

Week 1: *The Story of You* lesson plan

Quote of the Week: “Telling stories makes the difference between boring, forgettable speeches, and speeches that people remember. Do the hard work. Find the story. Tell it like only you know how.” – Nick Morgan

“Why You Must Tell Stories, Not Dump Information, In Your Presentations”

Monday: The purpose of this assignment is to find out how you (the student) identify yourself through a series of exercises and a couple worksheets.

Lesson summary (15-20 minutes): When we write words down, it changes how we speak them. Reading those written words makes us “sound written.” We want to avoid writing our story down; if you (the student) find that to be too difficult, we can always jot down the most important points on a piece of paper or a notecard. But try not to rely on that! After all, we want to tell our story from the heart, not the brain. Friday we will share our stories with the class!

Activity sheet description (20-30 minutes total): A picture of a stick figure person where each student writes down what they think is how they identify themselves (girl, daughter, cousin, niece, student, musician, singer, etc. as well as some adjectives that they think they define themselves such as funny, compassionate, courageous, eager, fabulous, etc.). This should take 10-15 minutes, and at the end of this activity the instructor is to write up on the board what people shout out (or raised hands, whichever).

For the purpose of this pandemic, each student can be sent the pdf for their parent to print out, and the instructor can “share screen” on zoom to a word document.

Here is where partners are to be assigned (referred to as “Buddies” and Buddy A/B). It should be comprised of two students, and how they’re picked is reliant on the instructor. If there is extra time, have them start discussing their worksheets.

Homework assignment: Each student should take home a worksheet (or print one out) that asks them to list the “background” of who they are. (Possible examples: race, my family is from Mexico, I’m the oldest of two, I am 12, I was born in Blank City, etc.). They don’t have to include anything

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they don't want to, it's simply to help them figure out who they are and what they would want to incorporate into their speech.

Tuesday: At the start of class, each student should be paired back up with their buddy (through breakout rooms [DO NOT OPEN THE ROOMS YET], or by moving desks, or by switching seats, etc.). Go through how the exercise is to work and allow full class time for them to develop their stories. Check in with them periodically to make sure each pair is being productive.

Exercise 1 (~40 minutes): Buddy A and Buddy B are standing up and facing one another. Buddy A goes first.

- ✚ **Step 1 (2 minutes total, 1 for each buddy):** They start out by taking the adjectives/identities they've written down (choose the four most important ones) and then saying "I am funny, I am smart, I am a child (son/daughter), etc." It should be about 1 minute for this, then switch.
- ✚ **Step 2 (4 minutes total, 2 for each buddy):** Tell the Buddies to incorporate their individual backstory (homework assignment) in the same format as before, except the time is now 2 minutes per buddy.
- ✚ **Step 3 (6 minutes total, 3 for each buddy):** Have them interweave the different parts of who they are into sentences ("My name is... I'm a funny 12-year-old from Blank City. I'm the oldest, and my younger sibling is X years old. My best friend is..."). After saying it the first time, they should say it again a second time, noting that it's okay if it isn't the exact same story as before. Then switch after 3 minutes.
- ✚ **Step 4 (speed round! 12 minutes total, 6 total for each buddy):** Buddy A gets 3 minute to tell their story, then Buddy B gets 3 minutes, Buddy A gets 2 minutes to tell their story, then Buddy B, Buddy A gets 1 minute to tell their story, then Buddy B.
- ✚ **Step 5 (Coming back together; ~15 minutes):** Reconvene the class and ask them how the activity went. Ask what was hard about it, what was easy about it, and if they feel like they

have a better grasp of what their identity is. Ask if they tried to tell everything in 1 minute or if they cut information out to give a summary (a majority of them will likely raise their hand for the former).

Homework assignment: Tell your story to yourself at least twice, then do your best to tell your story once to another person (it's okay if they can't, but they should do their best).

Wednesday: Start the day by having each and every student say their story from the day before all at once. Reassure them that no one is listening and prepare for chaos for the next 2-3 minutes. Pair them back up with their buddies and continue with exercise 2.

Exercise 2:

✚ **Step 1 (~16~22 minutes total; 3-6 for each buddy, 5 for feedback):** Buddies take turns telling and listening to the story the other has so far, and then provide feedback. Feedback can be done right after they tell their story, which would be most effective, or each buddy can tell their story twice (once without feedback and once with). If the latter is the case, then more time should be allotted (~22 minutes total). These feedback questions can be written on the board (or in the chat), or they can be handed out on a piece of paper:

- **Question 1:** What did you like about the story?
- **Question 2:** What could be better? Tone, voice, volume, etc.
- **Question 3:** Which part(s) of the story was your favorite?
- **Question 4:** What would you want more detail of?
- **Question 5:** Anything else you want to say?

✚ **Step 2 (~30-35 minutes total):** After they provide feedback (can be written down for notes as a reminder of what they could do with their story), they should spend the rest of the class time working out how to incorporate feedback into their story. Again, walk around and

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check in with each pair to make sure they're being productive and to answer any questions or offer help.

Homework Assignment: Practice your story and work out any kinks that are there (it might help if they practiced the story with another person, but it isn't a requirement).

Thursday: Start the day by informing them that today's the day they need to have a final version of their story. Tell them that "final version" doesn't mean they need to have a word for word exact telling each time, but that all of the general information should remain the same. Pair them up with their buddies and let them tell and retell the story to the other person. The rest of class should be spent like this. Walk around and make sure they're being productive as well as answering any questions they have. If the class size is big enough, have them start telling their stories in about the last ten minutes of class.

Friday: Explain to them the mulligan rule (should be done on Thursday if that's when speeches started):

- ✚ If a student totally freezes, they can say "Mulligan!" at the end of their story and can either do it again right there OR they can wait until everyone else has gone to do it (the end of Friday's class or beginning of Monday's class). It has to be said by the time they get back to their seat: "if their butt is in the chair, they can no longer declare"

The entire day should be spent on speeches.

Week 2: *Your Side of the Story* lesson plan

Quote of the Week: “Many stories matter. Stories have been used to dispossess and to malign. But stories can also be used to empower, and to humanize. Stories can break the dignity of a people. But stories can also repair that broken dignity.” - Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, author

“Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie – The Danger of a Single Story”

Monday: Finish up any speeches/mulligans left from Friday’s class. The purpose of this assignment is to communicate some part of you that you feel is misrepresented, to make clear how it should be accurately represented for you, and to learn how other’s also feel misrepresented.

Lesson summary (15-20 minutes): In order to understand our misrepresentation, we should understand the role assumptions have in the process. We can’t avoid making assumption, and these assumptions aren’t always bad. But when we make an assumption that turns out to be wrong, it can be hurtful to everyone involved. Did you know that stereotypes are a form of assumption? We assume someone will do, say, or think a certain way because of a stereotype. A stereotype is one of the most hurtful assumptions we can make, since we assume an individual will do something based on what we think of an entire group of people we associate them with.

Class Activity: What are some ways you feel misunderstood? Take a couple minutes to write out some reasons, then we will reconvene and write some of them on the board, like we did last week.

Buddy Note: Buddies can remain the same as the week before, or they can be switched up; this should be based on whichever is most beneficial for the students.

Exercise 3: This is a worksheet. Give some time to complete this during class; this can be taken home and finished up for homework.

Homework Assignment: Finish up the rest of exercise 3.

Tuesday: After step 1 of exercise 4, remind people who their buddies are (if they’ve changed), then pair up with each other.

Exercise 4 (~45 minutes): Buddy A and Buddy B are facing each other, with Buddy B sitting and Buddy A standing. They switch positions when they change each turn. Buddy A goes first.

- ✚ **Step 1 (~5 minutes):** Ask students to, individually, write down a few “headline” ideas (3-5) that capture the essence of their story. Each headline should be around 5 words, but not much longer.
- ✚ **Step 2 (~6 minutes total, 3 for each buddy):** Buddy A starts, reading off dramatically the headlines they’ve written down. Buddy B then tells Buddy A which two headlines they liked best and why (just a couple reasons).
- ✚ **Step 3 (~6 minutes total, 3 for each buddy):** Buddy A, after receiving feedback and letting Buddy B go, reads out the two headlines that are left and Buddy B picks between the two. They switch. If one of the buddies feels very strongly about one of the headlines, have the other buddy give the reasons why they *shouldn’t* pick that headline.
- ✚ **Step 4 (~26 minutes, 8 for each buddy, 10 to work individually in two 5 minute increments):** Staying where they are, have each buddy work independently to write out three to four bullet points that follow their headline to outline their story. Give 5 minutes to work on this before allowing each buddy 4 minutes to share the headline again and the bullet points. Buddy A goes first, Buddy B gives feedback, and then switch. The next 5 minutes should be spent revising the bullet points and/or adding at least two more. Give them 4 minutes to repeat the previous 4 minutes per buddy.
- ✚ It is important to note that these bullet points are not fleshed out sentences and they will not be turned into paragraphs.

Homework Assignment: Work on telling your story (or finish working on a topic, though this should be highly unlikely)

Wednesday: Start the day by having each and every student say their story from the day before all at once. Reassure them that no one is listening and prepare for chaos for the next 2-3 minutes. Pair them back up with their buddies and continue with exercise 2.

Exercise 2:

- ✚ **Step 1 (~16~22 minutes total; 3-6 for each buddy, 5 for feedback):** Buddies take turns telling and listening to the story the other has so far, and then provide feedback. Feedback can be done right after they tell their story, which would be most effective, or each buddy

can tell their story twice (once without feedback and once with). If the latter is the case, then more time should be allotted (~22 minutes total). These feedback questions can be written on the board (or in the chat), or they can be handed out on a piece of paper:

- **Question 1:** What did you like about the story?
- **Question 2:** What could be better? Tone, voice, volume, etc.
- **Question 3:** Which part(s) of the story was your favorite?
- **Question 4:** What would you want more detail of?
- **Question 5:** Anything else you want to say?

Step 2 (~30-35 minutes total): After they provide feedback (can be written down for notes as a reminder of what they could do with their story), they should spend the rest of the class time working out how to incorporate feedback into their story. Again, walk around and check in with each pair to make sure they're being productive and to answer any questions or offer help.

Homework Assignment: Practice your story and work out any kinks that are there (it might help if they practiced the story with another person, but it isn't a requirement).

Thursday: Work on telling the final versions of their story to their partners and start presenting the speeches depending on class size.

(Optional) Homework Assignment: Tell their story even more if they want to so they can have a solid story to tell, since this week's story is a little trickier than last week's.

Friday: Start/continue presenting stories. Remind them of the mulligan rule.

Week 3: *Exchanging Stories* Lesson Plan

Quote of the Week: “Think about the word destroy. Do you know what it is? De-story. Destroy. Destory. You see. And restore. That's re-story. Do you know that only two things have been proven to help survivors of the Holocaust? Massage is one. Telling their story is another. Being touched and touching. Telling your story is touching. It sets you free.” - Francesca Lia Block

Baby Be-Bop

Monday: Finish telling last week's stories/mulligans if necessary. The purpose of this story is to better understand each other by learning and telling their story; internalization is an important process this week, as memorization defeats the purpose. Know the story by understanding it.

Lesson summary (15-20 minutes): This week, we're diving deep into empathy. Each of you carries an inner story of who you are, and to see how important that is we're going to be telling someone else's story. You're going to pick a story about yourself that you feel represents who you are or who you want to become, then you're going to tell it to your partner, and finally, after internalizing the story, you're going to present your partner's speech. Remember, we're speaking from the heart and not the brain, so do your best to learn the story by understanding it rather than trying to remember which point goes first.

Class activity: Take ten minutes to think about a story you'd like to tell about who you are/want to become. You can write down a brief one sentence summary if that helps you choose.

Buddy note: It might be wise to pair them up the same week as before, so they have the familiarity, but if it's better to pair them up differently, that's fine too.

Exercise 4: Allow each buddy to take turns giving two to three headlines for their stories (leaning towards a thesis but can incorporate the one sentence summary they've thought of earlier). Have them give each other feedback about which headline seems to “fit” their buddy. Some of them might base their headline feedback on which sounds the most exciting, and that's fine, just so long as it represents their buddy accurately. It's important to note that while each story we tell has something to say about who we are as a person; they should choose a story that characterizes and

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emphasizes who they are. Start practicing that story with their partner however they choose (taking turns, learning together, etc.).

Homework assignment: Nail down which story to tell and start working on it. It needs to be almost fully completed by tomorrow.

Tuesday: Remind people who their buddies are (if they've changed), then pair up with each other.

Exercise 5: Have them learn the other person's story by repeating it back to them twice, incorporating voice inflections, pauses, and body language. It doesn't need to be perfect, but they should do their best to tell the story as if they were the other person. It is very important that the rule of improv ("Yes, and...") be followed here; Buddies should not be shutting down their buddy if their buddy is struggling getting the story right (i.e., "You did really well here, and I think it would be even better if you used the same voice inflection that I do at [this] part").

Homework Assignment: Work on telling your partner's story.

Wednesday: Start the day by having each and every student say their story from the day before all at once. Reassure them that no one is listening and prepare for chaos for the next 2-3 minutes. Pair them back up with their buddies and continue with exercise 2. Remind them to give feedback in a positive way (such as, "wow, that was really good! But you forgot a point in the middle that's kind of important").

Exercise 2:

- ✚ **Step 1 (~16~22 minutes total; 3-6 for each buddy, 5 for feedback):** Buddies take turns telling and listening to the story the other has so far, and then provide feedback. Feedback can be done right after they tell their story, which would be most effective, or each buddy can tell their story twice (once without feedback and once with). If the latter is the case, then more time should be allotted (~22 minutes total). These feedback questions can be written on the board (or in the chat), or they can be handed out on a piece of paper:

- **Question 1:** What did you like about the way the story was told?
- **Question 2:** What could be better? Tone, voice, volume, etc.
- **Question 3:** Which part(s) of the story was your favorite to watch?
- **Question 4:** What gestures did you like/not like? Do you think it embodied you as a person?
- **Question 5:** Anything else you want to say?

Step 2 (~30-35 minutes total): After they provide feedback (can be written down for notes as a reminder of what they could do with the story), they should spend the rest of the class time working out how to incorporate feedback into the story. Again, walk around and check in with each pair to make sure they're being productive and to answer any questions or offer help.

Homework Assignment: Practice your story and work out any kinks that are there (it might help if they practiced the story with another person, but it isn't a requirement).

Thursday: Have them take turns going back and forth to tell the story (Buddy A goes first, Buddy B, etc.). There shouldn't be too much to work on here, but it's important that they be paired up so that if there is a problem it can be sorted out. Depending on class size, start sharing stories.

(Optional) Homework Assignment: Tell their story even more if they want to so they can have a solid story to tell, since this week's story is a little trickier than last week's.

Friday: Start/continue presenting stories. Remind them of the mulligan rule.

Week 4: *Reflection of the Past (3 Weeks)* Lesson Plan

Quote of the Week: “We tell stories in order to feel at home in the universe” – Roger Bingham

Monday: Finish telling last week’s stories/mulligans if necessary. The purpose of this week’s assignment is to have a reflective response on the lessons learned and the different storytelling methods they’ve used.

Lesson summary: We’ve done three different stories these past three weeks, and to finish off our unit of storytelling I want us to craft a reflection story. Tell us what you thought you were going to get out of this unit, what you wanted to get out, and what you did get out of this unit. Reflect on the stories you told; do you feel like you understand yourself and/or your partner(s) better?

Class activity: Take twelve minutes to jot down a few answers to the questions (written on the board). You don’t need to answer all of them, but you should write down points you’re able to expand upon later.

Exercise 6: This week is a little different; they aren’t going to be buddied up (at the very end of the last speech, ask the class if they felt it was harder, easier, or neutral to do it alone than with a buddy). Have them use the storytelling tactics they learned in the past few weeks (you can remind them if necessary) to develop their story.

Homework assignment: Tell the story at least twice, and it’s okay this week if they need to write at least some of it down.

Tuesday: Have them continue working on their reflection story. Do your best to work one on one with the students to make sure they understand the assignment and to help them if they’re feeling stuck.

NOTE: This should NOT be a silent classroom. Students should be working their story aloud and should be pretty comfortable doing so after the past three weeks of saying whatever they have aloud.

Homework Assignment: Work on telling your story. Practicing aloud is crucial.

Wednesday: Allow students, just like last week, to say however much of their story they have. For today's purpose only, assign buddies. Buddy up, give feedback after hearing the stories, and work to incorporate the feedback into their stories.

Exercise 2:

 **Step 1 (~16~22 minutes total; 3-6 for each buddy, 5 for feedback):** Buddies take turns telling and listening to the story the other has so far, and then provide feedback. Feedback can be done right after they tell their story, which would be most effective, or each buddy can tell their story twice (once without feedback and once with). If the latter is the case, then more time should be allotted (~22 minutes total). These feedback questions can be written on the board (or in the chat), or they can be handed out on a piece of paper:

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- **Question 3:** Which part(s) of the story was your favorite?
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- **Question 5:** Anything else you want to say?

Step 2 (~30-35 minutes total): After they provide feedback (can be written down for notes as a reminder of what they could do with their story), they should spend the rest of the class time working out how to incorporate feedback into their story. Again, walk around and check in with each pair to make sure they're being productive and to answer any questions or offer help.

Homework Assignment: Practice your story and work out any kinks that are there (it might help if they practiced the story with another person, but it isn't a requirement).

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Thursday: Work on telling the final versions of their story and start presenting the speeches depending on class size.

(Optional) Homework Assignment: Tell their story even more if they want to so they can have a solid story to tell, since this week's story is a little trickier than last week's.

Friday: Start/continue presenting stories. Remind them of the mulligan rule. As noted above, after the last speech/mulligan, ask them to raise their hand if they felt it was harder, easier, or if they have no opinion on doing it alone than with a buddy.