

## **Digital Storytelling: The Personal Narrative**

Once you have chosen and assembled the images for your digital story, consider the following guiding questions and tips when composing the personal narrative.

### **What is the purpose of my story? To inform or to entertain?**

If the purpose of your story is to inform, you will want to be sure to convey the main idea of the story early on and make clear connections between images and information. Information should build toward a logical conclusion with appropriate transitions and connections. While you might wish to surprise your audience with a creative and attention-getting opener, subsequent sections of your story should be logically connected.

If the purpose of your story is to entertain, you may wish to begin with an attention-getting surprise OR build toward one. Entertaining stories usually contain elements of humor, suspense, or intentional confusion in order to hook readers' attention and build interest in the climax. The conclusion may or may not clarify the central idea. In a story designed to entertain, the writer sometimes chooses to leave the reader hanging.

### **Who is my audience?**

When planning, or pre-writing, your story, consider the needs of your audience. What background information would your audience need in order to appreciate your story? Depending upon the age and reading level of your audience, you will want to choose your words and details with an appropriate level of complexity and sophistication.

### **What details will I want to include in order to get the attention of my audience and begin my story?**

Story beginnings vary. Informative stories frequently begin with a surprising or interesting fact, a question to pique readers' curiosity, or a general statement of the content or information to be explained. Entertaining stories use interesting, surprising, or intentionally confusing openings—for example, opening in the middle of the action—to immediately engage the readers' attention. Some writers find that dialogue or a quotation creates a strong beginning. Stories need a central conflict. What problem is the character trying to solve? What issue is the information meant to clarify or resolve?

### **What is the turning point or climax of my story? What events will I include that will build toward that turning point?**

Be sure to identify your goal before you begin writing. What is the main idea of your information or the turning point of your story? How should events or information be sequenced in order for the reader to make important connections and elicit the main idea or identify the climax? How will the conflict development toward crisis/turning point before being resolved?" Planning backward from the climax or main idea will help you to create a sequence of events or ideas for your story.

### **How will the story end?**

An informative story should have a clear conclusion that summarizes the main idea. An entertaining story may leave the reader hanging, but more frequently provides closure as the main character(s) resolve their conflict.