



Connect with Storytelling

Level 3 Project



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TOASTMASTERS
PATHWAYS
— learning experience —

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Connect with Storytelling

About Connect with Storytelling

In this project, you will learn to apply storytelling techniques and descriptive skills to make a presentation relatable and interesting. You will draw from your own experience to craft a story and develop a personal style when telling it. You will create stories that elicit the desired emotional impact on the audience.

Resources

The following is a list of resources available in your digital project on Base Camp. Some of these resources, such as evaluations, are also available on the Resources section on Base Camp.

Project Checklist

Evaluation Resources

Introduction and Assignment

Introduction

Storytelling has been a form of communication throughout the history of humanity. Stories have been spoken aloud and passed down from generation to generation in every civilization around the world. The value of knowing how to tell a good, entertaining story cannot be overstated.

Your Assignment

Purpose: The purpose of this project is to practice using a story within a speech or giving a speech that is a story.

Overview: Choose an established story, a story about your life, or a fictional tale of your own creation. Deliver the 5- to 7-minute speech at a club meeting. If your Vice President Education approves a non-club event, your evaluator should be a Toastmaster who attended the event.

Your speech can be persuasive, humorous, informational, or crafted in any style that appeals to you and supports your speech content.

Throughout this project you will see icons in the margins next to the text. These icons indicate additional resources available online.



Video: Sign in to Base Camp to watch a video that supports this project.



Interactive Activity: Sign in to Base Camp to complete an interactive activity.



Resource: Sign in to Base Camp to view this resource online.



Weblink: Return to your digital project when you see this icon to link to a website or Base Camp location.

For all assignment details and requirements, review the [Project Checklist](#).

Learning in Connect with Storytelling

Assess and Reflect



To assess and track your knowledge, complete the activity below by listing what you already know and what you wonder about the topic today. Add up to five items to each list. After you complete your project, you will have an opportunity to review your answers and add what you have learned.

Know

For example: I know how to tell an engaging story.

Wonder

For example: I wonder how to tell stories that create emotional impact.

Competencies

The following is a list of competencies that you will learn and practice in this project.

- Apply storytelling techniques and descriptive skills to make the presentation relatable and interesting.
- Understand the elements of a good story.
- Use vivid descriptions and appropriate tone to tell an engaging story.
- Create stories that have the desired emotional impact on the audience.

The Power of Storytelling

A story is a narrative that is designed to interest, amuse, or instruct the listener. Stories have the ability to highlight important moments and memories. They can connect you to others through empathy and shared experiences.

Telling a story can be more engrossing for an audience than a typical speech or presentation. When listeners are absorbed in another's story, their emotional response triggers the brain to create memories. The best educators fuse learning with powerful storytelling to help their students remember important facts and information.

Stories make a powerful impact as the primary point of a speech or a small part of a larger presentation. It is the speaker's decision how to best incorporate a story into a speech for the greatest effect.



Watch a video on Base Camp to learn more.

Develop Your Story

Every story reflects the storyteller and their experiences. As you prepare a story to include in a speech or presentation, there are several important elements to consider.

Purpose

Stories serve many purposes in a speech. They can help you connect with an audience, overcome resistance, and form a connection that allows you to teach an important lesson or explain a difficult concept.

Stories open the door for meaningful communication. Weaving stories through a presentation can help audience members recall facts and information they might forget without a memorable story as a reference point.

Tone

Be mindful of the occasion and your audience when determining the tone and emotional content of your story. Regardless of the occasion, share a story that resonates positively with your audience. A story told at a wedding or funeral may be moving, funny, or both. The most important component in choosing your topic is relating it to the audience and the event.

Vivid Descriptions

Descriptive language paints a mental picture. When telling a story, well-chosen words evoke specific imagery to illustrate your point. A good storyteller's eloquent descriptions can transport their audience to another place and time.

Consider What is Most Important to You

When writing your story, keep in mind the amount of time you have to deliver it to your audience. For example, if you choose to tell a story about a friend and their extraordinary life by describing a meal you shared in a beautiful location, the goal is to talk about your friend. As lovely as the trees and the view were, some of these details may have to be eliminated in order to tell the core story of your friend's remarkable life.

Use expressive dialogue in your story. Instead of telling the audience what was said, share the actual dialogue. Write it out in the format of a script with characters saying the lines. The best storytellers take on different roles as they tell a story.

For more specific information about adding descriptive language to your storytelling, see the Using Descriptive Language elective project.

Create an Outline

An outline provides the framework for your story in the same way it does for the creation of a speech or other presentation. Planning makes all the difference when you present to an audience.

Your outline should include information about your story's introduction, conflict, and action.

INTRODUCTION

- Summarize the main point of your story in one sentence.
- Establish the setting, including the timeframe and location, of your story.
- List the people or characters involved.

CONFLICT

Every story has an issue to be resolved or challenge between two opposing forces. State the challenge to be overcome. Your challenge can be:

- Between a person and nature. You were stuck in the rain, trying to get home.
- Between two people. You and another both want the last sweet in a case at the market.
- Between a person and an organization. You would like to mail a letter and the post office closed five minutes before you arrived.
- Between a person and an object. Your shoe is caught in the door.

ACTION

- Stories move forward as characters strive to overcome the challenges they face.
- List your story's main events and plot.
- Give your story a clear opening, body, and conclusion.

Deliver Your Story

There are several key points to keep in mind when delivering your story.

Storytelling is a Performance

Rehearsal is important when preparing for any speech, but storytelling may require extra time. If you include dialogue, rehearse the different voices in your story. This does not mean you have to be an expert at creating characters. Even a slight variation in tone can give the impression of a different speaker.

Consider reviewing Understanding Vocal Variety, Effective Body Language, and other elective projects for guidance on effective speech delivery.

Using Body Language and Gestures

In addition to maintaining a confident speaking posture (see the elective project Effective Body Language), use your body to help tell your story. Facial expressions and gestures add to characterizations and bring your story to life.

Speaking in First Person

When you tell your story, do so from your own perspective. The closer the audience is to the people in the story, the more real it becomes. For example, instead of saying “A friend of mine saw...” say “I saw...” By making the story your own, you bring your audience on the adventure with you.

Pacing

Use the pace of the story to keep your audience engaged. For example, speak more quickly to show action or excitement during appropriate parts of the story. Pause to add drama to a specific section or to give your audience time to assimilate important points. Silence at the right times can have a powerful impact on an audience.

Review and Apply

Before you complete the assignment, take a moment to read through the questions you see here. If you are not able to answer them comfortably, review the project.

- What storytelling techniques will you use to make your presentation relatable and interesting?
- How can your story outline be used to help you add detail?
- What vivid descriptions will you add to create a more engaging story?
- How can description and dialogue help you achieve your desired emotional impact on the audience?

Complete Your Assignment



Project Checklist

Now that you have read through the project, plan and prepare your speech or report. First, review your assignment.

This project includes:

- A 5- to 7-minute speech

The following list includes tasks for this project. Please remember, your project is unique to you. You can use the checklist here or complete the digital version in your project on Base Camp.

Identify the elements of a good story.

Choose the story you would like to tell.

Schedule your report or speech with the Vice President Education. If your Vice President Education approves a non-club event, your evaluator must attend the event.

Write your speech.

Rehearse your speech.

When all components of your assignment are finished, complete your self-reflection by adding what you have learned to the last column of the Know-Wonder-Learned activity.

Evaluation Criteria



Review the criteria for the evaluation in this project. Your evaluator will use the following scale:

5 – Exemplary 4 – Excels 3 – Accomplished 2 – Emerging 1 – Developing

Clarity

- 5 – Is an exemplary public speaker who is always understood
- 4 – Excels at communicating using the spoken word
- 3 – Spoken language is clear and is easily understood
- 2 – Spoken language is somewhat unclear or challenging to understand
- 1 – Spoken language is unclear or not easily understood

Vocal Variety

- 5 – Uses the tools of tone, speed, and volume to perfection
- 4 – Excels at using tone, speed, and volume as tools
- 3 – Uses tone, speed, and volume as tools
- 2 – Use of tone, speed, and volume requires further practice
- 1 – Ineffective use of tone, speed, and volume

Eye Contact

- 5 – Uses eye contact to convey emotion and elicit response
- 4 – Uses eye contact to gauge audience reaction and response
- 3 – Effectively uses eye contact to engage audience
- 2 – Eye contact with audience needs improvement
- 1 – Makes little or no eye contact with audience

Gestures

- 5 – Fully integrates physical gestures with content to deliver an exemplary speech
- 4 – Uses physical gestures as a tool to enhance speech
- 3 – Uses physical gestures effectively
- 2 – Uses somewhat distracting or limited gestures
- 1 – Uses very distracting gestures or no gestures

Audience Awareness

- 5 – Engages audience completely and anticipates audience needs
- 4 – Is fully aware of audience engagement/needs and responds effectively
- 3 – Demonstrates awareness of audience engagement and needs
- 2 – Audience engagement or awareness of audience requires further practice
- 1 – Makes little or no attempt to engage audience or meet audience needs

Comfort Level

- 5 – Appears completely self-assured with the audience
- 4 – Appears fully at ease with the audience
- 3 – Appears comfortable with the audience
- 2 – Appears uncomfortable with the audience
- 1 – Appears highly uncomfortable with the audience

Interest

- 5 – Fully engages audience with exemplary, well-constructed content
- 4 – Engages audience with highly compelling, well-constructed content
- 3 – Engages audience with interesting, well-constructed content
- 2 – Content is interesting but not well-constructed or is well-constructed but not interesting
- 1 – Content is neither interesting nor well-constructed

Impact

- 5 – Story enthralls the audience and is a perfect complement to the speech content
- 4 – Story enhances the speech and heightens audience engagement
- 3 – Story has the intended impact on the audience
- 2 – Story makes some impact on the audience
- 1 – Story makes little or no impact on the audience

Pace

(Evaluate only if speaker includes a story as part of a larger speech.)

- 5 – Story flows perfectly with overall content to contribute to an exemplary speech
- 4 – Pacing contributes substantially to the effectiveness of the story and the overall speech
- 3 – Pacing enhances the delivery of both the story and the rest of the speech
- 2 – Pacing of the story disrupts the flow of the rest of the speech
- 1 – Pacing of the story detracts from the delivery of the speech

Complete Your Project



Once you have delivered your speech and received your evaluation, take a minute to review what you recorded under “Know” and “Wonder” in the Assess and Reflect section at the start of this project. Then add what you have learned while working through this project. Add up to five items.

Learned

For example: I learned how to use vivid descriptions in my storytelling.

Before You Move On

Review Your Learning

Review all the material in this project.

Deliver Your Speech

Plan, practice, and deliver your speech.

Receive Your Evaluation

Receive your evaluation and complete any other tasks required by your club.

Assess and Reflect

When all components of your assignment are finished, complete your self-reflection by adding what you have learned to the last column of the Know-Wonder-Learned activity.

Congratulations!

If you have completed every task, CONGRATULATIONS! You have completed your Connect with Storytelling project and you are ready to move on to your next project.



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