

NOAC 2024

CU Boulder



SEEK NEW HEIGHTS

The Art of Storytelling

Taking Your Storytelling to Its Greatest Height

Learning Objectives

1. To understand the importance of stories.
2. Learn techniques to tell great oral stories.
3. Learn to tell stories through displays.





1. Oral Storytelling



Learning Objectives

1. Understand the importance of telling stories in historical exhibits.
2. Investigate basic concepts of storytelling with exhibits.





Some Ways to Tell a Story

- Displays
- Film/moving pics
- Music



Great Storytelling is Challenging

“The art of storytelling combines the principles of short-story writing and of successful acting.”

-- Ernest Thompson Seton, author & storyteller



Key Elements of Storytelling



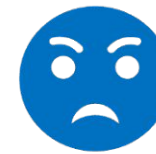
ENVIRONMENT



Audience and Environment



- Who is the audience?
- What is the audience's atmosphere?



- Where is the audience?
- Can they see and hear the storyteller?
- Audiences react to ALL stimuli – movement, noise, lights, temperature



The Story and Setting

- Story elements:

- Beginning
- Middle
- End

All within a Setting

- Storytelling is purposeful

- To Inform
- To Entertain
- To Persuade
- To Command

- Timing is critical

- When to tell it
- When to stop
- When to pause

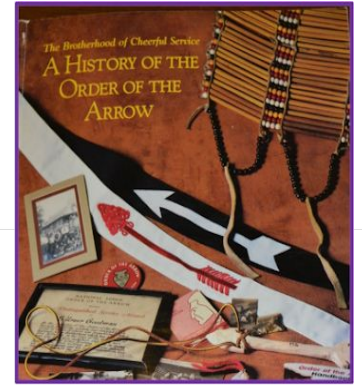


- Time is critical

- Keep within given limits
- Know key concepts if shorter time frame than expected



The Story – Tips and Tricks



- Tell the story as urgently as its setting demands
- When planning it, make sure the climax is at the very end
- Know when is it appropriate to tell a story
- Know what type of story is appropriate for the audience
- Keep a repertoire of stories to tell at anytime



The Storyteller

- Must manage the audience, the story, setting, and environment simultaneously to keep audience attention
- Use all the senses and whole body to tell the story
 - Vocal inflection, pauses, gestures, body language, etc.
- Positive persona and personal magnetism
- Know the storyline and key elements
 - Have notes and props to prompt you, as necessary
 - Use pauses for emphasis and time to think, and adjust



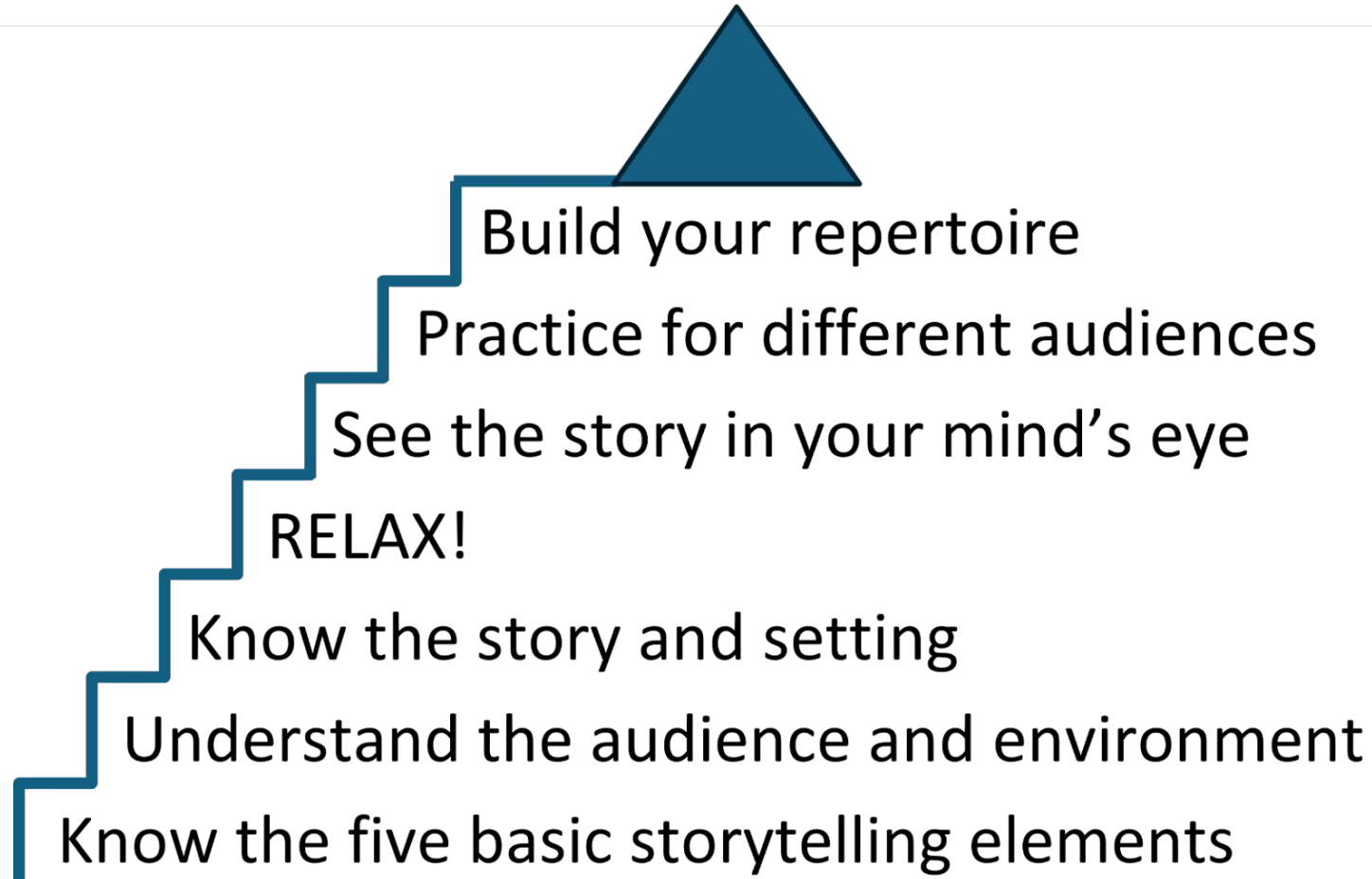
The Storyteller – Tips and Tricks



- Storytelling takes PRACTICE to
 - Get the right rhythm
 - Correctly pronounce words within the story setting
 - Make all gestures, inflections, and movement part of the story
 - Get over the jitters
- Slow down!
- Make eye contact with the back of the room
- Visualize the scene in your mind's eye as you speak



Climb the Storytelling Success Mountain





2. The Art of Storytelling

Your Display Tells a Story



Many thanks to
BILL TOPKIS
past GEO Lead Advisor and
author of the original
version of this presentation



Stories are Important

*“Stories have to be told or they die,
and when they die, we can't
remember who we are or why we're
here.”*

-- Sue Monk Kidd, author



Where to tell Your Story

- In a Museum
 - Permanent
 - “Pop-up”
- On a Website
- In a Film or Video
- In a Book
- In a Show
- In a memorabilia display
- In a Speech
- In a Comic Strip
- In a Mural
- Any public presentation of our history



Oral History can be Storytelling But Storytelling is not Oral History

- Oral History is someone telling their story.
- Storytelling is telling *Our Story* to others.
(e.g. The NOAC GEO tells the OA story.)



Make a display like this “Pop” with storytelling



Story is what people remember.
There is no need to show varieties
except for collectors



Where's the story? (And there is certainly one to tell.)





- No need to show every issue
Even NSM didn't show all of their Rockwell oils.
- You confuse the story with extraneous pieces that only tangentially fit.
- It's not about showing off!
- The story is for the masses, save the micro details for the experts.



If you do it right, it's almost as if you didn't do anything at all.

- It requires a soft touch
- The story can be picked up without the viewer even knowing it.

Billy Clark Comic Strip - The story is compelling, but we also learn about the OA's Founders - Why they are who they are!





Billy Clark Comic
By Corey Topkis



Basic Museum Storytelling Theory

- Every panel has a topic and a theme
 - Topic - What the panel is about
 - Theme - The point you want to make with it
- Weave the panels to create compelling storylines
- This makes your presentation interesting
conveys your “takeaways” - What you want your viewer to remember.



What Makes a Good Takeaway?

- Interesting!
 - Fun!
 - Thought Provoking
 - Compelling
 - Relatable
 - Branding
 - Anecdotes
 - Concise
 - Know your audience
- Readable Fonts
 - Sans serif
 - Hierarchy
 - Point Size
 - Open Space



Getting Started

- Start at the End!
 - What are the feelings and knowledge you want your viewer to have at the end?
 - If you don't know this, how do you know what to do?
 - Each element of your project should build toward this – as in a fable.
 - This allows you to develop your “**Takeaways**” from the story.
 - Often text blocks in a display are called a “Takeaway” – each one is an opportunity for your viewer to take something away with them.



Why is Storytelling Important?

Because it makes your presentation

- Interesting
- Convey your presentation's Takeaways
- Relatable
- Thought provoking

All of which makes the presentation Compelling!



How to Tell the Story?

- Words:
 - Choose carefully – wordsmith
- Music:
 - In films
 - Ambiance
- Memorabilia:
 - *Mantra – The memorabilia is not the story; it colors the story.
Same with images.
- Images and Graphics

Combine the above!



As the saying goes,
“A picture is worth a thousand words”



OA Tapout, Camp Wolverton (1966)
By Mike Robbins



And paintings too!



The Scoutmaster (1956)
By Norman Rockwell



Using Images Together with Memorabilia to Tell the Story

Notice how combining an image with the memorabilia can help tell the story and allow what you show to become more relatable.



With story you can...

- Tell a moral - but allow the viewers to figure it out themselves
- Make Scouting relatable
- Make a greater point
 - In *Nuwingi – The Willing*
 - “How can I make a difference?”
 - “You are the next century.”
- Leave a lasting impression
- Provide context

WHY?



*"The human species
thinks in metaphors and
learns through stories."*

--Mary Catherine Bateson,
author, cultural anthropologist



Story Provides the Larger Picture

- You let Scouts know they are part of a long, storied and important tradition.
- Explains that although the program may change, the values stay the same.



Takeaway Challenge

- Fix on the story you want to tell.
- Then choose the objects, words, music, smells, and other sensory items that will best tell the story.

