

WaterStories

WaterStories is an opportunity for students to create projects about the importance of water in your community through interviews and storytelling. The Smithsonian Institution offers resources for storytelling, such as the toolkit which has been provided to you. While the toolkit focuses more on storytelling for use in a museum setting, many of the topics covered will be relevant to your use in the classroom. We have pulled out some main ideas here and will direct you to specific sections of the toolkit. You are welcome and encouraged to explore the toolkit further than the information we have pulled out of it.

Introduction

Storytelling Toolkit Part 1: Introduction

Introduce students to storytelling and to *WaterStories* by letting them listen to a few stories on the Smithsonian Institution's Museum on Main Street website, <https://museumonmainstreet.org/stories/search>.

While students are listening, have them consider these questions:

- Who is the interviewee?
- What is their relationship to water?
- What is the story the speaker is trying to tell?
- How do you feel during or after listening?
- What did you learn about the topic?

To get students thinking about the quality of the stories, have them consider these questions:

- What did you like about the story?
- What do you think could have been improved about the story?
- Is there anything else you wanted to know in this story that was not explained?
- How was the sound quality? (E.g. volume of voices, background noises, etc.) If applicable, how was the video quality? (E.g. resolution, lighting, interview area)

Introduce students to the theme of water with some brainstorm questions around water in your community. This is a good time to review what they learned in WaterSim if they participated in those activities prior to this exercise.

- How do you use water on a daily basis?
- Do any of your family members or other community members rely on water for their livelihood? In what ways?
- Have you heard any stories from family members or family friends about water in your area? (E.g. water availability, use, or quality)

Storytelling Basics

Storytelling Toolkit Part 2: The Basics of Storytelling

This section of the toolkit covers some basic storytelling ideas. If necessary to provide structure to students, cover the “Basic Storytelling Structure” and “The Three C’s” to use as a guide when developing their stories. Although they will do an interview, students should still consider the organization and flow of their ideas to create a cohesive and engaging story.

Choosing a Topic: *Water/Ways* Exhibition Themes

Three of the eight themes of the *Water/Ways* exhibition have been selected to be used in student stories. Have students read and discuss each theme and consider the types of stories that might be told using each theme as a guide. List some examples of people that might have stories related to the themes. Examples of storytellers could include a family member, city councilmember, business owner, farmer, and many others.

The other themes may also be used in student stories. See the Smithsonian’s *Water/Ways* website for all of the themes addressed in the exhibition.

A handout and brainstorm activity is available for students at the end of this packet.

Water and Humanity

Water is often integral to culture. It affects how we interact with the environment around us, where we choose to live, and it is central to many festivals, prayers, and offerings. Water amazes and inspires us as artists, poets, and writers. And, we go to water to have fun! Think about how often we go to the water’s edge for recreation, rest, and relaxation.

Availability of Water

The availability of fresh water is a basic need for communities. In the past, people settled in places with adequate water. Today, tens of millions of Americans continue to make their homes along the water’s edge.

Water as a Critical Resource

Water is a shared resource. It flows between communities; the water used upstream is also used downstream. But it is not always shared equally. Water’s usefulness – and our unquestionable need for it – makes it a valuable commodity. Disputes over access and availability of water happen regularly, throughout the world, our country included. These disputes often lead to a difficult question for a community to answer: Who owns the water?

Researching

Storytelling Toolkit Part 3: Research Tips

The Basics of Research

Explain to students that they will research and develop a water story related to their community. Using their theme and possible interviewees, students can use the research methods in the Toolkit in addition to these websites specific to Arizona:

- Arizona Department of Water Resources - <http://www.azwater.gov/azdwr/>
- Arizona Water Science Center, U.S. Geological Survey - <https://az.water.usgs.gov/>
- Arizona Department of Environmental Quality - <http://www.azdeq.gov/>
- Central Arizona Project – <http://www.cap-az.com/>
- Salt River Project – <https://www.srpnet.com/>

This is not a comprehensive list and students may find other resources use. Students should ensure that any additional sources they plan to use are reputable.

Interview planning handouts are available at the end of this packet.

Citing Your Sources

Cite all sources as described in the Toolkit. Note that some of the DCDC equipment for loan comes with stock images that may be used in student projects. Be aware of any licensing information for other audio, video, or images that students plan to use.

Scripting

Storytelling Toolkit Part 4: Scripting

Scripting Basics

Depending on the structure of the student's project, they may do more or less scripting. If the student is performing an interview, they will need to be more flexible in the material that is collected and produced. If they are telling a story, they should follow the instructions closely for scripting, outlined in the Toolkit.

To help the students choose whether they will pursue an audio or video story, consider the audio and video elements presented in this section. Allow students to consider how they will need to convey their story in each way. See the recording section for additional information about available equipment.

Preparing the Interview

Storytelling Toolkit Part 5: Interviewing

The included interview worksheets will help guide students in their interviews. In deciding who to interview, students should consider their chosen *Water/Ways* theme and the research they conducted. Use the provided handouts at the end of this packet to allow students to brainstorm possible interviewees. For 7th-8th grade students, interviewing experts may be more complicated. The educator should schedule time with adults on the school premises. Interviews with family members can take place off school grounds as a homework assignment.

Oral History Tips

1. Ask large questions first.
2. Focus on the interviewee's experience, not just facts or opinions.
3. Do not interrupt.
4. Be ready with follow-up questions.
5. Questions should be concise and focused.
6. Avoid having the questions feel choppy and disconnected.
7. Yes-or-no and leading questions should be avoided.
8. Don't begin with highly personal or sensitive questions.
9. Challenge the interviewee when necessary.

Sample interview questions are listed on the next page. For more information, see page Oral History tips within the Interviewing section of the Smithsonian Storytelling Toolkit. Additional oral history curricula and teaching tools are listed in the Resources section of this booklet.

Suggested Interview Questions

Students can choose some of these questions to ask their interview subject, based on the theme they chose and the research conducted. These are suggested questions, and students can supplement with additional questions that are not identified here.

Introductory questions:

Set the speaker at ease and get a sense of their background

- Please tell me your name?
- Where do you live?
- Can you tell me a little about your family?
- What in your community is special to you? Why?

Daily life:

Get an understanding of the speaker's personal experiences related to water.

- What specific changes have you seen or experienced in the places you care about in relation to water?
- Is water important to your daily life? Does your livelihood depend on it?
- What is the best way to communicate the issues surrounding water with your own community?

The future:

Understand their view of the future of water in their community or region

- How do you imagine the future regarding water in your region?
- What advice would you give to the policy makers about water conditions in your community?
- What changes are you making in your own life and/or in your community to protect our water resources?

Wrap-up:

Conclude the interview and allow the speaker to address any other topics of interest to them.

- Any special places or memories surrounding water?
- Is there anything else you would like to talk about?

Recording

Storytelling Toolkit Part 6: Recording

There are many options for recording student interviews. Consider the audience for these stories, whether they will be presented in the classroom, a school or community event, or online. Would students rather tell their story with words and sounds, or would it be better told in a video format? This could be your decision or one you make with your students.

Decision Center for a Desert City at ASU has audio and video recording devices and software available for loan. To borrow any of the equipment below, contact Liz Marquez, DCDC Program Manager at liz.marquez@asu.edu or 480-965-2177. See the included equipment list and loan form for specific information.

Equipment is available on a first-come, first-served basis and must be reserved at least two weeks in advance to ensure that it is available and arrives by the needed time. Equipment may be used for up to two weeks and then must be shipped back to DCDC offices in Tempe, AZ, at the expense of DCDC.

The equipment may be used in conjunction with any equipment owned by the educator's school or the students. For example, students may choose to record audio using their smartphone accompanied by an external microphone.

Getting Permission

All subjects should read and sign an audio/video release form. You should have an understanding of how the finished product will be used, if it will be uploaded and where, before the students goes to interview.

If the student interviewer is under the age of 18, consider having parents sign a consent form so they too understand how the finished product will be used.

A sample release form is available in the Toolkit. Consult your school or institution to determine whether further consent is needed for the student interviewers or interviewees.

Publishing

Storytelling Toolkit Part 8

There are a variety of options available for publishing the stories produced by your students. Understanding the permissions necessary for your students will be important in this section.

If you do not have permission to release student stories on the internet because the students are under 18, consider holding a student listening session to share the stories among the students' classmates within the school.

For students over 18, there are multiple platforms for sharing stories.

- Smithsonian's Museum on Main Street *WaterStories* site
 - Stories can be uploaded directly and are curated by the Smithsonian
- Submit to Kristine Navarro-McElhane Kristine.Navarro-McElhane@asu.edu at ASU's School of History, Philosophical and Religious Studies for curating and storage.
- Connect with your local host site of the *Water/Ways* exhibition to co-produce a community event to showcase the student stories.

Water/Ways Exhibition Themes

<https://museomonmainstreet.org/content/waterways#ExhibitionDetails>

These are 3 of the themes of the Water/Ways exhibition. Read through each theme and consider the types of stories that might be told using each theme as a guide. Then, choose the theme you would like to explore in your interview.

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WaterStories Interview Planning Worksheet

Part 1

List three people you would like to interview about their experiences with water.

Subject #1

Name		Occupation	
Street Address		City	Zip Code
Email			
Why do you want to interview this person?			
What are their experiences with water?			

Subject #2

Name		Occupation	
Street Address		City	Zip Code
Email			
Why do you want to interview this person?			
What are their experiences with water?			

Subject #3

Name		Occupation	
Street Address		City	Zip Code
Email			
Why do you want to interview this person?			
What are their experiences with water?			

WaterStories Interview Planning Worksheet

Part 2

Now that you've selected your subject, do some background research on the person and their occupation to get an understanding of what that person might want to talk about.

Name	Occupation	
Street Address	City	Zip Code
Email	Phone	
Interview Theme(s)		
<p>During your interview, let the person speak and explore what comes to mind with your questions. You should be prepared to ask follow-up questions that relate to the subject of the conversation, though they may not be listed in the questions above.</p>		
Questions and Answers		
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		