

How stories shape our minds

✦ C2 Level

✦ Duration: 1 - 1.5 hours

✦ Age: Adults

✦ Lesson goals

- Students can synthesize and exploit information and arguments from a complex spoken or written text;
- Students can present a complex topic confidently and articulately to an audience unfamiliar with it, structuring and adapting the talk flexibly to meet the audience's needs.

✦ Flipped classroom lesson*

✦ Group lesson

*Flipped classroom teaching is an instructional strategy, which is aimed at increasing student engagement and learning outcomes. Students learn material at home through online resources, and then use class time to discuss the material and work on activities related to it. To have this class, assign the "AT HOME" part as homework 1-2 weeks in advance.

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At home

Exercise 1: Watch this [video](#) “How stories shape our minds”. Answer the following questions in writing and be ready to use your answers in class during discussion.

1. How is a story able to change prejudice?
2. What elements of psychology do stories elicit in readers?
3. What is the theory concerning immersion in a story based on?
4. What purpose do individual words serve in telling a story?
5. What is a 'parasocial relationship', as described in the video?
6. What are the positive effects of forming relationships with fictional characters?
7. What is an example of a controversial topic that has been influenced by stories?



“**Stories have the potential to be incredibly powerful. They're able to change how we relate to each other, to change prejudice, so the potential for stories to persuade is staggering.**”

”

Exercise 2: Read this article. Highlight or write out the main ideas and be ready to use in class.



Exercise 3. Fill in the gaps with the words below to complete the phrases used in the article. Self-check by scanning the article once again.

cues

virtuous

tune out

compelling

informational

resolved

resonate

empathic

likened

simulation

affiliated

dramatic

1. The emotionally ____ (1) narrative moved us all to tears.
2. He was believed to be ____ (2) with a notorious crime organization.
3. She ____ (3) him to a loyal puppy dog.
4. She had difficulty processing the ____ (4) stream they were receiving.
5. The characters in the book made her emotionally ____ (5) with the story.
6. The emotional ____ (6) provided by the game is deeply affecting.
7. Her friends responded appropriately to subtle social ____ (7).
8. She had to ____ (8) external distractions in order to focus.
9. The movie followed a ____ (9) arc from beginning to end.
10. In the end, the story ____ (10) itself in an unexpected way.
11. Our collaborative effort formed a ____ (11) cycle of success.
12. The immersive environment enabled his ____ (12) transportation into the fantasy world.

Exercise 4. Synthesize the information from the video and the article and write out 3 most important points about stories that either of them or both of them mention (not more than 2 sentences each)*.

Exercise 5. Prepare a presentation based on the main points that you outlined in the exercise above. Choose one story (from a book, film, TV, fairy tale, cartoon etc.) and explain how these points can be / are reflected in this particular story or the experience of its readers.

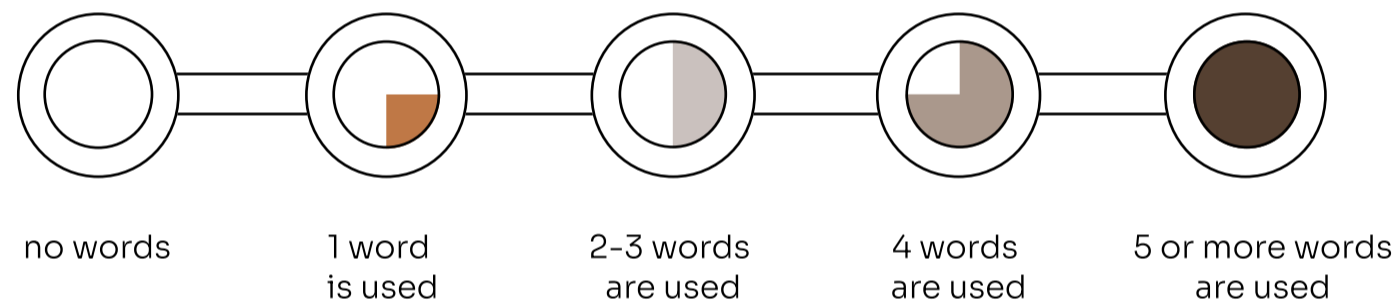
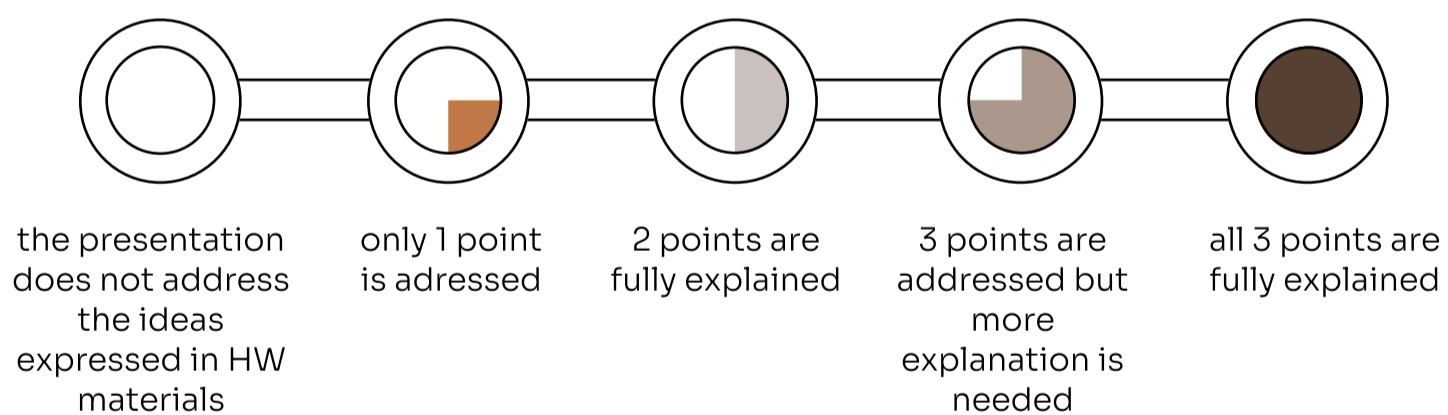
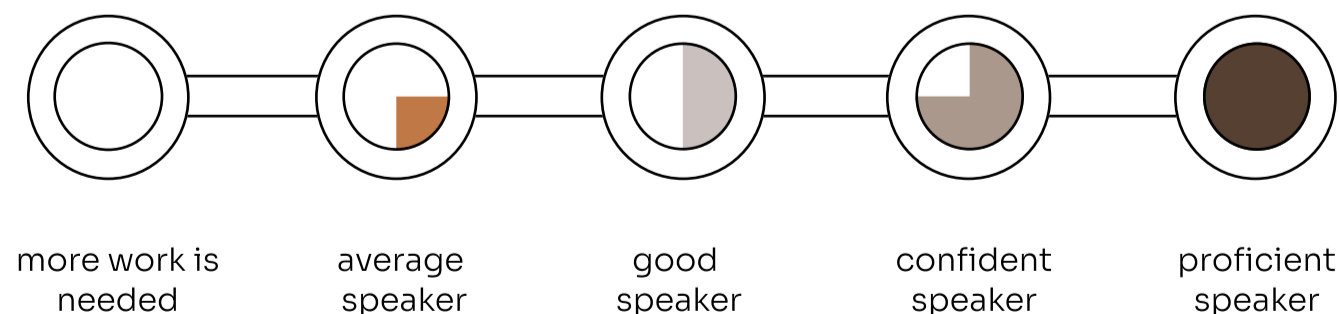
Requirements:

1. Length: max 10 min
2. Use at least 5 words or phrases from exercise 2
3. Demonstrate 3 points that you outlined in task 4 at the beginning of your presentation

*Model answers to Exercises 4 and 5 can be found in the “Correct answers” section

2**In class****Exercise 1: Answer these questions relying on your homework materials as well as your unique experience.**

1. How do stories help us understand the world around us?
2. What techniques do authors use to make their stories more engaging?
3. How does storytelling help build relationships between people?
4. Do you think that reading stories can help us become more empathetic?
5. How do you think reading stories can help us develop a better understanding of ourselves?

Exercise 2: Show your presentation. If you are a listener, use this assessment sheet to provide your classmates with feedback*:**Usage of vocabulary from homework****How the key points from homework are addressed****Public speaking skills**

*Feedback can be provided openly or anonymously, in the spoken or written form (at the discretion of the teacher)



Correct answers

Exercise 1:

1. Stories have the potential to change prejudice by changing how readers view each other; broadening perspectives and making people more open to understanding the experiences of others.
2. Stories elicit a sense of full immersion in readers, making them feel as though the events are actually happening to them.
3. The theory concerning immersion in a story is based on the mirror neuron system.
4. The individual words of a story serve to create a dynamic world; readers begin to visualize experiencing the story in an active way.
5. A 'parasocial relationship' is a false social relationship that readers form with fictional characters, as though they are real people.
6. The positive effects of forming relationships with fictional characters include making readers feel less alone and improving their self-esteem and mood.
7. An example of a controversial topic influenced by stories is same-sex marriage or immigration.

Exercise 3.

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|------------------|---------------|--------------|
| 1. compelling | 5. resonate | 9. dramatic |
| 2. affiliated | 6. simulation | 10. resolved |
| 3. likened | 7. cues | 11. virtuous |
| 4. informational | 8. tune out | 12. empathic |

Exercise 4.

Model answer:

- Stories have an insane persuasive power on people. They are very effective at producing moral and even political change.
- People who read stories affiliate with strangers. We watch or read about an image that we know is fictional, but evolutionarily old parts of our brain, due to mirror neurons, make us feel as if we were experiencing this image or event.
- The notion of transportation means that people can lose themselves in the story world. Sometimes it makes them feel less lonely.

Exercise 5.

Example presentation outline based on the model answer:

- Point 1. Stories have an insane persuasive power on people... (Watching “The Lion King” can be useful for teaching the value of family ties and lifelong friendship)
- Point 2. People who read stories affiliate with strangers... (“The Lion King” can help children process difficult emotions such as grief and prepare them for similar real-life experiences)
- Point 3. The notion of transportation means that people can lose themselves in the story world... (Seeing the strong friendship between Simba, Timon and Pumba can help the viewer identify with their positive feelings)