessons and motivation.

Researching helps craft a story that is engaging, interactive, and memorable. It also allows you to understand which storytelling techniques work best. What kind of characters do they relate to? What themes excite them?

Activity:

Search for a popular book or movie in your audience's age group. Identify what makes it appealing. How can you apply similar elements to your story? Write a short summary using those techniques.



4. CREATING AUDIENCE PERSONAS



“Give your audience a face, a voice, a point of view.”

Audience personas help visualise your ideal audience. These fictional characters represent their:

- Age and interests.
- Preferred storytelling format.
- Emotional triggers.

Examples:

- Lena, 14: Loves fantasy, enjoys social media, prefers quick and engaging content.
- Jake, 18: Motivated by real-life success stories, follows YouTube creators.
- Sophia, 25: Prefers deep, thought-provoking narratives, listens to podcasts.

By creating detailed audience personas, you can shape your storytelling style to match their needs and expectations. This helps you refine character development, themes, and plot structure.

Activity:

Create a fictional persona for your target audience. Give them a name, age, interests, and a storytelling preference. Now, write a short scene from their perspective.



5. TAILORING YOUR STORY'S MESSAGE

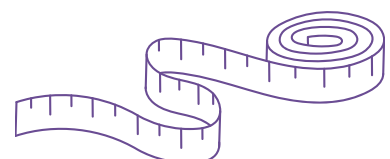


A well-crafted story delivers a message that connects with the audience's values, emotions, and experiences. Your message should be:

- Clear – What do you want your audience to take away?
- Relevant – Does it align with their interests and concerns?
- Impactful – Does it inspire, entertain, or educate them?

For example, a story about perseverance can be adapted for different audiences:

- For young children: A fun tale about a rabbit who never gives up.
- For teenagers: A story about overcoming failure in school or sports.
- For adults: A narrative about career struggles and success.

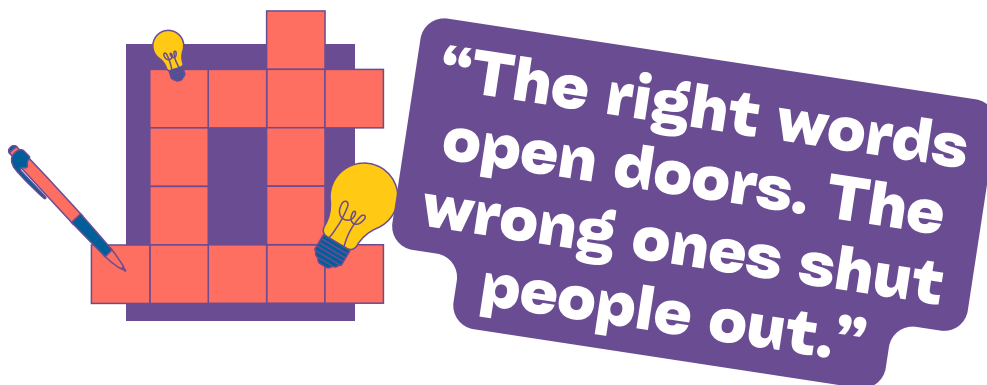


Activity:

Write a short paragraph about a lesson you've learned. Rewrite it for two different audiences—one for kids and one for adults. How do the themes, tone, and style change?



6. USING THE RIGHT LANGUAGE AND TONE



The way you tell your story matters just as much as the story itself. Choosing the right language and tone helps your audience connect with your message, understand its meaning, and stay engaged. Language is the words and phrases you use, while tone is the feeling or attitude behind them. To choose the right language and tone, consider:

- **Age group:** Young children prefer simple words and playful tones, while teens relate to casual, modern language. Adults might expect more complexity and depth.
- **Cultural background:** Some phrases or idioms might not translate well across cultures. Keep your language inclusive and respectful.
- **Emotional tone:** Should your story be humorous, serious, inspirational, or dramatic? The tone should match the story's message.
- **Medium of storytelling:** A blog post may require a more professional tone, while a TikTok video may allow for a fun and energetic approach.

For example:

- A history lesson for children could be told through an adventurous time-traveling character who explores historical events.
- A motivational speech for young adults might use empowering words and personal anecdotes.
- A fictional story about loss for an older audience could have a reflective and emotional tone.

To make your story more relatable, listen to how your audience speaks and incorporate their style into your storytelling. Use humor, slang, or emotional depth where appropriate.



Activity:

Choose a topic and write a short description in three different tones: fun and playful, formal and serious, and conversational. Compare how each version changes the feel of the story and its appeal to different audiences.



7. MAKING YOUR STORY RELATABLE



A relatable story is one that mirrors the audience’s experiences, emotions, or aspirations. When people see themselves in a story, they connect with it on a deeper level. To make your story more relatable:

- Use familiar settings and situations – Place your characters in environments your audience recognizes, such as school, work, or social gatherings.
- Incorporate real emotions – Show struggles, triumphs, and dilemmas your audience might have faced.
- Create characters that reflect real-life experiences – Characters should have goals, fears, and conflicts similar to those of your audience.
- Use dialogue that feels natural – The way characters speak should mirror how your audience talks in real life.

For example, a story about courage can be adapted in multiple ways:

- For teens: A high school student overcoming their fear of public speaking.
- For children: A young adventurer facing a mysterious challenge in a fantasy world.
- For adults: A new employee navigating a challenging workplace situation.

For a cultural perspective, a story about heritage might focus on a teen reconnecting with their grandparents' traditions, showing both internal struggles and a sense of belonging.

Activity:

Think of a personal experience that had an emotional impact on you. Rewrite it in a way that makes it relatable to a different audience by changing the setting, characters, or emotions while keeping the core message intact.



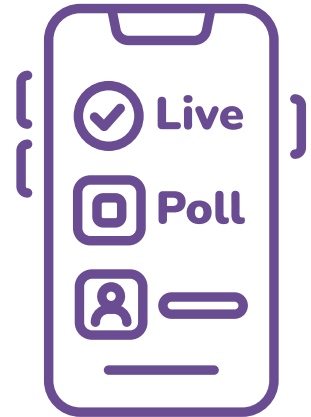
8. ENCOURAGING AUDIENCE INTERACTION



Audience interaction transforms storytelling from a one-way experience into a dynamic conversation. When your audience actively participates, they become more emotionally invested in the story. Interaction makes stories more memorable and increases engagement. Here are some effective ways to encourage audience involvement:

- **Ask thought-provoking questions:** Prompt your audience to reflect on themes, characters, or outcomes. Example: "What would you do if you were in the character's situation?"

- **Use polls and challenges:** Social media platforms allow for interactive elements like voting on the next chapter or guessing plot twists.
- **Encourage alternative endings:** Let your audience imagine different conclusions. This works especially well in digital storytelling and serialised formats.
- **Invite user-generated content:** Ask your audience to contribute their own experiences, artwork, or short stories related to your theme.
- **Create interactive storytelling experiences:** Use “choose your own adventure” formats where readers or viewers make choices that impact the story’s direction.



For example, an Instagram storyteller might post a poll asking followers to choose what happens next in a story. A podcaster might invite listeners to share their own experiences related to a particular theme. A writer could hold a contest where fans submit their own endings to a short story.

Activity:

Write a short story prompt and include two interactive elements—one that invites audience participation (such as a poll) and another that encourages them to share their own ideas or responses.

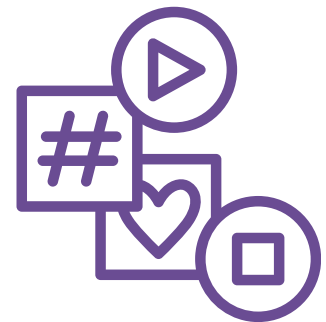


9. CHOOSING THE BEST PLATFORMS TO REACH YOUR AUDIENCE

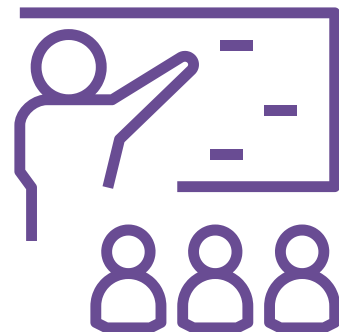


Selecting the right platform is essential for ensuring your story reaches and resonates with the intended audience. Different platforms serve different purposes and cater to various audience preferences. Here are some options to consider:

- **Social media platforms (TikTok, Instagram, YouTube):** These are ideal for younger audiences who prefer short, visually engaging, and interactive storytelling. TikTok excels at quick, punchy stories, while Instagram allows a mix of images, reels, and longer captions. YouTube is great for in-depth storytelling through video.
- **Blogs and storytelling websites:** Platforms like Medium, Wattpad, or personal blogs work well for detailed storytelling, reaching an audience that enjoys long-form narratives.



- **Podcasts and audio platforms:** If your audience enjoys storytelling through listening, consider platforms like Spotify or Apple Podcasts. This works well for storytelling that requires emotion, interviews, or deep discussions.
- **Live storytelling events and community gatherings:** Ideal for cultural storytelling, spoken word, and direct engagement with an audience who appreciates personal interaction and real-time feedback.
- **Educational platforms:** If your story is informative, platforms like Coursera, TEDx, or school presentations can be powerful avenues.



For example, a storyteller sharing folktales from their culture might choose YouTube for a visual format, a podcast for deep discussions, or a blog for a written storytelling experience. A storyteller focusing on personal development might use Instagram for short motivational posts and a blog for deeper analysis.

Activity:

Pick a story idea and analyse which platform(s) would be the best fit for your target audience. Consider engagement levels, content format, and audience behaviour. Why does this platform work best for your story?

Selecting the right platform helps your story reach the intended audience effectively:



- Social media (TikTok, Instagram, YouTube): Great for younger audiences who prefer short, visual storytelling.
- Blogs and podcasts: Better for in-depth storytelling.
- Community events or school presentations: Ideal for interactive storytelling.

10. ADAPTING YOUR STORY FOR DIFFERENT DEMOGRAPHICS



Adapting your story ensures it reaches and resonates with different groups of people. A story that works for children may not be as impactful for adults, and a narrative meant for a specific cultural audience may need adjustments

to be understood globally. Here's how you can tailor your storytelling for different demographics:

- For young children: Use simple language, bright visuals, and engaging characters to maintain their attention.
- For teenagers: Incorporate modern themes, relatable characters, and emotional depth to connect with their experiences.
- For professionals: Focus on structured storytelling, logical progression, and themes of expertise or leadership.
- For multicultural audiences: Avoid cultural stereotypes, use inclusive perspectives, and provide contextual explanations when needed.

For example, a story about teamwork could be told through a fun sports event for kids, a high school group project for teens, and a corporate leadership scenario for professionals. Similarly, a folktale from one culture could be adapted to have universal themes of kindness and courage so audiences from other backgrounds can relate.

Activity:

Take a story idea and rewrite it for two different demographics. Change the setting, characters, and tone while keeping the core message the same.

What adjustments did you make to suit each audience?



11. ENSURING CULTURAL SENSITIVITY AND INCLUSIVITY



Inclusive storytelling ensures that different cultures, traditions, and perspectives are represented with respect and authenticity. Stories about cultural heritage help audiences connect with their roots, appreciate diversity, and understand historical traditions. When crafting culturally sensitive stories, consider:

- **Diverse characters and perspectives** – Represent different ethnicities, traditions, and experiences fairly.
- **Avoiding stereotypes and clichés** – Do research to ensure accurate and respectful representation.
- **Being mindful of historical and social context** – Explain cultural aspects thoughtfully for a global audience.

Here are examples from different cultures:

- **Lithuania:** A story about the Baltic pagan traditions before Christianity, featuring a young girl learning ancient customs from her grandmother, such as the significance of Rasa (Summer Solstice Festival) and its connection to nature.

- **Latvia:** A folktale adaptation about the legendary hero Lāčplēsis (Bear Slayer) and how he represents Latvian resilience, rewritten for children with engaging animal characters.
- **Ireland:** A modern retelling of the myth of Cú Chulainn, where a young boy in contemporary Dublin finds a mystical artefact that connects him to the ancient warrior's legacy.
- **Italy:** A story set in a small village where an old artisan teaches a young apprentice how to craft Venetian masks, uncovering the deep history and artistry behind the tradition.



By adapting cultural stories for different audiences, storytellers ensure that these rich traditions remain relevant and accessible. A child's version may focus on adventure and magic, while an adult's version may highlight historical depth and symbolism.

Activity:

Choose a cultural tradition from Lithuania, Latvia, Ireland, or Italy and rewrite it for two different audiences – one for children and one for adults. How does the tone, language, and focus change? Inclusive stories reach a wider audience and create deeper connections. Keep in mind:

- Diverse characters and perspectives.
- Avoiding stereotypes and clichés.
- Being respectful of different cultural traditions and values.





Activity:

Analyse a story you like. Does it represent diverse perspectives? How could it be more inclusive?

12. GATHERING FEEDBACK FOR IMPROVEMENT



Gathering feedback is a crucial step in improving your storytelling. Your audience's response provides valuable insights into what works and what needs refining. Constructive feedback helps you adapt your storytelling style, strengthen your message, and ensure your story resonates. Here are some effective ways to collect and use audience feedback:

- **Direct Questions:** Ask your audience what they liked and what could be improved.
- **Polls & Surveys:** Use online forms, social media polls, or discussion forums to collect opinions.
- **Monitor Engagement:** Track reactions, comments, and shares to gauge interest levels.



- **Live Discussions:** Hosting a Q&A or discussion about your story can reveal new perspectives.

For example, if a story about overcoming challenges receives feedback that the protagonist’s struggle wasn’t relatable, you might revise the character’s background to reflect more universal experiences. If an audience loves a specific theme, you can expand on it in future stories.

Activity:

Share a short story idea with two different people. Ask for one thing they liked and one thing they think could be improved. Revise your idea based on their suggestions and reflect on how it enhances the story’s impact.



13. MEASURING AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT



Measuring audience engagement is crucial to understanding how well your story resonates with your viewers, readers, or listeners. Engagement goes beyond just views or reads—it includes how much the audience interacts with and responds to your story. There are different ways to measure

depending on the platform you are using:

- Social Media: Likes, shares, comments, and watch time.
- Blogs & Articles: Time spent on the page, clicks, and number of shares.
- Live Storytelling: Audience reactions, participation, and follow-up questions.
- Video & Audio Platforms: Play-through rates, replays, and listener feedback.

For example, if you post a digital story on Instagram and it receives many shares and comments, that shows high engagement. However, if a story has many views but little interaction, it might mean the audience didn't find it engaging or relatable enough.



Tracking audience behaviour helps storytellers improve their approach. If engagement is low, try making stories more interactive, relatable, or visually appealing. Ask yourself: Are people reacting emotionally? Are they discussing or sharing it with others? A high level of engagement often means the story left a strong impression.

Activity:

Find a popular digital story and analyse its engagement. What factors might have contributed to its success? If possible, compare it with a less successful story and identify what was missing in terms of engagement.

Tracking engagement helps you understand what resonates with your



audience. Look at:

- **Views, likes, and shares.**
- **Comments and direct interactions.**
- **Story retention - do they finish it?**

14. BUILDING A LOYAL AUDIENCE COMMUNITY



A loyal audience is the foundation of long-term storytelling success. Instead of attracting new listeners or viewers every time, building a loyal community ensures that your audience stays engaged and looks forward to your stories. To foster loyalty, storytellers must:

- **Be consistent** – Publish content regularly so your audience knows when to expect new material.
- **Engage with the audience** – Respond to comments, ask questions, and encourage discussions.
- **Create interactive experiences** – Use storytelling challenges, Q&A sessions, or live readings to involve your audience.
- **Encourage contributions** – Invite your audience to share their ideas, perspectives, or even co-create stories.

Activity:

Draft a short social media post inviting your audience to participate in a storytelling challenge. Encourage them to share their favourite memories, traditions, or a creative twist on a popular theme.



15. REFINING YOUR STORY BASED ON AUDIENCE INSIGHTS



Storytelling is an evolving process, and audience feedback provides valuable insights for improvement. By understanding what resonates with your audience, you can refine your storytelling techniques to enhance engagement and impact. Adjustments might include:

- **Modifying pacing or tone** – If the audience finds the story too slow, adding more action or dialogue can increase engagement. If they find it overwhelming, slowing down key moments can enhance emotional depth.
- **Enhancing clarity and relatability** – If certain themes or references are not connecting, adjusting the language or making characters more relatable can improve accessibility.
- **Experimenting with formats** – Trying different mediums such as videos, podcasts, interactive storytelling, or visual storytelling can help reach different segments of your audience.

For example, if a historical storytelling video gets feedback that younger viewers find it too long, shortening it or adding engaging animations could make it more appealing. If a personal story about overcoming challenges receives comments that people wanted to hear more about specific struggles, expanding those sections could create a stronger emotional connection.

Activity:

Choose a past story you've created and gather feedback from at least two people. Identify one thing that worked well and one area that needs improvement. Revise your story based on their feedback and reflect on how it improved the overall impact.



Conclusion

Understanding and engaging your audience is the key to successful storytelling. When you know who your audience is, you can:

- Shape your story to connect with them.
- Deliver a message that makes an impact.
- Choose the right platform to reach them.

A great story doesn't just entertain - it inspires and makes people feel understood. Encourage audience interaction by:

- Asking questions.
- Gathering feedback.
- Adapting your storytelling style to match their interests.



Activity:

Choose a story idea and apply everything you've learned. Define your audience, research their preferences, and write a short piece tailored to them.

Whether your goal is to make people laugh, think, or dream, engaging your audience will determine your story's impact. With the right audience and approach, your story has the power to inspire, educate, and entertain for years to come.



ACROSS EUROPE: KNOWING YOUR AUDIENCE

National snapshots from Lithuania, Ireland, Latvia, and Italy

From podcasts to live events, young creators across Europe know that great storytelling isn't just about what you say, it's about who you're speaking to. These examples show how knowing your audience can help your story connect.

Lithuania

Balsiai Mythology Park in Vilnius. The target audience for the created videos is Lithuanian teenagers aged 14–18, especially those visiting the park on school trips or with their families. They are curious, tech-savvy, and drawn to short, visually engaging content. They enjoy mythical themes if presented with a modern or mysterious twist. The goal is to spark interest in local heritage through relatable storytelling and make them want to scan more QR codes.



2024-1-LT02-KA210-YOU-000247320



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Ireland

At the Tyrone Guthrie Centre in County Monaghan, storytelling workshops allow young people to share their personal stories while considering their audience's emotions and interests. The centre's outreach program encourages participants to think about who they are telling their story to and how they can shape it to connect with their audience. The workshops focus on helping youth craft stories that resonate emotionally. For example, local young people often share stories about rural life, community, or family, tailoring their narratives to reflect the experiences of others in the room. Visitors or artists might also adapt their stories for a rural audience, ensuring their content and language are accessible and engaging for the community. By recognising the audience's values, struggles, and interests, participants learn to create more meaningful, relatable stories. The centre teaches them that understanding the audience is key to creating an impactful story, whether they are telling a local legend, a personal experience, or an imaginative tale. Through this approach, young storytellers develop a deeper connection with their listeners, making their stories more enjoyable and memorable.



Latvia

In Latvia, content creator @airitata uses an interactive approach in her TikTok cooking videos. She often involves her audience by asking questions like, "What would you add to this dish?" or starting polls such as, "Next – sweet or savory recipe?" This encourages followers to share their ideas and vote, turning viewers into co-creators of the content and strengthening engagement through meaningful participation.



Italy

@greg_goya is an Italian street artist and content creator from Turin, renowned for his unique "fast art" installations that blend street art with performance. His work is specifically designed to engage a younger, social media-savvy audience by combining visual art with interactive elements. Goya's installations often feature prompts that encourage public interaction – such as hearts painted on the ground labeled "kiss here" or benches posing

reflective questions. These pieces are crafted to elicit immediate emotional responses and participation from passersby, making art a communal experience. By documenting these interactions and sharing them on platforms like Instagram and TikTok, Goya extends the reach of his art beyond the physical space, creating a digital dialogue with his audience. His content resonates particularly with younger demographics who value authenticity, spontaneity and emotional connection in art.



SHARE YOUR STORY

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DIGITAL STORY

From Community Building
to Youth Employability

DIGITAL STORY- TELLING

3



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DIGITAL
STORY

HOW TO TELL A STORY

DIGITAL STORY | GUIDE FOR YOUTH

INTRODUCTION:

What is Digital Storytelling?

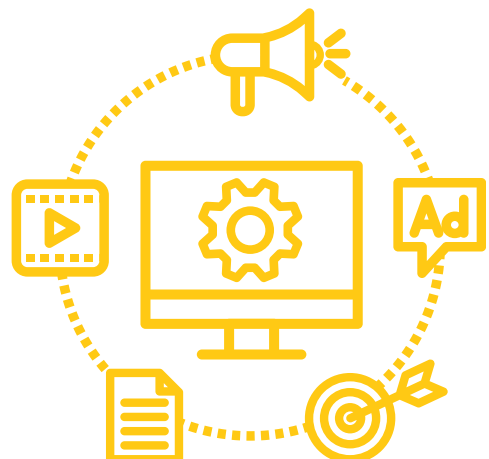
Digital Storytelling is the art of telling stories using digital tools such as images, videos, audio and text. It is an innovative way to express ideas, emotions and experiences in a visual and interactive format.

This technique is not limited to personal stories but can also be used to raise awareness about social issues, promote community projects or preserve historical and cultural heritage. Thanks to the power of digital media, stories can reach a wide audience and inspire real action.

How does it work?

Each digital story combines different multimedia elements to create a compelling narrative, which can take forms such as:

- A short video on YouTube or TikTok.
- An image carousel with text on Instagram.
- A podcast featuring interviews and ambient sounds.
- A blog post with real-life photos and testimonies.



Practical Example:

Imagine you want to tell the story of an elderly woman in your village who has been producing artisanal honey for generations.

- Photos of her hands at work and the beehives.
- Audio recordings of her voice as she shares her story.
- Short video clips showing the honey-making process.
- Descriptive text linking the images and adding emotion.

This way, the audience doesn't just read her story—they see it, hear it, and experience it.



1. DIGITAL STORYTELLING: WHAT & WHY



What are the essential elements of digital storytelling?

To create an effective digital story, it's important to combine:

- **Author's Voice:** Personal narration is the heart of Digital Storytelling. Usually, the author is also the protagonist of the story, bringing authenticity and depth to the narrative.
- **Images:** Images can be personal or selected to enrich the story. Photographs, illustrations, and graphics help visualise the message and make it more engaging.



- **Video (Optional):** In some cases, short video clips are integrated into the narration to add dynamism and realism.
- **Music and sound:** Audio plays a crucial role in creating atmosphere and emotion. Background music and ambient sounds can emphasise key moments in the story.

Why Digital Storytelling Matters?

1. Amplifies voices and improves social

awareness: becoming active citizens, using digital media not just to consume, but to inform, influence and inspire.

Digital storytelling tools empower:

- Raise awareness about social and environmental issues that matter to them (e.g. climate change, traditions, cultural heritage).
- Share testimonies and stories from underrepresented voices in the communities.
- Develop empathy and civic responsibility by exploring stories of others.



2. Promoting community projects and local engagement: connecting to the community, making a difference locally using technology.



Digital tools help to:

- Document and promote community initiatives, school projects, or local volunteering.
- Create digital exhibitions, photo essays, or interactive maps showcasing local places, stories, or events.
- Collaborate with peers, educators, and local stakeholders.

3. Preserving historical and cultural heritage: taking pride in one's own roots and heritage, while developing research and media production skills.



As digital archivists, we use storytelling tools to:

- Record and share family stories, interviews with elders, or cultural practices.
- Reconstruct the memory of their neighbourhood, city, or migration stories.
- Create multimedia projects that celebrate diversity and identity.



4. Mastering Digital Tools for Meaningful Purposes: not just tech users – becoming critical, creative, and ethical storytellers in the digital age.

In all these contexts, digital tools become more than technical skills—they are instruments for storytelling with purpose:

- Video and audio editing teaches narrative structure and media ethics.
- Using design platforms sharpens visual communication and creative thinking.
- Sharing online fosters media literacy and understanding of digital citizenship.



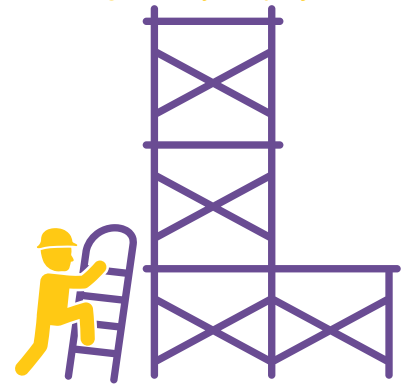
2. ELEMENTS OF A DIGITAL STORY



To create an engaging and effective digital story, it is essential to follow a clear structure and integrate key storytelling elements.

Story Structure

A well-constructed digital story follows a logical sequence that helps the audience immerse themselves in the narrative:



Introduction

Present the theme and context. The beginning should immediately capture attention and provide a clear idea of what the story is about.

- A strong hook: Begin with an intriguing question, an unexpected fact, or a powerful visual to spark curiosity.
- Setting and background: Briefly introduce the time, place, and circumstances of the story to create a clear mental picture.
- Tone and mood: Use music, colours and narration style to set the emotional tone and prepare the audience for what is to come.
- Introduction of the protagonist: Present the main character(s) and their initial situation, making them relatable and engaging.

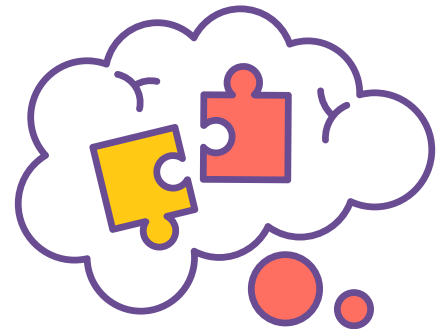
Development

Introduce the main events, characters and emotions. This is the heart of the story, where engagement and emotional connection are built.

- Character growth: Show how the protagonist evolves through experiences, struggles, or revelations.



- Rising tension and conflict: Introduce obstacles, dilemmas, or challenges that add depth to the story.
- Emotional engagement: Use storytelling techniques such as personal reflections, testimonials and dynamic visuals to create an emotional bond with the audience.
- Pacing and transitions: Ensure a smooth flow between scenes to maintain coherence and avoid disengagement.



Conclusion

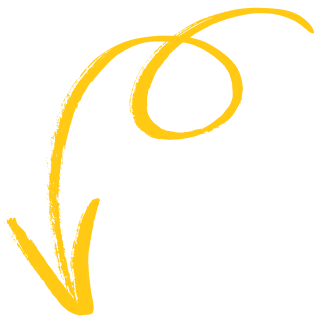
Deliver the final message, moral of the story, or a call to action that encourages the audience to reflect or take action.

- Resolution of the conflict: Show how the story's challenges are resolved or transformed into new opportunities.
- Final message or takeaway: Highlight the key lesson or insight that the audience should remember.
- Call to action (if applicable): Encourage viewers to reflect, share or take action based on the story's theme.
- Memorable ending: Use a powerful quote, visual or emotional moment to leave a lasting impression.

Practical example: creating a story on preserving local traditions

INTRODUCTION

- Opening scene: a quick video montage of past festival scenes, contrasted with an empty town square today.
- Question overlay: "What would happen if our traditions disappeared?"
- Music choice: start with a soft, nostalgic tune that transitions into something modern.



DEVELOPMENT

- Film an interview: record a grandparent or community elder sharing memories of a festival.
- Show modern perspectives: interview young people and ask if they participate in these traditions.
- Mix old and new footage: show clips of past traditions and compare them with how they look today.
- Make it personal: if you've never attended a festival before, film your first experience.

CONCLUSION

- A shot of a lively festival with young people actively participating.
- A final text overlay: "Traditions live on when we choose to keep them alive. Will you be part of the story?"
- Uplifting music that leaves the audience inspired.



Essential Components

Characters and Setting

Who are the protagonists of the story?
Where does the story take place? These elements help the audience connect emotionally with the narrative.



Message and Emotion

Every digital story has an emotional goal and a key message. It is important to convey meaning and engage the audience on a personal level.



Clarity and Simplicity






The language should be direct and accessible, supported by an effective visual organisation (short texts, clear scenes, and well-chosen images).




3. DIGITAL TOOLS FOR DIGITAL STORYTELLING



To create an effective digital story, using the right tools is essential. Below is a comparison table featuring recommended software and apps for each phase of the digital storytelling process. Each tool includes a short description, an icon, and a QR code linking to a top-rated online tutorial.

Category	Tool	Short description	QR code to Tutorial
Graphic Design & Photo Editing	Canva	Easy-to-use tool for creating graphics, posters, and presentations with templates.	
	Pixlr	Intuitive image editor for retouching photos, filters, and effects.	
Video Editing	iMovie	Simple software for editing videos with basic transitions and effects.	
	CapCut	Free app with advanced tools for fast and engaging video editing.	
	InShot	Perfect for short videos with text, stickers, and sound effects.	
	Lumen 5	Lumen5 is an AI-powered platform that simplifies video creation, allowing users to turn blog posts, articles, or even ideas into videos quickly and easily	

Category	Tool	Short description	QR code to Tutorial
Audio Editing	Audacity	Free audio editor for recording/modifying voice, adding effects.	
	GarageBand	Tools for recording and mixing music or voice-overs professionally.	
Writing & Storyboarding	Storyboard That	Online tool for creating visual storyboards.	
Free Images & Graphics	Unsplash	High-quality free photos to illustrate your stories	
	Pixabay	Large library of royalty-free images and videos.	
Free Music & Sound FX	Free Music Archive	Free tracks for background music	

Category	Tool	Short description	QR code to Tutorial
Free Music & Sound FX	YouTube Audio Library	Copyright-free music for video editing.	
Animation	Gacha Club	It is a free-to-play mobile game where players create and customise anime-style characters, then use them in battles and create stories within the game's studio mode.	

Activity: Brainstorming and Storyboard Creation

Build Your Digital Story! Want to create an engaging digital story? Let's start with the basics: a clear idea and a solid structure. In this group activity, we'll use creative brainstorming and storyboarding to develop your project!

Creative Brainstorming

Objective: Generate original ideas and choose a meaningful theme.

What to do:

1. Form groups of 3-5 people.
2. Choose a theme related to rural life. Some ideas:
 - a. Local traditions (festivals, ancient crafts, regional legends).
 - b. Nature and environment (climate change, sustainable agriculture).
 - c. Life stories (personal experiences, community testimonies).
3. Write your ideas on physical post-its or use a digital whiteboard (e.g., Miro, Jamboard).



4. Group similar ideas and decide which story to tell.

Useful tools:

- Google Jamboard for digital brainstorming.
- Trello for organising ideas into thematic cards.



Storyboard Creation

Objective: Structure your story into clear sequences.

What to do:

1. Draw a simple sequence with three key moments:
 - Beginning – Introduction of the theme and characters.
 - Development – Main events of the story.
 - Ending – Final message or call to action.
2. Define the details:
 - Setting – Where does the story take place?
 - Characters – Who are the protagonists?
 - Key moments – What are the most important scenes?
3. If possible, use digital storyboard software (Storyboard That, Canva) or work on paper using printable templates.

Useful tools:

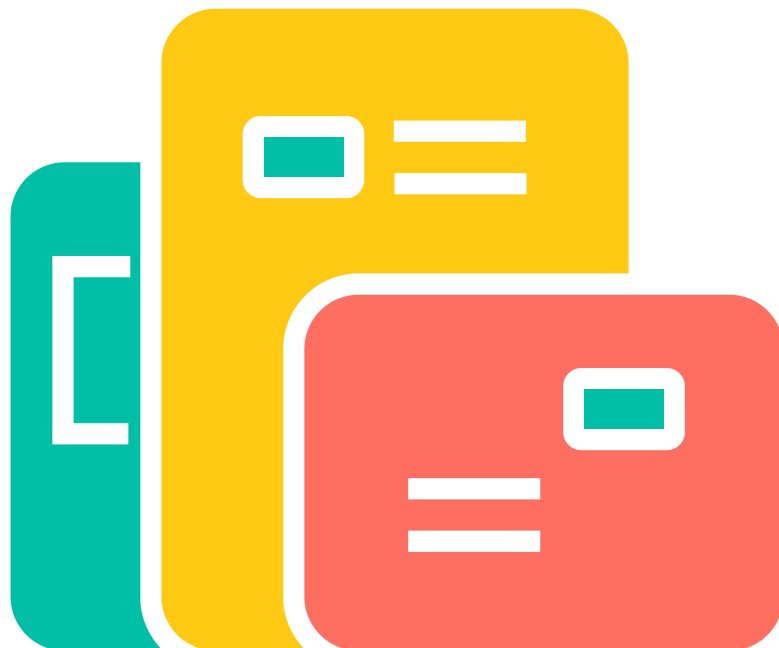
- Storyboard for creating digital storyboards.
- Printable templates for hand-drawing your story sequence.

Now it's your turn! Choose a theme, develop your ideas, and bring your digital story to life!

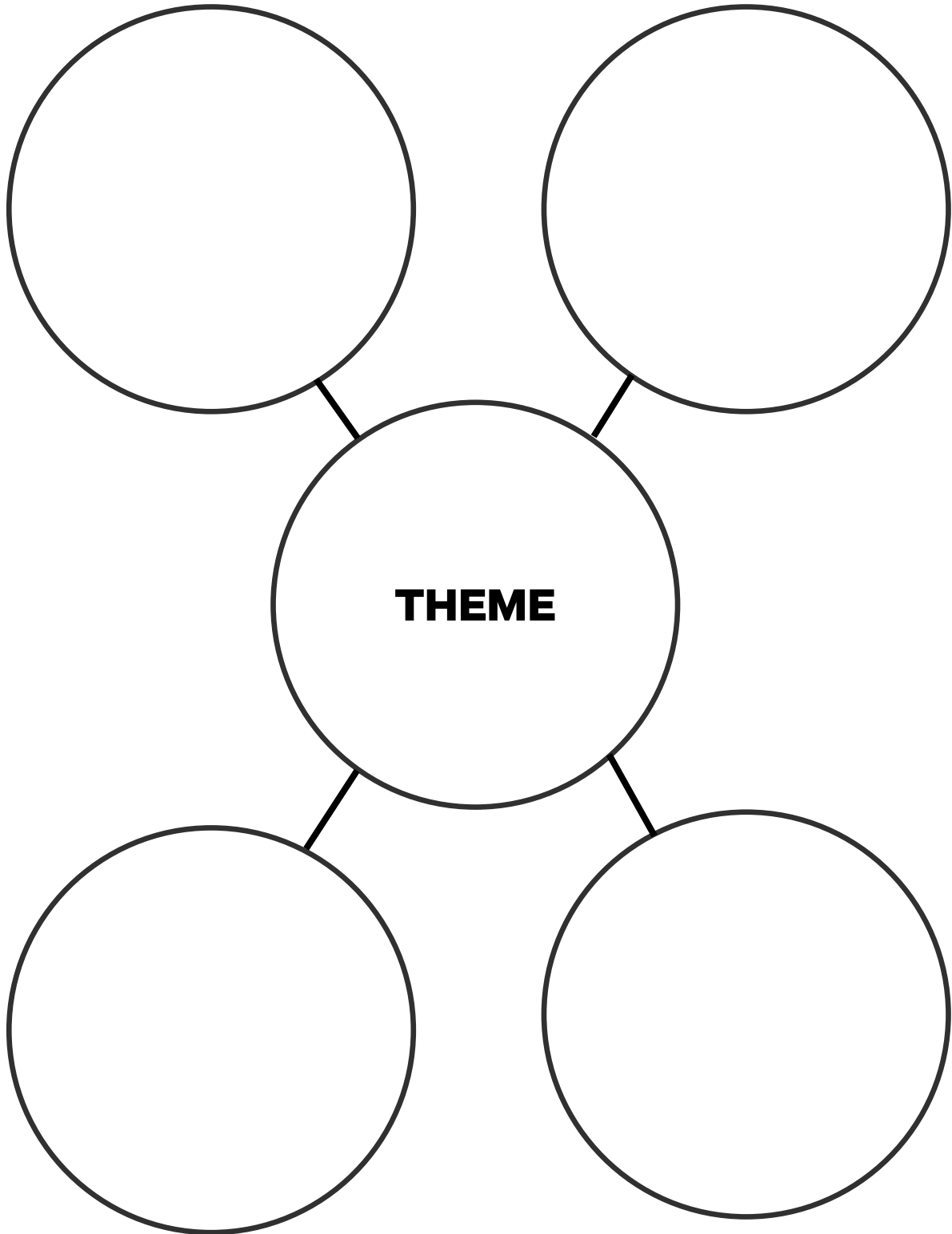
Find Sample Storyboards on the next page! (With Images and Descriptions)

The theme	Beginning	Middle	End
A Local Festival	A village prepares decorations for the annual lantern festival.	Community gathers; children light lanterns with elders.	Reflections on how the tradition brings generations together.
A Farmer's Life	Introducing Maria, a young organic farmer.	Struggles with drought and innovative solutions.	Message about sustainable farming and hope.
A Regional Legend	A child hears an old tale about the forest spirit.	They explore clues tied to the legend.	Discovery of a hidden spring, connecting past and present

Use the following interactive templates to visualise your ideas. See the next pages for the templates.



BRAINSTORM WEB



STORYBOARD FRAME TEMPLATE



Scene description:

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Narration/Voice-over:.....

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Scene description:

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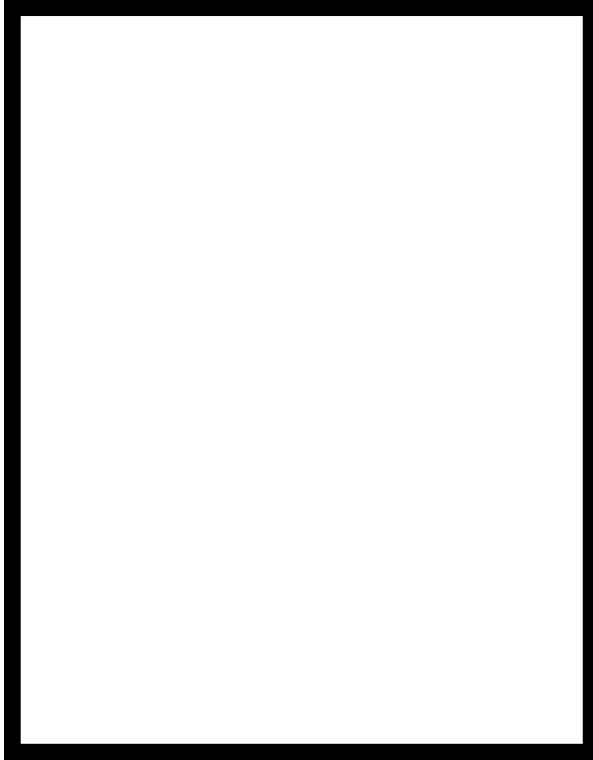
.....

Narration/Voice-over:.....

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CHARACTER & SETTING SHEET



Draw your character or setting

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Describe their role, personality or symbolism

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5. PRODUCTION TECHNIQUES: FILMING AND RECORDING



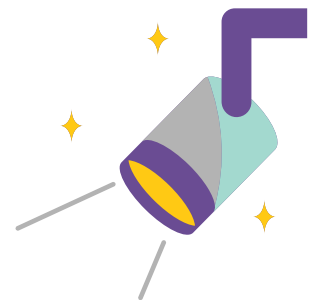
“Every shot and sound should serve the story.”

Creating high-quality video content is essential for engaging storytelling. Paying attention to lighting, sound, and framing can make a big difference in the final result. Here’s a guide to help you improve your filming and recording techniques.

Tips for high-quality filming

Lighting and framing

- Use natural light whenever possible – Shoot during the golden hour (early morning or late afternoon) for soft and warm lighting.
- Avoid backlighting – Position the light source in front of your subject to prevent dark silhouettes.
- Keep your shot steady – Use a tripod or stabilise your phone by resting it on a solid surface.



Audio quality

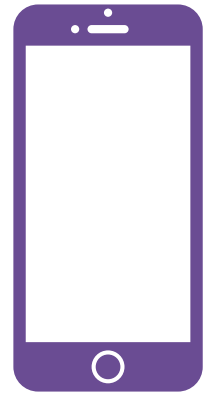
- Record in a quiet environment – Background noise can distract the audience.
- Use an external microphone – A small clip-on (lavalier) microphone can significantly improve sound clarity.



- Do a test recording – Check if the audio is clear before shooting the full scene.

Technical choices: horizontal vs. vertical

- Horizontal (16:9) – Best for YouTube, websites and presentations. Ideal for a cinematic look.
- Vertical (9:16) – Perfect for Instagram Reels, TikTok, and Snapchat. Best for mobile-first content.
- Square (1:1) – Works well on Instagram and Facebook feeds.



Activity: Filming a Rural Story

Goal: create a 30-second video using your smartphone, capturing a meaningful aspect of rural life.

- Choose a subject – Examples: a local artisan crafting handmade goods; a traditional rural celebration or festival, a natural landscape like a sunrise over the fields.
- Plan your shots – Decide on close-ups, wide shots, and movement to make the video dynamic.
- Record multiple takes – Having different angles will help during editing.
- Add narration or background sound – Record a voice-over or capture ambient sounds to enhance the storytelling.

Tips

- “Always clean your camera lens before shooting.”
 - “Keep videos under 60 seconds for social media engagement.”
1. “Use a simple video editing app (like CapCut or iMovie) to refine your footage.”



6. EDITING AND CONTENT ASSEMBLY



Once the footage is recorded, editing is the key step in transforming raw clips into an engaging story. This phase allows you to select the best moments, add effects, and enhance the audio, making the narrative more dynamic and impactful.

Editing Stages

. Importing media

- Upload video clips, images, and audio tracks into your chosen editing software.
- Organise files into folders for easy access and workflow management.

. Cutting and selecting sequences

- Remove unnecessary parts and keep only the most meaningful moments.
- Arrange scenes according to the story structure.
- Maintain a smooth rhythm: avoid overly fast cuts or prolonged pauses.

. Effects and transitions

- Use smooth transitions to connect scenes seamlessly.
- Add overlay text for clarification or titles.
- Improve audio quality with background music or sound effects (e.g., Free Music Archive).

Useful tools:

- CapCut / InShot → Quick and intuitive smartphone editing.
- iMovie / DaVinci Resolve → More advanced editing on a computer.

Editing tools overview

Software	Platform	Key Features
iMovie	iOS/Mac	Easy to use, basic effects, HD export.
InShot	iOS/Android	Easy to use, basic effects, HD export.
CapCut	iOS/Android	Easy to use, basic effects, HD export.

Tip: Try different software to see which one suits your needs best!

Activity: Edit Your Video!

Goal: Create a 30-60 second video, assembling recorded clips based on a pre-planned storyboard.

Steps:

- . Work in groups and select the most suitable editing software.
- . Import your recorded videos and pick the best scenes.
- . Add transitions, effects, and music to enhance the story's flow.
- . Export the final video and share it with the group for feedback.



Activity Variations:

- Creative challenge: Make two versions of the same video—one dynamic and fast-paced, the other slower and more narrative-driven.
- Sound experiment: Edit one version with music and another without to compare the emotional impact.



7. TIPS FOR AN IMPACTFUL VISUAL LAYOUT



A well-designed visual layout enhances the storytelling experience, making content more engaging and easier to follow. Here are some essential design principles to consider when presenting your digital story.

Practical tips for an effective presentation

Colour palette - Choose a cohesive and visually appealing set of colours that reflect the identity of the rural community.

- Practical examples: If you want to convey tradition and warmth, use earthy tones like brown, beige, and terracotta. If you want to highlight nature and sustainability, go for soft greens and blues.
- Useful tools: Try Colors or Adobe Colour to create a harmonious palette.

Readable typography - Use modern and clear fonts to ensure easy reading.

- Practical examples: For titles, choose an eye-catching font like Montserrat or Lora. For the body text, go with a smooth and readable font like Open Sans or Roboto.
- Tip: Avoid mixing too many fonts; stick to a maximum of two styles for a clean and professional look.



Images and graphics - Authentic images make your story more engaging and believable.

- Practical examples: If you're telling a rural life story, instead of using generic field pictures, take real photos of your community—people working in the fields, local events, or unique landscape details.
- Where to find images? If you don't have your own, use free high-quality image sites like Unsplash, Pexels, or Pixabay to find emotional and authentic visuals.



With these elements, your digital story will not only be interesting to read but also visually stunning!

Design tools for a professional look

- Canva → User-friendly platform for creating layouts, posters, and digital presentations.
- Adobe Spark → Great for designing social media content, video thumbnails, and storytelling visuals.

Tip: Use pre-made templates to save time, but personalise them with local elements to make your story unique.

ACROSS EUROPE: STORYTELLING IN ACTION

National snapshots from Lithuania, Ireland, Latvia, and Italy

From short films to interactive maps, young creators across Europe are combining tech and imagination to tell stories that matter. These examples show how digital media can bring voices to life, connect communities, and make storytelling more accessible, expressive, and powerful.

Lithuania

The Portal project, created by Lithuanian artist Benediktas Gylys, is an inspiring example of how technology and art can bring people together. A large circular screen in Vilnius now connects the city in real time with other places around the world, like Lublin (Poland), Dublin (Ireland), and Philadelphia (USA). Through this live video stream, people can wave, smile, and feel a sense of connection beyond borders. It's like a digital bridge between cultures, reminding us that even from a distance, we can still be close.



Ireland

The Youth Media Project (YMP) in Ireland empowers young people by teaching them to use digital storytelling to raise awareness about social issues. Through workshops, youth are trained in video production, photography, and social media, allowing them to create stories on topics such as mental health, climate change, and social justice. The project encourages youth to share their stories on social media, amplifying their messages and reaching a wider audience. By giving young people the tools to tell their own stories, YMP fosters confidence, creativity, and active citizenship. It helps youth connect with their communities, challenge stereotypes, and advocate for change. The project's use of digital tools



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Latvia

Kristaps Kukainis, known as @kristvps on Instagram and YouTube, is a Latvian-born content creator and videographer based in Dubai. He specialises in building and growing personal brands through engaging video content. Kristaps shares insights on video editing, personal branding, and content creation, often utilising tools like CapCut and InShot to produce high-quality visuals. His approach demonstrates how creators can effectively use accessible editing tools to craft compelling narratives and enhance their digital presence.



Italy

Sam Youkilis is a photographer and videomaker who focuses on everyday life in Italy, using a unique and poetic approach to digital storytelling. His short vertical videos, often shared on Instagram, capture small, authentic moments in a visually compelling way. He frequently uses static, long-take shots with no cuts, allowing real-time action to unfold naturally—like a group of elderly people eating, a village procession, or children playing. These scenes are rich in ambient sound (voices, footsteps, birds, distant traffic) and he rarely uses music. When he does, it's carefully chosen to enhance emotion or add a subtle contrast. Visually, Youkilis favors natural light, soft, warm colors and carefully balanced compositions—often symmetrical or centered. Each video feels like a moving photograph, where even the smallest gestures gain emotional weight.



**SHARE
YOUR
STORY**



DIGITAL STORY

From Community Building
to Youth Employability

ETHICS OF THE STORY



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DIGITAL
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ETHICS OF THE STORY

DIGITAL STORY | GUIDE FOR YOUTH

INTRODUCTION: THE POWER & RISK OF STORYTELLING

Stories surround us. They fill our feeds, spill out in group chats, play out in podcasts, and go viral in 30-second TikToks. Telling your story, your truth, is a powerful thing. It can connect, inspire, expose, and heal. It can also do real harm.

Sometimes, our stories include other people. A friend. A classmate. A teacher. An ex. In a digital world, even a simple post can have a much bigger reach and much bigger consequences than we expect. That's why storytelling comes with ethical questions, especially when your words might impact someone else.

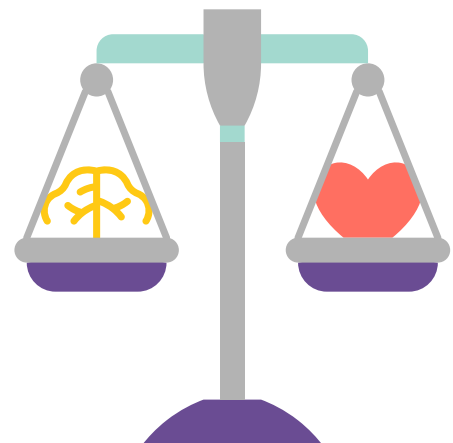
This chapter is about figuring out how to tell stories that are **bold and honest**, but also **fair and thoughtful**. We're not here to scare you into silence; we're here to help you tell your truth in a way that respects your voice *and* the people who show up in your life.

We'll ask questions like:

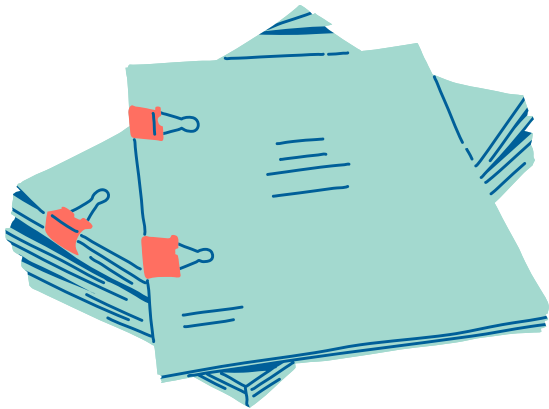
- **Do I need someone's permission to include them in my story?**
- **Is it possible to be truthful and still be kind?**
- **What happens when your story goes viral?**
- **Where's the line between *my truth* and *the truth*?**

Being an ethical storyteller isn't about following rules; it's about thinking critically, being aware of impact, and owning your choices. You don't need to be perfect. But you do need to pay attention.

Let's get into it.



1. WHEN STORIES HURT: REAL LIVES BEHIND THE SCRIPT



“Just because
it’s your story
doesn’t mean
it’s only
about you.”

You can say it’s fiction. You can change names. You can even add a disclaimer. But once your story is out in the world, **you don’t get to control how it lands - or who it lands on.**

Telling your story can be healing. It can be brave. But when your story includes other people, even indirectly, it carries a risk. Maybe they didn’t ask to be included. Maybe they don’t see the events the same way. Maybe they’ll be recognised, even if you tried to disguise them. And in the digital world, where stories spread fast and audiences love to dig deeper, what feels like a personal truth can become someone else’s nightmare.

Case Study: Baby Reindeer: What Happens When Stories Get Too Real?

Richard Gadd’s *Baby Reindeer* is a semi-fictional series based on his real-life experience with a stalker. It’s raw, gripping, and deeply personal. Names and details were changed, but not enough. The show debuted to critical acclaim and intense public interest, with online viewers quickly identifying the real woman behind the character “Martha.”



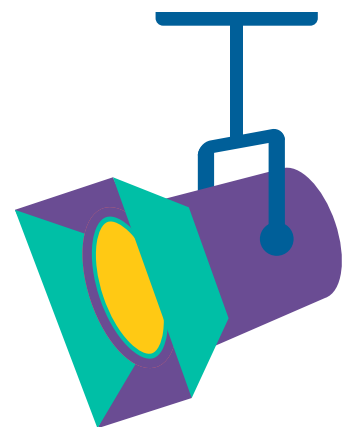
Within days, her personal information was circulating, and she became the target of widespread harassment. While Martha was portrayed as the perpetrator in the story, it also became clear that she was a vulnerable person, possibly struggling with her mental health. The situation raised complex ethical questions about storytelling, responsibility, and what happens when audiences take matters into their own hands.

This raises difficult questions:

- **Is the creator responsible for what happened to her, even if he didn't name her?**
- **Does personal trauma justify telling a story that harms someone else?**
- **Can a story be both healing for the teller and harmful to someone else?**

Gadd said the show was about processing his own pain, not exposing anyone. But once it aired, the internet took over. The woman in question gave interviews, saying she felt misrepresented and devastated. The line between truth, fiction, and responsibility had completely blurred.

Now imagine this: Someone tells a story based on something that happened to you. They say it's fictional. But people recognise it. They recognise you. And you're suddenly a character in someone else's truth, with no say in how you're portrayed. What's fair? And what's too far?



Case Study: Inventing Anna: Storytelling, Embellishment & Responsibility

The Netflix series, *Inventing Anna*, is based on the real-life story of Anna Sorokin, a con artist who posed as a wealthy heiress in New York City. The show is entertaining, sharp, and full of wild twists, but it blurs the line between fact and fiction.

One character, “Rachel,” is based on a real woman who was scammed by Anna. In the series, she’s portrayed as cold, selfish, and even slightly ridiculous. The real Rachel later said she never gave permission for her story to be told that way –and that the portrayal damaged both her reputation and her mental health.



This raises more ethical questions in storytelling:

- **Even if the main character is captivating, what responsibility does the storyteller have to the real people around them?**
- **Does the desire to “make a good story” justify reshaping how someone else is seen or remembered?**
- **As viewers or readers, how quickly are we to believe the version of events and the people we’re shown? How often do we question whether the side characters were fairly portrayed?**

Reflection: Your Story Isn't Just Yours

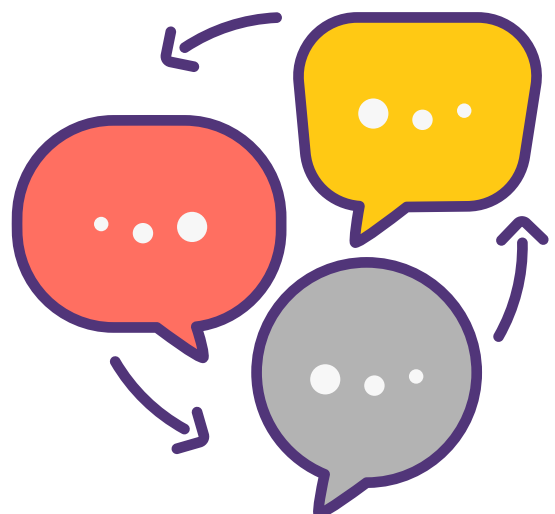
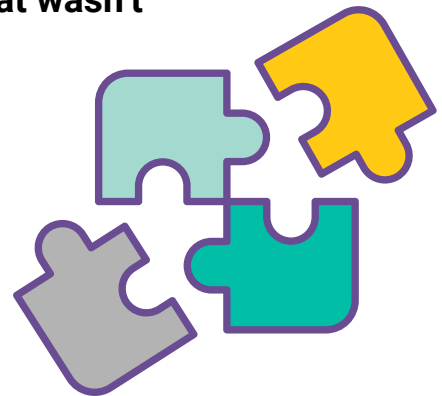
When we share personal stories—especially in public or digital spaces—it's easy to place ourselves at the centre. But no one's life unfolds in isolation. Our experiences are often intertwined with the lives, choices, and reputations of others.

You don't need to stay silent. But before sharing, ask yourself:

- **Am I telling this because it's true, or because it's dramatic?**
- **Would I feel okay if someone shared this version of the story about me?**
- **What will I do if someone feels hurt, even if that wasn't my intention?**

Discussion Prompts

- **When does a personal story become a public one?**
- **Is changing names enough if the person can still be recognised, or hurt?**
- **Have you ever seen yourself or someone you know in a story that wasn't theirs to tell?**



2. 'MY TRUTH' VS. THE TRUTH



We all see the world through our own lens. Our memories are shaped by emotion. Our stories are shaped by perspective. And sometimes, **two people can live through the same moment and walk away with completely different versions of what happened**, both feeling absolutely certain they're right. That's not always because someone's lying. It's because storytelling is personal. Emotional. Selective. But when we put those stories out into the world, especially in digital spaces, we're no longer just sharing perspective. We're shaping how others see reality.

So, how do we tell our truth without claiming ownership of *the* truth?

Case Study: Two Sides, One Spotlight: The Ethics of the Depp–Heard Case

In one of the most public legal battles of the decade, actors Johnny Depp and Amber Heard told two conflicting stories about their relationship. Following their divorce, Depp sued Heard for defamation after she published an opinion piece in a major newspaper describing herself as a survivor of domestic abuse. She didn't name him, but the implication was clear. Depp claimed the article damaged his reputation and career. Heard responded with her own allegations, saying she had been abused by Depp, while he

claimed that he had been the one abused. Both said they were the victim. Both gave emotional, deeply personal testimony. And the world watched—judging, reacting, and taking sides.

The courtroom became a stage. Social media exploded with reaction videos, memes, edits, and livestream commentary. TikTok was flooded with content mocking one party and defending the other. Nuance disappeared. The story stopped being about two people's pain and turned into something else: entertainment.

This case shows what happens when personal stories collide and when audiences forget that no one ever sees the whole picture.

This raises more ethical questions in digital storytelling:

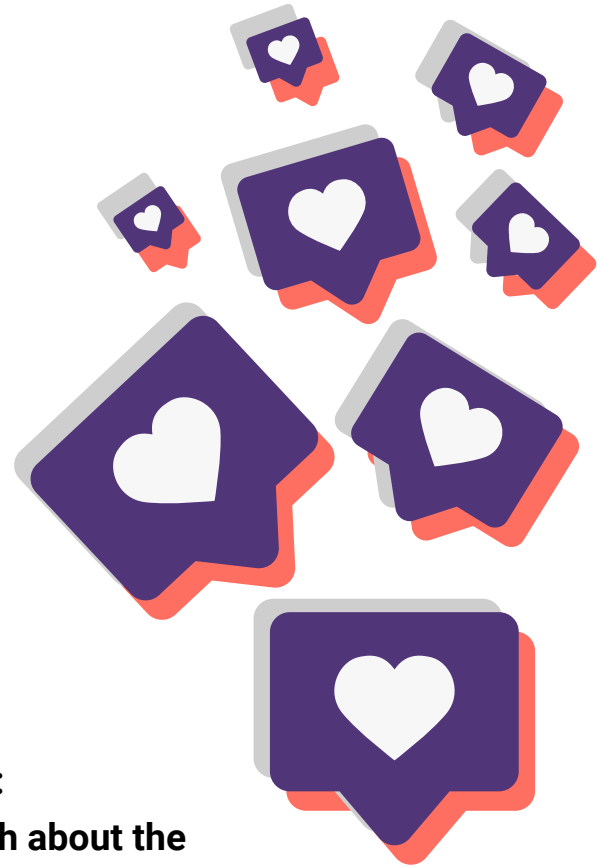
- **What happens when personal stories are played out on a global stage? Can we still treat them with the care and complexity they deserve?**
- **When both people in a story say they were harmed, how do we listen without jumping to conclusions?**
- **How did social media influence how people saw this case? Do memes, edits, and commentary change how we perceive real people?**



Case Study: From Ghosting to Global: How One Story Took Over TikTok

In early 2022, several women on TikTok discovered they had all dated the same man, Caleb, a furniture designer in New York. They began posting stories about being ghosted, love-bombed, and sent the same Spotify playlists. The videos were casual at first—funny, even—and each one reflected someone's personal experience.

But then the story went viral. Caleb was quickly identified, doxxed, and publicly shamed. People who had never met him formed strong opinions about his character based on snippets of other people’s experiences. What started as a few women “telling their truth” became a global internet spectacle with real-world consequences for someone who had never agreed to be part of the story.



This example raises powerful questions:

- **When several people share their truth about the same person, does that automatically create a complete, fair picture?**
- **When a story spreads online, how much of “*the truth*” gets lost in the retelling?**

Why It Matters

Your truth matters. But someone else’s version of that truth might look completely different. Ethical storytelling doesn’t mean staying silent. It means recognising that stories, especially those involving others, can have **multiple layers**.

When we ignore that, we risk turning complex situations into black-and-white narratives: heroes and villains, right and wrong. But real life doesn’t work that way. Stories can be powerful without being absolute.

Activity: Flip the Perspective

Exercise: Think of a real story you've told before - something small is fine. Now try retelling it from the other person's perspective.

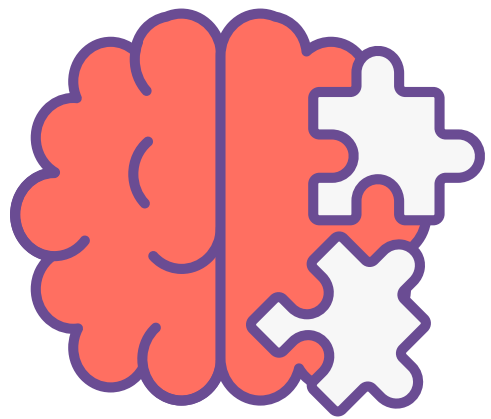
- What details might they focus on that you didn't?
- Would they describe *you* the way you described *them*?
- What parts of the story feel different when you switch perspectives?

Takeaway: There's more than one way to tell the same story. And ethical storytellers know that their version isn't the only one.



Discussion Prompts

- Have you ever told a story that someone else disagreed with?
- Can two people be "right" about the same situation?
- What does it mean to be honest without pretending you know everything?



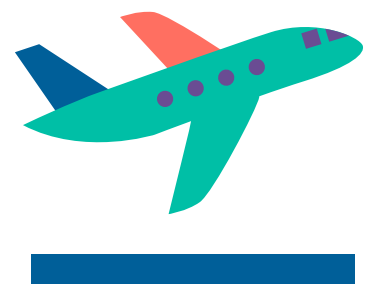
3. THE ETHICS OF GOING VIRAL



You tell a story online. Maybe it’s funny. Maybe it’s painful. Maybe it’s meant for your friends, or your 200 TikTok followers. And then - suddenly - it’s *everywhere*. People you’ve never met are commenting, stitching, and duetting. They have opinions. They have questions. They might even go looking for the people in your story.

That’s the nature of digital storytelling: **you control what you post, but not what happens next.**

When something goes viral, it becomes public property in a way you can’t predict. The story grows legs. Strangers add context, form judgements, and sometimes take action. A personal post can turn into a public reckoning. So how do you share something real without accidentally becoming the centre of an internet firestorm?



Why It Matters

Virality is a powerful force. It can bring visibility, support, and connection, but also scrutiny, judgment, and pressure. Once your story spreads, it's hard to take it back. Even deleting a post doesn't erase the screenshots, shares, or stitched reactions.

As a storyteller, you don't have to expect virality. But you do have to be prepared for the possibility of being heard by more people than you intended.

Activity: What If Your Story Went Viral?

Exercise: Write a short personal story, real or imagined, that you might share online. Now ask yourself:

- What if this reached 10,000 people?
- What if it reached a million?
- Who might recognise themselves in this?
- Could the story be misunderstood or taken out of context?
- Would you be proud of this story going public?



Takeaway: You can't control the internet. But you can control the care and intention you bring to your storytelling.

Discussion Prompts

- Have you ever posted something that got more attention than you expected? How did it feel?
- Is it possible to "go viral responsibly"? What would that look like?
- Should storytellers be held responsible for what their audiences do?

4. CONSENT IN STORYTELLING: DO YOU NEED PERMISSION?



You lived it. You felt it. It’s your story... right?

But what if someone else was part of it? What if your story reveals something about *them*, something they wouldn’t want shared, or that they see completely differently? Do you need their permission?

Consent in storytelling isn’t always a legal requirement, but it’s almost always an **ethical one**.

What Is Consent in Storytelling?

Consent means someone agrees to be included in your story. That might mean letting them know in advance, getting their approval for specific details, or at the very least, considering whether what you say about them is fair, respectful, and necessary.

This is especially important when the story is personal, painful, or might make someone identifiable, even if you don’t name them.

In the digital space, a single post can change how someone is seen by their friends, family, classmates, or thousands of strangers. That’s a lot of power, and it comes with responsibility.

Case Study: Venting or Violating? When Stories Cross a Line

An American college student took to TikTok to vent. Her roommate, she said, was passive-aggressive, messy, and emotionally draining. She didn't name names, but she included just enough: the layout of their dorm, their course, their city. The video was short, funny, and brutally honest.



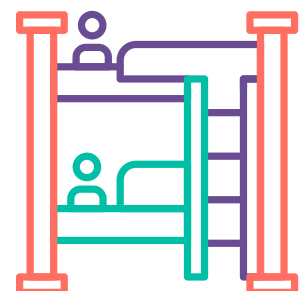
And it blew up.

Comments flooded in. Viewers took sides, labelled the roommate “toxic,” and demanded updates. Some people on campus quickly figured out who the roommate was. Screenshots spread. Mutual friends got involved. What began online started affecting real life badly.

The creator eventually deleted the video. But the damage was already done. The roommate later responded: “I found out I was the villain in someone else’s story because strangers started messaging me about it.”

What started as a moment of venting became viral, without the knowledge or consent of the person at the centre of it.

This example shows how easy it is to tell a personal story that includes someone else without asking whether you should. It doesn't take much for people to connect the dots—especially when they go to the same school, live in the same place, or know you personally.



Discussion Prompts

- Have you ever shared a story that involved someone else, without asking them first?
- Did you consider how they'd feel reading it? Would it have made a difference if you had?



Why Consent Matters

Consent isn't about censorship. It's about respect. It's about asking:

- Am I telling this story to process, or to punish?
- Would I want someone to tell a story about me this way?
- Could this affect someone's safety, privacy, or relationships?

Sometimes it's as simple as asking, "Hey, I'm thinking of sharing this - are you okay with that?" Other times, it's knowing when to change more than just a name. It might mean shifting details, waiting to share, or choosing not to publish it at all.

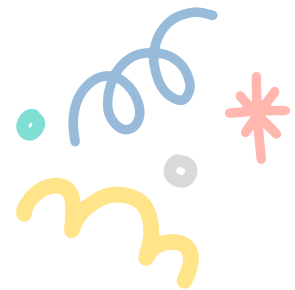


Activity: Rewriting With Consent in Mind

Exercise: Take a short story you've written (or make one up). Now revise it in two ways:

1. Ensure no one involved could be identified even by people who know you.
2. Change it as if the person it's about will read it. What changes?

Takeaway: Being thoughtful about consent doesn't make your story weaker. It often makes it stronger, smarter, and more ethical.



Discussion Prompts

- Is there ever a situation where you shouldn't ask for consent?
- How do we balance our need to express ourselves with someone else's right to privacy?



5. STORYTELLING & THE LAW: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



Sharing your story might feel personal. But when it involves real people, real events, or even your opinions about someone else, **it can also be legal territory.**

That doesn't mean you need to be a lawyer to tell your truth. But it does mean you should understand the boundaries, especially when you're publishing online for others to see, comment on, and share.

This section won't give you legal advice (because we're not lawyers), but it *will* help you understand how storytelling can cross into areas like **defamation, privacy violations, and consumer law.**

What Could Be a Legal Issue?

Some stories cross into legal danger when they:

- **Damage someone's reputation** in a way that's false and harmful
- **Expose private information** without consent
- **Profit from someone else's likeness or trauma**
- **Claim something factual that can't be proven or is untrue**

Key Terms

- **Defamation: Saying or posting something false about someone that damages their reputation.**
 - Libel = written or posted
 - Slander = spoken
- **Invasion of Privacy: Sharing personal or sensitive details about someone without their permission, especially if they're not a public figure.**
- **Public Figures: Celebrities, politicians, and influencers are generally held to a different legal standard when it comes to public commentary.**
- **Consent: Whether or not you have permission to share details that could identify or misrepresent someone else**

Case Study: Belle Gibson – The Wellness Influencer Who Lied

Belle Gibson built a wellness empire around a lie. She claimed she had terminal cancer and had cured herself through clean eating and natural therapies. Her “healing journey” spread quickly through Instagram, media interviews, a bestselling app, and a popular cookbook.

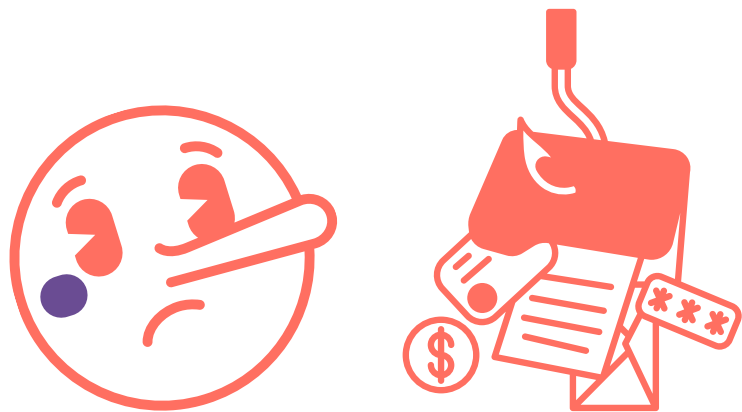
The problem? She never had cancer



When the truth came out, public outrage turned into legal action. In 2017, Gibson was found guilty of misleading and deceptive conduct under Australian consumer law. The court ruled that her false story caused real harm, especially to vulnerable people seeking alternative medical treatments. She was fined hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Gibson's story is a powerful reminder that personal storytelling, especially when monetised and shared with a wide audience, can go beyond ethics and into legal consequences.

Takeaway: The bigger the platform and the bigger the claim, the bigger the responsibility.



What Does This Mean for You?

Being a responsible storyteller isn't just ethical, it's smart. You don't need to stop sharing your truth. But you *do* need to ask:

- Am I presenting this as fact or as my experience?
- Could this harm someone's reputation unfairly?
- Am I publishing something that could get me into legal trouble?
- Would I be okay defending this publicly or in court?

Being thoughtful isn't about censorship; it's about protecting yourself *and* others.

Activity: Activity: Fact, Feeling, or Fiction?

Exercise: Take a short story you've written or posted (or imagine one). Go through it line by line and label each part:

- Fact (provable truth)
- Feeling (your perception or emotional response)
- Fiction (any made-up or exaggerated detail)



Now ask:

- Could someone dispute this?
- Would I feel okay reading this out loud to the people involved?
- Is it clear where the facts stop and my perspective begins?

Takeaway: Telling your story is powerful, but clarity, honesty, and responsibility make it ethical and safe.



Discussion Prompts

- Have you ever shared something online and worried later about whether you should have?
- Should storytellers be legally responsible for how their words affect others?
- Is a disclaimer enough to avoid legal consequences (“names have been changed,” “this is just my experience”)?
- Have you ever seen a story online that felt like it crossed a line? What made it feel that way?

6. FINAL THOUGHTS: BALANCING TRUTH, ETHICS & IMPACT

Storytelling is one of the most powerful things you can do. It helps us understand who we are, connect with others, and bring meaning to moments that might otherwise go unnoticed. And in the digital age, your story has the power to travel fast, far, and wide.

But with that reach comes responsibility.

This doesn't mean you should stop telling your truth. It means asking the right questions before you share:

- Is this story only mine to tell?
- Could it harm someone—emotionally, reputationally, or legally?
- Am I being fair? Am I being clear?
- Am I prepared for this story to be misunderstood, reshared, or challenged?

The best storytellers don't just express themselves; they think critically, act responsibly, and stay aware of the impact their words might have.



You Can Be Honest and Ethical

You don't have to choose between being honest and being respectful. You can tell brave, funny, moving, messy stories—and still be kind, thoughtful, and safe.



You Can Be Creative and Careful

Being ethical doesn't limit your creativity. It sharpens it. It forces you to think more deeply, write more intentionally, and share with more purpose.



You Can Speak Up and Own the Impact

When you share something publicly, especially online, you don't control how people respond. But you do control your intent, your tone, and how much thought you give to the people your story might touch.



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Final Activity: Your Ethical Storytelling Guidelines

Exercise: Write a short list of personal “rules” or values you want to follow when sharing stories about your life or others. Here are some prompts to get you started:

- I will always ask myself who else is affected by this story.
- I will change details when needed to protect someone’s privacy.
- I will check whether I’m sharing to connect or to hurt.
- I will be open to feedback if I get something wrong.
- I will take responsibility for my story’s impact, not just my intention.

Takeaway: There’s no perfect formula. But having your own internal compass helps you tell stories that reflect who you really are, not just what happened.

**The World
Needs Your
Stories—Told
Ethically**



You have a voice. You have a story. And that story matters. Telling it with care makes it even more powerful.

ACROSS EUROPE: ETHICAL STORYTELLING IN CONTEXT

National snapshots from Lithuania, Ireland, Latvia, and Italy

Ethical storytelling means making careful choices—about facts, emotions, humour, and public impact. These brief examples illustrate how creators and communities across Europe are navigating these decisions.

Lithuania - When Myths Meet Reality

Sometimes stories are based on real life. Sometimes they come from legends, dreams, or memories passed down through generations. Especially when working with cultural heritage or mythology - like Baltic or Lithuanian legends - it's easy to mix facts with fantasy. That's why it's essential to check the facts before sharing a story as "truth." Baltic mythology is rich in powerful stories, such as Eglė, the Queen of Serpents, the Sun Goddess Saulė, and the thunder god Perkūnas. These tales carry meaning, values, and emotion, but they're not historical records. When using such legends in digital storytelling, it helps to clarify: Is this a myth, a belief, or a fact? Respecting cultural roots means doing some research, giving credit to traditional sources, and being thoughtful about how myths are retold - especially if you're mixing them with real places, people, or modern messages. Being creative is amazing. Being responsible makes your story even stronger.



Ireland - Truth, Memory, and Public Narratives

In 2018, an inquest into the deaths of ten people in Belfast during the Ballymurphy Massacre in 1971 began, uncovering significant ethical considerations in storytelling. The victims, whom British soldiers had killed during Operation Demetrius, were initially portrayed as militants by the British Army. However, the inquest found that they were innocent civilians and that the killings were unjustified. The case raised important ethical



ACROSS EUROPE: ETHICAL STORYTELLING IN CONTEXT

questions about the media's responsibility in shaping public perception, particularly in how it portrays victims and their families. The delay in official acknowledgement of the victims' innocence led to emotional distress for their families, who had to wait decades for justice. This situation highlights the ethical duty of storytellers, including the media and official narratives, to ensure accuracy, fairness, and sensitivity when addressing painful historical events and the lives of those affected.

Latvia - Humour and Responsibility

Rojs Rodžers is a Latvian influencer and co-host of the podcast "Vai viegli būt?" ("Is It Easy to Be?"), known for his provocative and humorous approach to discussing current social issues, including ethics. His content often includes witty remarks and irony that spark debates about the boundaries between humour and ethics. For example, in his podcast episode "Vai viegli būt... Nepopulāram?" ("Is It Easy to Be... Unpopular?"), He tackles topics that challenge traditional views and encourage reflection on societal norms. His approach exemplifies how content creators can use humour and provocation to draw attention to important subjects while navigating ethical considerations.



Italy - Digital Ethics in Action

Cathy La Torre is an Italian lawyer specialising in civil rights, anti-discrimination, and digital rights. She uses Instagram to make legal knowledge accessible, translating complex legal concepts into clear, relatable language. Her content focuses on pressing ethical and social issues, including LGBTQ+ rights, gender-based violence, and social justice. Through videos, reels and posts, she fosters awareness and promotes a culture of inclusion and respect. Her direct and empathetic communication style invites reflection and dialogue, while interactive tools, such as polls and Q&As, strengthen her bond with the community.





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