



CONNECT WITH STORYTELLING

LEVEL 3 PROJECT



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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.

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.

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.

Note: If your vice president education approves a non-club event, your evaluator should be a Toastmaster who attended the event.

For all assignment details and requirements, review the Project Checklist on page 10.



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.

ASSESS YOUR SKILLS

Evaluate your current skill level by rating each statement.



Select the appropriate number based on your skills today:

5
EXEMPLARY

4
EXCEL

3
ACCOMPLISHED

2
EMERGING

1
DEVELOPING

Pre-Project					Statement	Post-Project				
5	4	3	2	1	I am confident that I can tell an engaging story.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	I project enthusiasm when telling a story.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	I use vivid descriptions in my storytelling.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	I can tell stories that create emotional impact.	5	4	3	2	1
5	4	3	2	1	I recognize how this project applies to my life outside of Toastmasters.	5	4	3	2	1

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.



DEVELOP YOUR STORY

Every story reflects the storyteller and her 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.

TO NE

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 her audience to another place and time.

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 her 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 available online.

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 available online 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

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

Review: Return to page 3 to review your assignment.

Organize: Use the Project Checklist on page 10 to review the steps and add your own. This will help you organize and prepare your assignment.



Schedule: Work with the vice president education to schedule your speech.

Prepare: Prepare for your evaluation. Review the evaluation resources on pages 12–14 and share all resources with your evaluator before your speech. You may choose to share your evaluation resources online.



PROJECT CHECKLIST

Connect with Storytelling

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.

This project includes:

- A 5- to 7-minute speech

Below are tasks you will need to complete for this project. Please remember, your project is unique to you. You may alter the following list to incorporate any other tasks necessary for your project.

Identify the elements of a good story.

Choose the story you would like to tell.

Schedule your 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.

- After you have completed all components of the assignment, including your speech, return to page 4 to rate your skills in the post-project section.

Additional Notes

EVALUATION FORM

Connect with Storytelling

Member Name _____ Date _____

Evaluator _____ Speech Length: 5 – 7 minutes

Speech Title

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this project is for the member to practice using a story within a speech or giving a speech that is a story.

Notes for the Evaluator

The member completing this project is focusing on using stories in a speech or creating a speech that is a story. The member may use any type of story: personal, well-known fiction, or one of his or her own creation.

Listen for a well-organized speech that is a story or includes a story.

General Comments

You excelled at:

You may want to work on:

To challenge yourself:

For the evaluator: In addition to your verbal evaluation, please complete this form.

5 EXEMPLARY	4 EXCELS	3 ACCOMPLISHED	2 EMERGING	1 DEVELOPING	
Clarity: Spoken language is clear and is easily understood					Comment:
5	4	3	2	1	
Vocal Variety: Uses tone, speed, and volume as tools					Comment:
5	4	3	2	1	
Eye Contact: Effectively uses eye contact to engage audience					Comment:
5	4	3	2	1	
Gestures: Uses physical gestures effectively					Comment:
5	4	3	2	1	
Audience Awareness: Demonstrates awareness of audience engagement and needs					Comment:
5	4	3	2	1	
Comfort Level: Appears comfortable with the audience					Comment:
5	4	3	2	1	
Interest: Engages audience with interesting, well-constructed content					Comment:
5	4	3	2	1	
Impact: Story has the intended impact on the audience					Comment:
5	4	3	2	1	
Pace: Pacing enhances the delivery of both the story and the rest of the speech. (Evaluate this competency only if the member includes a story as part of a larger speech.)					Comment:
5	4	3	2	1	

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Connect with Storytelling

This criteria lists the specific goals and expectations for the speech. Please review each level to help you complete the evaluation.

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 this competency only if the member 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 story detracts from the delivery of the speech



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