

REDFORDCENTERSTORIES

Chapter (Lesson) 10. Redford Center Stories Challenge

Lesson Ten Intentions:

- Students consider the impact of narratives to open, deepen, broaden conversations about climate and community
- Students explore the movement from idea to action, through the craft of filmmaking
- Students examine steps they might use in the design and development of their own video narrative
- Students reflect on their own inspirations, and on the activation and expression of their visions and voices

Lesson Ten Overview:

This lesson can act as a culmination of any learning that has come before it, if students have explored any of the Redford Center Stories curriculum, or as a stand-alone lesson that contains some of the highlights of earlier lessons and also takes students through aspects of developing a video narrative for the Redford Center Stories Challenge. It provides a simple overview of a process students can use to create a 90-second video project. With environmental justice as a central theme, this lesson invites students to reflect on their sense of neighborhood, community, home, and “environment,” as well as to feel their own agency in building a world, now and into the future, that reflects and creates the conditions for a more just, healthy, and beautiful life for all. The intention of this final lesson is to leave students feeling their unique power as storytellers and changemakers.

Key Themes:

- Reflection, observation and dialogue
- Youth-led innovation and community-inspired/community-based initiatives
- The movement from idea to action, initial inspiration to completed project
- Understanding diverse needs and priorities in community; and the foundation/cultivation of “community”
- Considering the role of story in expressing ideas, sharing experiences and impacting ways of living

Duration: This lesson is designed for 30 mins., but can be done in 15-20, or expanded to 45-80 mins.

Lesson Components:

- Slides (in Google slides format; adaptable for educator needs/preferences)
- VIDEO: “Ode to the Earth”; “Home”; “Five Minute Film School”; selected Redford Center-supported films
- WRITING/REFLECTION: Moving from script to storyboard, storyboard to sound/images/clips -> film
- Resources and extension ideas (see end of lesson)

Materials:

- Educators: Lesson PDF, access to online media (for video viewing), slide deck (customizable)
- Students: pencil/pen and paper

Connections (see extensions/resources and standards below; full standards for this project [here](#)):

Justice, Environment; Film, Reading/Writing; History; STEM

Mini-challenge (can be used as a way of assignment/assessment); Further Reading; Watching; Exercises

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The Voices of Youth

Slide 3

Share or invite a student to read James Redford's statement about the voices of young people:

"The urgency of climate change and many of the related environmental challenges we face mandates that we saturate our culture with stories that inspire action...As the next few decades will be critical in terms of minimizing the impact of climate change, it's particularly important that we support and promote the **voices of our youth.**" – James Redford

You might explore questions like:

- How does the word "urgency" impact you in James Redford's statement?
- What about the word "mandates"?
- Why "saturate our culture with stories that inspire action" – where/what is the power in a story?
- In what ways do you feel the voices of young people are being heard and understood/not?

Read a tribute to the life and work of James Redford [Here](#)

"An Incomplete Tapestry"

Slide 4

Writer, biologist, and naturalist E.O. Wilson encourages people to see all creatures, great and small, as part of our communities. Watch [this video](#) and discuss:

- What are some of the small (even invisible) animals that exist in your local environment? What role do these animals play in your environment?
- What is biophilia, and why is it important?
- How would it change your perspective if you paid closer attention to these tiny life forms on a regular basis?

Share or invite a student to read the following quote from Dr. Elizabeth Lindsey:

Speak to young people in a language they're using.
Give them **platforms and bandwidths** to tell the stories that are meaningful to them.
The people I've been working with the last few years, whom I admire,
have great respect for the potential of integrating these technologies...

How we see the world is how we tell our story.

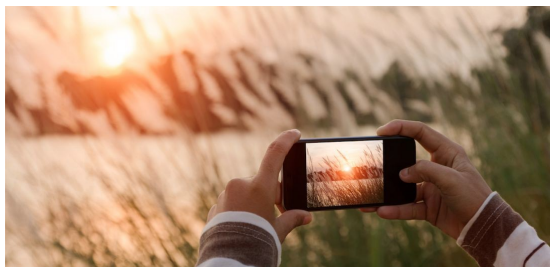
I want my life to be devoted to the way people see their lives as rich and valuable, and an integral part of humanity's story.

If one story is missing, **the tapestry is incomplete.**

You might explore questions like:

- What do you think is the role of technology in creating healthier, more just ways of living?
- How have you seen technology inspire people, bring people together, open new possibilities?
- What does "How we see the world is how we tell our story" mean to you?
- How do you relate to, or understand, Dr. Lindsey's comment about one missing story?

Learn more about Dr. Elizabeth Lindsey, cultural anthropologist, **ethnonavigator**, and the first female National



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Redford Center Stories Challenge

Slide 5

Young people across the globe are bringing an infusion of energy to the movement for environmental justice — and we invite students to be a part of it! The Redford Center invites young people to tell their story, raise their voice, and help change the conversation about **what environmentalism and environmental justice** looks like through short video format (90 seconds or less) so we can move more people into action.

Here's the winning video from the 2020-2021 Redford Center Stories Challenge, called [The Ripple](#). Questions to consider:

- How does Shannon Germaine construct the narrative of her film?
- What stands out to you about this film in terms of:
 - Structure
 - Images
 - Narrative strategy
 - Film techniques



Slide 6

New Narratives

If you've gone through some of the curriculum, you may have shown a few or all of the films on this slide. You might revisit some of the **main themes/ideas in these narratives**, or identify some you've not yet had a chance to watch and find the ones that might add to your experience as you move toward making student films.

Here are the films included on this slide (all Redford Center projects/[grantee projects](#)):

The Nature Film: <https://redfordcenter.org/films/nature-film>

Inventing Tomorrow: <https://www.pbs.org/video/lesson-plan-clip-2-inventing-tomorrow/>

This Land: * [Clean Version](#)

Art of Activism: Ellen Choy: <https://youtu.be/3EbY7iUFtuo>

Standing Above the Clouds: <https://vimeo.com/363397315>; PW: maunakea

Happening: <https://happeningthemovie.com>

There are other films scattered across the curriculum, and some additional feature length or longer version films available to view. As students make their own work, they are participating in a growing community of filmmakers, storytellers, activists, and environmental stewards who are telling new stories of **environmental justice** – connecting the personal and the communal, people and planet.

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Redford Center Stories Challenge Prompts

Slide 7

Join activists, filmmakers, scientists, and students from across the world in telling stories of *what is*, and *what can be*...This year's Redford Center Stories Challenge theme: **environmental justice**.

With particular emphasis on environmental justice, equity of access to the outdoors, redefining what it is to be an "environmentalist," and health and healing for communities and the planet, The Redford Center and Redford Center Stories invite student to **respond** to one of the following prompts in a short form video...

Slide 8

Prompt #1:

The future I envision is...

What do you envision for the future of our world and our environment? A vision statement is a powerful thing to imagine and share with others so that communities can come together who share similar goals and missions. They can be inspiring and energizing to collective action. The Redford Center envisions a world in equitable balance, where human and planetary health and justice are fundamental values driving action. What future do you envision? How can we work to make it a reality? It might be a letter/poem from your future self that tells us how you responded to the moment we are in.

Slide 9

Prompt #2:

I'm an environmentalist because...

This is your opportunity to stake your claim as an "environmentalist." What are you fighting for? How are you investing in environmental justice, protection, and/or regeneration? What are you doing to meet the moment? You might share a story you're moved to tell from your own community that reflects what environmentalism and climate justice looks/feels like.

Prompt #3:

A call to action.

Create a public service announcement (PSA) that creates awareness about, or shows the importance and impact of, a problem facing the environment, or the communities most impacted by the climate emergency. What do you want your audience to feel and to know? What behavioral change do you hope to people will make, and how can you help inspire this change? You might take the opportunity to tell the story of your environment (the good and the bad). Research/identify threats to your home town + solutions to address these threats. What solutions have been tried? What are things individual people can do? What systemic changes are needed? Provide a suggested solution and a tangible way to take action.

Slide 11

You might explore with students the following questions to ask in making a video/film.

Why these steps? What does each one allow you to explore? How might you think about your video/film as a conversation – why do this? Why consider your intended audience?

- ☐ What story do I want to **explore/tell**?
- ☐ Who would I like my **audience** to be?
- ☐ What would I like the audience to **feel/experience**?
- ☐ What would I like the audience to **do**?

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Slide 12

Focus/Story/Script

Identifying the **FOCUS/STORY/SCRIPT**

- Is there a story/subject/focus you are most drawn to?
- If you've been writing along this journey, any piece of writing/poem/reflection/story that stands out?
 - Are there pieces of writing, poems, stories you might combine in some way?
 - Or something you're newly inspired to write?
- Is there research you need to do/interviews?
- How might certain data strengthen your narrative?
 - Do you imagine this data informing what you say, or explicitly being shared/shown?
- What's one new thing you hope your audience learns?

Slide 13

Storyboarding

For many people bringing an idea into the world, there is an important step between idea and creation for films, novels, comic books, and other mediums that require planning out scenes: **making a storyboard**. A storyboard is a visual outline of a film (including for short and feature film, across genres). It's an important part of the **preproduction** process and consists of a series of images or notes that show/describe in short form everything that's going to happen in the finished piece. Storyboards might be drawn by hand, or be written as notes like Post-Its (or you might consider having students use a program like Jamboard).

As/once different moments, elements, or things you want to include to illuminate your idea become clear enough to draw/write down, you might play with their order, arrangement. You can ask yourself: Is there a clear beginning, middle, and end?

Beginning - "establishing shot" (what do you want people to come in on/experience first?)
Middle - journey you take people on (what change, transition, possibility are you exploring?)
End - what people are left with? (what's the thing you hope people take away?)

You might have students share some of their storyboard ideas with each other, or work in teams to help each other develop their ideas. If a student has a script/poem/piece of writing they are working with, they might draw or note scenes or images beside different lines or moments.

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Slide 14

Sound

It's tempting to think of a video/film as a visual experience, but in many/most cases, even more important than the visuals is the quality of sound. You want each word spoken (if there are words) to be clear and easily audible. If there is music, is it coming across clearly? If you mix music and voice, how can they support each other, instead of one overriding the other?

- How can your message be heard in the best way?
- Where should there be sound, and where should there be quiet? How will you know?
- Do you want to include natural sounds? The sounds of nature, water, birds, a city?
- If you imagine your audience includes people who don't speak the same language as you, what might be the role of sound in communicating your message?

Slide 15

Filming

When you are ready to film, how will you think about the **composition** of your images, footage? How do you want the camera to relate to the subject – as an extension of the subject, as an observer of the subject?

- What images support your story and message?
- Whose point of view is featured in the story? Who/what is the narrator?
 - Will the narrator be sharing a first-person point of view? Why or why not?
 - How is this reflected in what is going to be shown?
- When do you want to move and be still?
- When might you want to be close in/far away from the focus of your narrative?
- What angles of view/perspectives can you explore?



Slide 16

Editing/Revision

Is the heart/purpose of the story clear? What *don't* you need to tell the story (what can you cut, omit, create or communicate in a different way? What might you change? Or add to give more detail, more feeling to what's being shared? Is the beginning, middle and end clear? (Students can also make more than one video if they want to do that; or make one individually and one in a team, if possible.)

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Slide 17

Foundational Elements

Some foundational elements for The Redford Center's original storytelling work include the following. You might invite students to discuss how they relate them to their own ideas:

- Solutions-focused stories to offer a more hopeful view of the future and to help audiences understand **how they can play a role**.
- Telling stories through characters so that audiences can **see themselves** in the story and also be educated on how the issue affects them.
- Prioritizing **entertainment** and working to make the film surprising, inspiring, beautiful, emotional, musical, hip, fun, and more (you'd want to watch it).
- Leaving people with a sense for **new actions** they can take in their own life.
- Creating nonpartisan stories, meaning that the story doesn't align with one political ideology but rather appeals to **universal values**.
- Showcasing unlikely stories so that all audiences, even those that don't readily identify as environmentalists, see themselves as **part of the story and the solution**.

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Suggested Standards: Language Arts and History/Social Studies

This lesson gives students multiple opportunities to engage with **language, images and text**, with particular focus on how point of view impacts the story one tells. Students also have a chance to reflect on their own experience and point of view in **conversation and writing**.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.R.7

Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.2

Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L.3

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.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.6

Use technology, including the Internet, to produce and publish writing and to interact and collaborate with others.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.7

Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.W.9

Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1

Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.2

Integrate and evaluate information presented in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.4

Present information, findings, and supporting evidence such that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

Suggested Standards: STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math)

Throughout this lesson students are encouraged to understand the primacy of **observation**, and the need to attend closely to **patterns and relationships**, and to be able to envision **the impact of actions**.

- Patterns and relationships
- Precision and depth in observation
- Inference and probability
- Ratios and proportional relationships

Suggested Connections: NGSS/Environment

Students are encouraged to make connections between the health of natural systems and the health of human beings and human communities. In addition, phenomena and change may be observable at one scale and not another, or

may require a different way of inquiry and attention to detect and understand.

- Health of human lives and health of natural systems
- Flow of energy and matter at the scale of the entire planet
- Exchange of matter between natural systems and human societies affects long-term functioning of both
- Phenomena that can be observed at one scale may not be noticed/observable at another scale
- Systems interact with other systems
- Stability might be disturbed either by sudden events or gradual changes that accumulate over time

Suggested Connections: Social Justice

The integration of perspectives and voices in this lesson is intended to encourage greater appreciation for the depth of **one's own identity**, and **respectful curiosity about others' lived experience**.

Diversity. Students will respectfully express curiosity about the history and lived experiences of others and will exchange ideas and beliefs in an open-minded way.

Action. Students will recognize their own responsibility to stand up to... injustice.

Suggested Connections: Social Emotional Learning Competencies

Components of this lesson are meant to support students' sense of **confidence and agency**, as well as their social-awareness and sense for relationships; as well as how much relationships need tending, both with **respect** to our relationship with the natural world and each other.

- Self-awareness (confidence, self-efficacy)
- Social-awareness (perspective-taking, appreciating diversity, respect for others)
- Social skills (communication, relationship building)
- Responsible decision-making (evaluating, reflecting)

Suggested Connections: UN Sustainability Goals

(*Click the images to go to pages on the UN's website that detail the goals and intentions behind each.)

