



Meridian Stories Language Arts Challenge

“Miss Brill” Comes to Town – A Short Story-Inspired Podcast

Submission Due Date: March 22, 2019

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The Challenge

Have you ever watched a celebrity narrate their daily routine on YouTube? Have you ever been fascinated by the way they lived their lives and went about their days, and maybe even tried to recreate this yourself? If so, then you've probably heard of vlogging. Ever wonder where vlogging comes from? Well, vlogging actually finds some of its roots in this 1920's short story, "Miss Brill." This story is written by Katherine Mansfield, a prominent modernist writer of short stories from New Zealand.

In this challenge, your team will create a first or third-person audio scene based upon your reading of the short story and your observations from your own lives.

- First, your team will read the short story and identify three aspects of the story that make it meaningful: these can be moments that made you laugh out loud, cringe, wonder and/or reflect.
- Second, your team will each separate and find a different location in your community where you can comfortably sit and observe everything going around you (like what Miss Brill does in the story!). You will want to take very detailed notes about everything you are seeing and hearing.
- Third, your team comes back together and reviews your collective observations.
- Fourth, keeping in mind the writing style and the three elements you pulled out of the short story "Miss Brill," your team will either select one person's narrative or combine all of your narratives to script a scene – designed for audio only - of a moment/morning/afternoon in the life of a fictional character that you will create. The scene will be informed by the writing style and character in "Miss Brill," using the three meaningful elements you have identified as a guide.

- Fifth, you will audio record this scene. Feel free to add sound effects, music, and any other fun edits that your team thinks will best aid in the storytelling.

Deliverables include:

- A 2 - 4 minute podcast (this is the only Meridian Stories deliverable)
- Experiential Summary (at teacher's discretion)
- First Draft Script (at teacher's discretion)

Assumptions and Logistics

Time Frame - We recommend that this *Meridian Stories Competition* takes place inside of a three to four-week time frame.

Length - All Meridian Stories submissions should be under 4 minutes in length, unless otherwise specified.

Submissions - Keep in mind that each school can only submit three submissions per Competition (so while the entire class can participate in the Challenge, only three can be submitted to Meridian Stories for Mentor review and scoring).

Teacher Reviews - All reviews by the teacher are at the discretion of the teacher and all suggested paper deliverables are due only to the teacher. The only deliverable to Meridian Stories is the media work.

Teacher's Role and Technology Integrator - While it is helpful to have a Technology Integrator involved, they are not usually necessary: the students already know how to produce the media. And if they don't, part of their challenge is to figure it out. They will! ***The teacher's primary function in these Challenges is to guide the students as they engage with the content.*** You don't need to know editing, sound design, shooting or storyboarding: you just need to know your content area.

Digital Rules/Literacy - We strongly recommend that all students follow the rules of Digital Citizenry in their proper usage and/or citation of images, music and text taken from other sources. This recommendation includes producing a citations page at the end of your entry, if applicable. See the Digital Rules area

in the Meridian Resources section of the site for guidance.

Location – Try not to shoot in a classroom at your school. The classroom, no matter how you dress it up, looks like a classroom and can negatively impact the story you are trying to tell.

Slate - All media work must begin with a slate that provides:

- a) the title of the piece;
- b) the name of the school submitting;
- c) the wording ‘Permission Granted’ which gives Meridian Stories the right to a) publicly display the submission in question on, as linked from or related to or in support of Meridian Stories digital media; and b) use it for educational purposes only; and
- d) We strongly recommend that students do not put their last names on the piece either at the start or finish, during the credits.

Collaboration - We strongly recommend that students work in teams of 3-4: part of the educational value is around building collaborative skill sets. But students may work individually.

Presentation - We strongly recommend that at the end of this process, the student teams present their work either to the class and/or to assembled parents and friends as a way to showcase their work. The workforce considers Presentational Skills to be a key asset and we encourage you to allow students to practice this skill set as often as possible. These short videos provide a great opportunity for kids to practice their public presentational skills.

Our research indicates this to be a really useful exercise for two additional reasons:

1. Students actually learn from their peers’ presentations – it is useful to hear a perspective that is not just the teacher’s; and
2. The public setting – painful as it is for some students – provides them with an opportunity to ‘own’ their work and to be more accountable.

Process

Below is a suggested breakdown for the students’ work.

During Phase I, student teams will:

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- Read the story. Record your immediate first impressions of the story. How did the story make you feel? Were there any specific moments that stood out to you in any way?

Teacher’s Note: This is a story that may best be experienced as read aloud – as heard, rather than just seen. Hearing the story may open the doors to understanding and working with the language more fluidly.

- Come together with your team and review all of your observations about the story. Together, decide what three aspects in the story are the most meaningful. These aspects may be specific moments in the story; stylistic choices; word usage/sentence structure or characterization. There is not right or wrong here, just make sure to identify *why* these moments are important. Make sure these elements are clear as you will include them at the beginning of your podcast.
 - We will give you a head start by providing for you one critical literary aspect of this narrative: Miss Brill is both an observer of life around her and a participant in her own observations!
- **Teacher’s Option – Experiential Summary:** Teachers may require that student teams hand in a two-page summary of their collective responses to the story and the three distinguishing aspects that make the story meaningful.
- Now each member of your team will separate and find your own location (ex: a park, playground, café, dining room) to which you often go, where you will then sit and record your observations for at least 30 minutes.
- Once everyone in your group has collected their observations, come back together and go over all the observations collected. You should begin crafting a scene that reflects a moment in the life of a fictional character your group will create (in Phase II).
 - Look to the three aspects you pulled out of “Miss Brill” here to guide you.

During Phase II, student teams will:

- Create the character - Now that your team has a good outline of the scene you want to create based on your analysis of the short story and your observations, it is time to create the voice of this scene: the character.

- One of the biggest decisions in creating this character is whether you want the story to be narrated in first person or third person. “Miss Brill” is narrated in third person. Does this work for your character?
- Other character considerations include:
 - Female or male?
 - Age?
 - Command of language and word choices?
 - Popular or unpopular – in other words, on the inside looking out or the outside looking in...or neither?
 - Strongest passion: Athletics? Academics? Music? Theatre? Money and business? Nature and camping? The dominant interest you choose may affect the ‘voice’ of your character.
- Now draft the script, matching scene outline to character voice. Make sure to read it aloud to see how it sounds.
 - If you haven’t already, researching some podcasts – NPR is always a good source – to ‘hear’ how they sound; how they use words and sound effects and music to tell their stories, may be a good idea.
 - ***Teacher’s Option: First Draft Script*** – Teachers may require that student teams hand in their first draft for review and feedback.
- Now take this moment to write down a few words on why your group chose the three aspects of “Miss Brill” that you did. What about these aspects did you find meaningful? How did they add to the story? How did they shape your story?
 - This short piece will go before the recording of the scene your group created as a way to set the stage for the story to follow.
- Go back to the script. Read it out loud. Rewrite. Read it again, perhaps to friends. Get feedback. Rewrite again, ...guided by the original story, your three aspects, your observations and the evolving voice of your newly created character (new characters *never* find their voice in the first, second or even third draft!)

During Phase III, student teams will:

- Finalize the script.
- Cast the character voice and record the audio

- Edit the audio.
- Post-produce the audio recording
 - Consider the sound design of this scene. For example, if this scene takes place in the park, adding background sounds of people laughing or playing games, as well as the sounds of nature, would help the listener visualize the scene. (That is one of the signs of a successful podcast – the listener being able to imagine where the scene is taking place. This can be done using descriptive writing and with the use of select sound effects).
 - Is there a place for musical underscore for your podcast?

Meridian Support Resources

Meridian Stories provides two forms of support for the student teams:

1. Meridian Innovators and Artists – This is a series of three to four minute videos featuring artists and innovative professionals who offer important advice, specifically for Meridian Stories, in the areas of creativity and production.
2. Media Resource Collection – These are short documents that offer student teams key tips in the areas of creativity, production, game design and digital citizenry.

Recommended review, as a team, for this Competition include:

Meridian Innovators and Artists	Media Resource Collection
<p><i>On Scriptwriting and Comedy</i> – Kent Pierce</p> <p><i>On Fiction Writing</i> – Lily King</p> <p><i>On the Importance of Character in Storytelling</i> – Scott Nash</p> <p><i>On Sound Design</i> – Chris Watkinson</p>	<p>“Creating a Radio Story”</p> <p>“Sound Recording Basics”</p> <p>“Sound Editing Basics”</p> <p>“Building Characters”</p>

Evaluation Rubric – *“Miss Brill” Comes to Town – A Short Story-Inspired Podcast*

CONTENT COMMAND			
Criteria	1 - 3	4 - 7	8 - 10
Clear Understanding of Important Aspects in the Story	The three aspects pulled out of the story are not meaningful to the story and fail to demonstrate any of the important stylistic choices made by the author.	The three aspects pulled out of the story are meaningful and demonstrate some understanding of the stylistic choices made by the author.	The three aspects pulled out of the story are insightful and demonstrate a commanding understanding of important stylistic choices made by the author.
Creative Re-Invention of the Story Format	The resulting podcast does not build upon the essence of the “Miss Brill” story	The resulting podcast does build upon the essence of the “Miss Brill” story	The resulting podcast clearly emanates from an insightful understanding of the “Miss Brill” story

STORYTELLING COMMAND			
Criteria	1 - 3	4 - 7	8 - 10
The Observations	The societal observations on which your new scene is based lack detail and authenticity	The societal observations on which your new scene is based reflect detail and authenticity	The societal observations on which your new scene is based are engaging, authentic and insightful
The Script	The script does not demonstrate a cohesive mix of observations and storytelling	The script somewhat demonstrates a cohesive mix of observations and storytelling	The script brilliantly translates your observations into a compelling story
The Character	The character is not unique or interesting and does not inform the narrative structure in your	The character is interesting and reflects an understanding of	The character is compelling and demonstrates a clear understanding of the role of character as

	podcast as it does in “Miss Brill”	the role of character in “Miss Brill”	exemplified in “Miss Brill”
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MEDIA COMMAND			
Criteria	1 - 3	4 - 7	8 - 10
The Voice Recording	The voice used in the recording does not fit the character you have created on paper	The voice used in the recording fits the character you have created on paper	The voice used in the recording perfectly matches and brings to life the character that you have written
Sound Design	The accompanying sound design does not enhance the listeners’ experience of the story	The accompanying sound design somewhat enhances the listeners’ experience of the story	The accompanying sound design enhances and expands upon the listeners’ experience of the story

21ST CENTURY SKILLS COMMAND (for teachers only)			
Criteria	1-3	4-7	8-10
Collaborative Thinking	The group did not work together effectively and/or did not share the work equally	The group worked together effectively and had no major issues	The group demonstrated flexibility in making compromises and valued the contributions of each group member
Creativity and Innovation	The group did not make a solid effort to create anything new or innovative	The group was able to brainstorm new and inventive ideas, but was inconsistent in their evaluation and implementation of those ideas	The group brainstormed many inventive ideas and was able to evaluate, refine and implement them effectively
Initiative and Self-Direction	The group was unable to set attainable goals, work independently and manage their time effectively	The group required some additional help, but was able to complete the project on time with few problems	The group set attainable goals, worked independently and managed their time effectively,

			demonstrating a disciplined commitment to the project
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Essential Questions

1. How do setting, character and plot sequence combine to help create an engaging short story?
 - a) What are the critical narrative tools that the author uses to propel the story to its captivating ending?
2. How did the three literary elements your group identified in the short story shape your own observing and creative writing process?
3. What can one learn from the pure task of observing human nature?
4. How did your group navigate the script writing process? Was it difficult to translate the non-fiction visual observations into a compelling fictional oral story?
5. How has immersion in the creation of original content and the production of digital media – exercising one’s creativity, critical thinking and digital literacy skills - deepened the overall educational experience?
6. How has working on a team – practicing one’s collaborative skills - changed the learning experience?

Student Proficiencies

1. The student will be able to identify and understand the functions of the different narrative tools at an author’s disposal to create great stories.
2. The student will have a greater awareness of how narrative and perspective in fiction can affect perspective and understanding in real life.
3. The student will have a deeper appreciation for observing human nature and what it means to be ‘present’.
4. The student will have a deeper appreciation for and understanding of a) the connection between daily humanity and the power of fiction; and b) the notion that fiction is often an enhancement on daily life for the purposes of a better understanding of self and others.
5. The student will utilize key 21st century skills, with a focus on creativity, critical thinking and digital literacy, in their process of translating their encounter with literature into an original podcast.

6. The student will have an increased awareness of the challenges and rewards of team collaboration. Collaboration – the ability to work with others - is considered one of the most important 21st century skills to develop in students as they prepare for life after secondary school.

Common Core Curricular Correlations

The *“Miss Brill” Comes to Town – A Short Story-Inspired Podcast* Challenge addresses a range of curricular objectives that have been articulated by the new **Common Core Curricular Standards – English Language Arts**. Below please find the standards that are addressed, either in whole or in part.

Common Core Curricular Standards – English Language Arts Standards

<i>Standards</i>	<i>8th</i>	<i>9th / 10th</i>	<i>11th / 12th</i>
RL2 READING: LITERATURE Key Ideas and Details	Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.	Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.	Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text, including its relationship to the characters, setting, and plot; provide an objective summary of the text.
RL3 READING: LITERATURE Key Ideas and Details	Analyze how particular lines of dialogue or incidents in a story or drama propel the action, reveal aspects of a character, or provoke a decision.	Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.	Analyze the impact of the author’s choices regarding how to develop and relate elements of a story or drama (e.g., where a story is set, how the action is ordered, how the characters are introduced and developed).
RL4 READING: LITERATURE	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings;	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings;	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings;

Craft and Structure	analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.	analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (e.g., how the language evokes a sense of time and place; how it sets a formal or informal tone).	analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including words with multiple meanings or language that is particularly fresh, engaging, or beautiful.
W2 WRITING Text Types and Purpose	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine a topic and convey ideas, concepts, and information through the selection, organization, and analysis of relevant content.	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.	Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas, concepts, and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.
W3 WRITING Text Types and Purposes	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, well-chosen details, and well-structured event sequences.
SL1 SPEAKING AND LISTENING Comprehension and Collaboration	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grade 8 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.	Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9–10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.	Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 11–12 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.
SL5 SPEAKING AND LISTENING	Integrate multimedia and visual displays into presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add interest.	Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning,	Make strategic use of digital media (e.g., textual, graphical, audio, visual, and interactive elements) in presentations to enhance understanding of findings, reasoning,

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas		and evidence and to add interest.	and evidence and to add interest.
L1 LANGUAGE Conventions of Standard English	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.	Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
L5 LANGUAGE Vocabulary Acquisition and Use	Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.	Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.	Demonstrate understanding of figurative language, word relationships, and nuances in word meanings.

Appendix

MISS BRILL
(1920) By Katherine Mansfield

<http://www.eastoftheweb.com/short-stories/UBooks/MissBril.shtml#1>