



Extending Literature: A News Report about The Next Chapter

Language Arts Challenge

Due: April 7, 2023

Designed for Middle and High School Students

[This Meridian Stories Challenge was developed by Haley Wims, a student at Colby College.]

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The Challenge

The stories we choose to tell and to read are full of twists, turns, ups, downs, and ultimately, endings that leave us thinking. This challenge asks you to place yourself directly into the final moments of the world of a book you are reading, and then leap into the future. Imagine you are on a news show reporting on the events of your book immediately *after* the final chapter. Including an interview with one or more characters in this story, film a newscast detailing what has just occurred at the end of the story - be sure to include select details about the story itself and the character’s journey - and then answer the question, “What’s next?”

Deliverables include:

- Newscast (this is the only Meridian Stories deliverable)
- Ending Analysis (at teacher’s discretion)
- Interview Questions List (at teacher’s discretion)
- Final Draft Script (at teacher’s discretion)

Assumptions and Logistics

Time Frame - We recommend that this digital storytelling project 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.

Slate - All digital storytelling projects 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, related to or in support of Meridian Stories digital media; and b) use or reference it for educational purposes only, in any and all media; 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.

Submissions - Keep in mind that each school can only submit three submissions per Competition (so while the entire class can participate in any given 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 digital storytelling project.

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 digital storytelling project. 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, while assisting them with time management issues. See the [Teachers Role](#) section of the site for further ideas about classroom guidance.

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 Stories Digital Resource Center](#) 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 digital story you are trying to tell.

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.

Process

Below is a suggested breakdown of students' work.

During Phase I, student teams will:

- Pick a work of literature for the challenge from your course curriculum, or as assigned to you by your teacher.
- After you have completed reading the book, re-read the ending of the story. Upon completion, brainstorm with your team about the meaning of the ending of the story. Questions to help catalyze this discussion include:
 - Is the ending conclusive or open-ended? Is it meant to settle things or unsettle things?
 - Are you satisfied and happy with the ending? Did you close the book with a happy sigh or with a shrug or with a hint of anger? Analyze those feelings: why did the book make you feel that way? Write down those thoughts because they may set you off on your journey for the next chapter.
 - What is the last decision or choice that your main character(s) made in the story? Analyze that decision to help you come up with the character's next decision.
 - **Teacher's Option: Ending Analysis** – Teachers may require teams to hand in a one-page analysis that cites five observations about the book's ending and how that ending made the reader feel.
- Time to brainstorm your story. Discuss where you think the plot and characters could be headed and choose one or two characters to be interviewed. Think about what makes this character interesting. Identify the key decisions that they made that, by the end of the story, defines who they are. How did they change throughout the story? How did their decisions impact the plot and other characters? Where were they left at the end of the story? Where might they personally be going next?
- The goal is to identify at least 2 specific decisions or actions the character(s) will take now that the story is over. Be sure to consider several possibilities, think beyond the most obvious one! Only one or two will be used for the final product but this can help get the creative juices flowing. Then, write several

interview questions for the character(s) that will elicit plausibly thoughtful and dramatic answers that suggest new directions for ...the start of the sequel! Or, just the next chapter.

- **Teacher's Option: Interview Questions List** – Teachers may require that student teams hand in a list of 10 interview questions that the interviewer will ask the character(s), as annotated with one line about the nature of the answers with which the characters will respond.
- By the end of Phase I, your team should have analyzed the ending of the book in enough depth to come up with new and plausible directions for the next chapter. And then crafted questions that will lead the main characters to articulate their next decisions in their story.

During Phase II, student teams will:

- Create a fully formed newscast which looks forward to where this world/character is headed next. Suggested roles:
 - **Anchor** – Sets the stage for the newscast, provides an overview of relevant story details.
 - **Interviewer** – Asks the character(s) open-ended questions that could include their view on specific plot points, and their relationship with other characters, and of course, their next decisions.
 - **Character(s)** – Answers questions and speaks about their experience with the events of the story – how you portray the character's view on the book's ending can provide insight for the viewer – and what they might do next. (Think about it: if *you* didn't like the ending of the book, say, perhaps the character didn't either...)
- Outline the flow of the newscast.
 - Make final decisions on which aspects of the existing story plot – including character specific details – to include. You'll want to spend about 20% of the digital story on summarizing, discussing, and analyzing the existing story.
 - Decide which people (anchor, interviewer, character(s)) will be responsible for delivering all the information that you have assembled.
 - Make a basic outline of the order in which people will appear and speak in your newscast. For example: anchor, interviewer, interviewer & character(s), anchor
- Working off your outline, script the scenes, creating dialogue that communicate your key points.

- Your anchor will be speaking directly to the camera/viewers, your interviewer and character(s) will balance speaking to the camera and speaking to each other. How will this all flow together?
- Will there be conflict? Not all interviews are placid, friendly conversations. The interviewer can ask some tough questions that irritate the interviewee. Or the interviewee can make some decisions on the set that upset the sense of a quiet and benign conversation, and create unanticipated drama. Look at the history of your character to decide if she/he will make this interview easy, or hard.
- Once your first draft is completed, read it out loud several times, listening for moments that are unclear, could be worded better, or could be made more engaging. Look at how your characters are speaking in your draft: are they aligned with the dialogue given to them in the book? And look at your news team: have you given them personalities, quirks, and interesting characteristics as well?
- Finalize your scripts
 - ***Teacher's Option: Final Draft Scripts*** - Teachers may require teams to hand in their final draft scripts for review/feedback.
- Brainstorm the visuals that you will be shooting. Most newscasts are very straightforward in terms of the visual settings. They are often a series of 'talking heads.' But it doesn't have to be that way. Choosing interesting locations for the interviews is one way to add visual value. Intercutting the interviews with shots that are meant to indicate scenes from the book (it's worth researching public domain imagery for inclusion) might make your news story more engaging. Look for ways to add visual pop to your newscast.
- Pre-produce the scene:
 - Scout locations for shooting.
 - Create costumes, props, and other set pieces, as needed.
 - Prepare the logistics for the actual shooting of the scenes.

During Phase III, student teams will:

- Shoot the video.
 - With an interview-style digital story, it can be easy to alternate between shots of the different speakers, which can get repetitive and boring. Add interest to your video by varying shots (close-ups, middle, etc.) and changing the angle at which you're shooting.
- Edit the video, adding stills, text, graphics, music, and sounds as desired.

Meridian Support Resources

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

1. Media 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. Meridian Resources – These are short documents that offer student teams key tips in the areas of creativity and production.

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

Media Innovators and Artists	Meridian Resources
<i>Acting for Film and Stage</i> – Janet McTeer	Creative Brainstorming Techniques”
<i>Interviewing Techniques</i> – Tom Pierce	Conducting an Interview
<i>Producing</i> – Tom Pierce	Producing: Time Management
<i>Editing</i> – Tom Pierce	Guide to Working in the Public Domain

Presentation of Learning

Meridian Stories is a proud partner of the non-profit *Share Your Learning*, which is spearheading the movement of over **five million** students to publicly share their work as a meaningful part of their educational experience.

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 digital stories provide a great opportunity for kids to practice their public presentational skills. *This can be achieved in a remote learning environment by inviting parents to a Zoom/Google/Skype screening of the student’s digital stories.*

According to *Share Your Learning*, Presentations of Learning (POL) promote...

- **Student Ownership, Responsibility & Engagement.** POLs can serve as a powerful *rite of passage* at the end of [a project]. By reflecting on their growth over time in relation to academic and character goals, grounded in evidence from their work, students are encouraged to take ownership of their learning. Just as an artist wants their portfolio to represent their best work, POLs encourage students to care deeply about the work they will share.

- **Community Pride & Involvement.** When peers, teachers and community members come together to engage with student work and provide authentic feedback, they become invested in students’ growth and serve as active contributors to the school community.
- **Equity.** POLs ensure that all students are seen and provide insight into what learning experiences students find most meaningful and relevant to their lives.

Meridian Stories’ own research indicates this to be a really useful exercise for one additional reason: Students actually learn from their peers’ presentations – it is useful to hear a perspective that is not just the teacher’s.

It is with this in mind that we encourage you to plan an event – it could be just an end-of-the-week class or an event where parents, teachers and student peers are invited – to allow the students to showcase their Meridian Stories projects. For more free resources that will support this planning, visit [Share Your Learning](#).

Evaluation Rubric – *Extending Literature: A News Report about The Next Chapter*

CONTENT COMMAND	
Criteria	1-10
Understanding of the Novel	The digital story demonstrates a thorough understanding of the important plot points and ending details of the chosen novel
Character Accuracy	The story presents a nuanced and thoughtful rendering of the character: the actor’s actions and speaking in the story are consistent with the character in the novel
Beyond the Ending	The predictions for where the characters and story are heading next are thoughtful, plausible, and creative
STORYTELLING COMMAND	
Criteria	1-10
Script – The Interviews	The interviewing dynamic is believable and compelling; it reveals character effectively and extends the story in a thought-provoking way
Newscasting Format	Students display clear understanding of the elements of a newscast - newscasters, anchors, story characters, and interviewing techniques - and utilize these elements in a way that engages and communicates clearly to viewers

MEDIA COMMAND	
Criteria	1-10
Visualization	The visualization of the story is creative, engaging and reflects a thoughtful professionalism
Editing	The video is edited cleanly and effectively, resulting in an engaging digital storytelling experience
Sound and Music	The selective use of sound effects and music enhances the dramatic appeal of the story and helps engage/entertain viewers
HUMAN SKILLS COMMAND (teachers only)	
Criteria	1-10
Collaborative Thinking	The group demonstrated flexibility in making compromises and valued the contributions of each group member
Creativity and Innovation	The group brainstormed many inventive ideas and was able to evaluate, refine and implement them effectively
Initiative and Self-Direction	The group set attainable goals, worked independently and managed their time effectively, demonstrating a disciplined commitment to the project

Essential Questions

1. How has thinking about the continuation of the story deepened your understanding of the author's choices and plot devices?
2. How does a close analysis of a specific character strengthen your skills of making inferences beyond what is stated explicitly in the text and using educated predictions?
3. In creating a newscast, what have you learned about the strengths of this storytelling format for delivering information in an entertaining way?
4. How has the concept of the story on paper taken on a new and vital life when translated to audio or video?
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

For more information, please write to brett@meridianstories.org or go to the website www.meridianstories.org
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1. Students will gain an in-depth understanding of how authors build worlds and create meaningful plot.
2. Students will learn how to analyze character traits and behaviors by making inferences beyond what is directly stated in the text and using information to make informed predictions.
3. Students will learn about the strengths of the newscast - interviews in particular - as a compelling and nuanced narrative format.
4. The student will become more aware of the powers, joys, and possibilities of digital storytelling with all its layers of narrative potency.
5. The student will utilize key Human Skills, with a focus on creativity, critical thinking and digital literacy, in their process of translating literary content into a new narrative format.
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.

Curricular Correlations

The *Extending Literature* Challenge addresses a range of curricular objectives that have been articulated by the **Common Core Curricular Standards – English Language Arts**. Below please find the standards that are addressed, either wholly or in part.

Common Core Curricular Standards – English Language Arts Standards

	5 th Grade	8 th Grade	9 th - 10 th Grade	11 th - 12 th Grade
RL2	Determine a theme of a story, drama, or poem from details in the text, including how characters in a story or drama respond to challenges or how the speaker in a poem reflects upon a topic; summarize 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 in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.	Determine two or more themes or central ideas of a text and analyze their development over the course of the text, including how they interact and build on one another to produce a complex account; provide an objective summary of the text.

RL3	Compare and contrast two or more characters, settings, or events in a story or drama, drawing on specific details in the text (e.g., how characters interact).	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	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative language such as metaphors and similes.	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone, including analogies or allusions to other texts.	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; 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).	Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; 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. (Include Shakespeare as well as other authors.)
W3	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear event sequences.	Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, descriptive details, and clear 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.
W4	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development and organization are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.	Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

W5	With guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.	With some guidance and support from peers and adults, develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on how well purpose and audience have been addressed.	Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.	Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach, focusing on addressing what is most significant for a specific purpose and audience.
W6	With some guidance and support from adults, use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing as well as to interact and collaborate with others; demonstrate sufficient command of keyboarding skills to type a minimum of two pages in a single sitting.	Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and present the relationships between information and ideas efficiently as well as to interact and collaborate with others.	Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products, taking advantage of technology's capacity to link to other information and to display information flexibly and dynamically.	Use technology, including the Internet, to produce, publish, and update individual or shared writing products in response to ongoing feedback, including new arguments or information.
W9	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.	Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.
SL1	Engage effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on <i>grade 5 topics and texts</i> , building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly.	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.

SL4	Report on a topic or text or present an opinion, sequencing ideas logically and using appropriate facts and relevant, descriptive details to support main ideas or themes; speak clearly at an understandable pace.	Present claims and findings, emphasizing salient points in a focused, coherent manner with relevant evidence, sound valid reasoning, and well-chosen details; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.	Present information, findings, and supporting evidence clearly, concisely, and logically such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and task.	Present information, findings, and supporting evidence, conveying a clear and distinct perspective, such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning, alternative or opposing perspectives are addressed, and the organization, development, substance, and style are appropriate to purpose, audience, and a range of formal and informal tasks.
SL5	Include multimedia components (e.g., graphics, sound) and visual displays in presentations when appropriate to enhance the development of main ideas or themes.	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, and evidence and to 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, and evidence and to add interest.
SL6	Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, using formal English when appropriate to task and situation.	Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.	Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.	Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and tasks, demonstrating a command of formal English when indicated or appropriate.
L3	Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.	Use knowledge of language and its conventions when writing, speaking, reading, or listening.	Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.	Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.