



The Story Exchange User Guide

Each video in the library is designed as a complete lesson. It is up to the instructor to decide how to utilize the lesson. We highly recommend that instructors review each video **before** sharing it with their viewers.

Each video includes (3) distinct parts:

1. The introduction: This provides context and serves as a cue for viewers.
2. The story: This involves a person sharing an event or anecdote from their life.
3. The outro: Conclusion, followed by three open-ended questions that translate into a curriculum-based engagement for the viewer.
 - The questions typically develop from connections inspired by the content of the storyteller and are different in each video.

The three questions are presented one at a time for 10 seconds, followed by a display of all three together for an additional 30 seconds. The instructor may pause the video at any point, including on the final screen, which displays all three questions.

Once the entire video has been viewed, the instructor facilitates various activities. Simply showing the video will not have as great an impact as actively engaging learners to process and discuss the ideas and themes presented in each video.

Here are some effective, proven practices for facilitating engagement:

- Have a whole-group discussion.
- Partners, triads, or groups of four take turns sharing their thoughts and reactions.
- Ask the viewers to journal about one or more of the questions.
- Have a silent conversation; using technology or a whiteboard, viewers can silently write their response to the video and then respond to each other.
- Students could write their own questions they would like to ask the storyteller.
- Students could write a letter to the storyteller, even if it was never sent.
- Create a video response that can be discussed, shared, or constructed by the viewer(s).
- Students could work to connect the storyteller to a story or book they have read/reading
- Students could illustrate their interpretation of the story.

- Students could connect the story to current events.
- Students could predict what the future holds for the storyteller.

Below are some more suggestions sorted by specific subject areas and standards:

20 Ways to Use The Story Exchange in Math Class

Simple, meaningful ways to bring storytelling and connection into your math curriculum.

1. Use Story-Based Statistics

Graph real stats from stories (e.g., “42% of teens feel hopeless”):

- Bar graphs, pie charts, or percentages
- Explore trends over time or across populations

2. Create Class Data Projects

After a video:

- Track sleep, stress, screen time
- Graph and analyze patterns
- Reflect on well-being using math

3. Promote Growth Mindset

Connect stories of perseverance to math:

- Encourage risk-taking and learning from mistakes
- Reflect on mindset using math journaling

4. Math + Story Journals

Prompt students:

“Write about a time math felt personal, hard, or meaningful.”

Use stories to model vulnerability and reflection.

5. Real-Life Budget Math

Build lessons on:

- Living wage budgeting
- Income and expenses from story characters
- Percent-based comparisons of needs vs. wants

6. Introduce Probability Through Story

Link decisions in a story to probability:

- “What were the odds?”
- “How many ways could that have gone differently?”

7. Turn Stories Into Word Problems

Example:

“If someone walked 2 miles to school for 180 days...”

Use story content as relatable math scenarios.

8. Patterns + Trends

Ask:

- What behavior or outcome patterns can we see?
- Can students model or graph those?

9. Survey the Class

After a video:

- Take a class poll on student feelings or experiences
- Graph and discuss results in math terms

10. Identity + Math

Prompt:

- “What’s your personal math story?”
- “How has math shaped your confidence?”

11. Timeline + Time Math

Create a timeline of a storyteller’s journey:

- Calculate duration of events
- Use elapsed time problems

12. Ratios in Context

Use real-life ratios:

- Screen time vs. sleep
- School time vs. free time

13. Storytelling with Numbers

Assign:

“Tell the story of your day using only numbers.”

Then translate that into charts or equations.

14. Number Talks with a Story Lens

After a video, pose a question:

“If this person had \$100 and needed to...”

Engage in mental math tied to real scenarios.

15. Cost of Living Projects

Use geography and math:

- Calculate cost of housing or groceries where the storyteller lives
- Compare across states or cities

16. Emotion Tracking with Graphs

Ask students to graph the emotional arc of a story:

- Use a scale of 1–10
- Connect to line graphs and slope

17. Analyze National Trends

Use public data sources (CDC, Pew) from stories to:

- Practice comparing data sets
- Identify outliers or averages

18. Story-Based Percent Practice

Example:

“40% of teens feel disconnected. How many in our class?”

Build number sense with relevance

19. Math Around Identity

Explore how math intersects with identity:

- Access to education
- Equity in school funding
- Pay gaps or opportunity data

20. Reflect with Numbers

Ask:

“If you could rate your connection to school on a scale of 1–10, what would it be before and after the story?”

Graph class results to show impact

20 Ways to Use The Story Exchange in Science Class

Real stories that humanize science, build empathy, and make content meaningful.

1. Humanize the Scientific Process

Pair a story about adversity or growth with units on scientific discovery:

- Discuss how real scientists persist through failure
- Make the connection between resilience and experimentation

2. Mental Health + Brain Science

Use stories about depression, anxiety, or trauma to introduce:

- The brain/nervous system
- Neurochemistry and stress response
- The science of emotional regulation

3. Fight Misinformation with Science

Use a story where misunderstanding caused harm or conflict, then:

- Investigate how science combats myths
- Teach media and scientific literacy

4. Environmental Science + Story

Find stories tied to climate anxiety, wildfires, pollution, etc.:

- Link personal experiences to global environmental data
- Discuss student roles as changemakers

5. Design a Scientific Survey

After a video, let students develop questions:

- “How do students in our school feel about [topic]?”
- Collect, analyze, and graph their own scientific data

6. Disease, Health, and Community

Use stories about chronic illness, addiction, or recovery:

- Connect to units on viruses, cells, or body systems
- Humanize the science behind health outcomes

7. Scientific Ethics + Real Lives

Use stories to explore ethical questions:

- Whose lives are impacted by science policy?
- Who benefits, who’s left out?

8. STEM Career Connections

Use stories from underrepresented voices:

- What barriers did they face in STEM?
- What inspired them to pursue science?

9. Cause and Effect Thinking

After a story, model:

- What was the trigger?
- What were the short- and long-term outcomes?

10. Emotional Graphing

Graph the emotional arc of a story like a data set:

- Where did stress spike?
- Use this to model change over time or correlation

11. Geoscience + Storytelling

If a story mentions wildfire, storms, or heat waves:

- Tie into earth science, weather, or climate units
- Model human-environment interaction

12. Science + Communication

Ask:

- “How do we use science to tell a better story?”
- Let students explain a scientific concept through metaphor or narrative

13. Stress + The Body

Use mental health-focused stories to explore:

- Cortisol, fight-or-flight, or endocrine system
- Stress-related illness in biology or health science

14. Cognitive Bias in Science

Explore how emotional thinking affects logic:

- Compare story-based assumptions with scientific method
- Discuss bias in data collection and interpretation

15. Science History Through Stories

Pair a video with historic science missteps (e.g., lead in paint, tobacco science):

- Who got hurt, and why?
- What changed because someone spoke up?

16. Design a Lab Inspired by a Story

Prompt:

- “After watching this video, what would you want to test or measure scientifically?”
- Build a mini inquiry project

17. Generational Science Topics

Link personal stories to long-term change:

- Smoking, obesity, pollution, screen time
- Graph generational data + discuss evolution of public health

18. Science + Access

Explore equity in science education or healthcare:

- What gaps are exposed in the storyteller's experience?
- How does science address (or miss) those needs?

19. Science Reflections After a Story

Prompt:

- "What part of this story connects to a science concept you know?"
- "How did this make science feel more human?"

20. Cross-Discipline: Write Your Own Science Story

Challenge students to write their own short "Story Exchange" narrative:

- About their relationship to nature, health, technology, etc.
- Then link it to a science principle

20 Ways to Use The Story Exchange in American History

Real stories that bring U.S. history to life, promote reflection, and spark civic understanding.

1. Connect Personal Stories to Civil Rights Movements

- Use stories about identity, discrimination, or activism to humanize events like the Civil Rights Act or school desegregation.

2. Link Immigration Stories to Historical Waves

- Pair a modern immigrant story with 19th/20th century immigration data and policies like Ellis Island, the Chinese Exclusion Act, or DACA.

3. Veteran & Military Reflections

- Use stories from veterans or family members to explore the lived experiences behind wars like Vietnam or Iraq.

4. The Great Depression + Resilience

- Use stories of economic hardship to illustrate the emotional toll of the 1930s.

5. Oral History Projects

- Let students model Story Exchange storytelling to collect family/community stories about major U.S. events.

6. Amplify Marginalized Voices

- Contrast textbook narratives with personal stories from BIPOC, LGBTQ+, or underrepresented communities across time.

7. Use Stories to Frame Constitutional Debates

- Connect student voices to freedom of speech, religion, or protest movements (e.g., *Tinker v. Des Moines*).

8. Link to Protest + Social Change Movements

- Use modern activism stories to analyze past protests: labor strikes, civil disobedience, suffrage, BLM, etc.

9. Compare Historical & Contemporary Trauma

- After stories about violence or mental health, discuss past events like slavery, Japanese internment, or 9/11.

10. Connect to Civic Participation

- Pair a story about voting or civic engagement with movements like Women's Suffrage or the Voting Rights Act.

11. The American Dream—Then and Now

- Compare modern stories to 1950s suburbia, westward expansion, or the Industrial Revolution.

12. Place-Based Storytelling

- Anchor stories to local/state history: “Where in U.S. history does this story belong?”

13. Education Access Across Eras

- Use stories about school inequity to examine *Brown v. Board* or *No Child Left Behind*.

14. Data & Storytelling

- Combine storytelling with U.S. Census data, migration patterns, or economic shifts.

15. Point of View Analysis

- Ask: “How would a 1910 laborer or 1965 protester tell this same story?”

16. Manifest Destiny vs. Displacement

- Use indigenous or immigrant voices to complicate expansion narratives.

17. Economic Disparity Through Story

- Compare Depression-era survival with modern poverty, minimum wage, or housing crises.

18. Student-Led Storytelling

- Let students create a short narrative from a historical lens after watching a Story Exchange video.

19. Primary vs. Personal Source Work

- Compare firsthand stories with primary source letters or speeches from American history.

20. Modern Connections to Historical Struggles

- End each unit by pairing a video with this prompt:
“How is this story a continuation of what we just studied?”

20 Ways to Use The Story Exchange in World History

Connect global events, cultures, and human experiences through the power of personal stories.

1. Migration + Refugee Narratives

- Use stories of displacement to explore refugee crises, diasporas, or forced migration (e.g., Syrian Civil War, Jewish Holocaust survivors).

2. Humanizing War + Conflict

- Pair stories about trauma or resilience with units on WWII, colonial resistance, or Cold War conflicts.

3. Colonization + Resistance

- Use personal accounts to examine the long-term human effects of colonialism in Africa, Asia, and the Americas.

4. Faith and Persecution

- Share stories involving religious identity or discrimination alongside studies of the Reformation, Crusades, or modern religious suppression.

5. Power + Perspective

- Ask: “How would the person in this story experience monarchy, empire, or revolution?”

6. Literacy and Education Access

- Connect stories about overcoming barriers in education to eras like the Enlightenment, industrialization, or girls' education worldwide.

7. Globalization + Identity

- Use stories of modern students balancing cultures to examine globalization's effects on language, customs, and belonging.

8. Empowering Women Through Story

- Connect videos about gender or opportunity to women's roles in ancient societies, suffrage, or 20th century feminism.

9. Historical Trauma + Healing

- Discuss how generational trauma (e.g., genocide, apartheid) still affects people today—make the link through stories.

10. Compare Narratives Across Time

- After a story, ask: “Who in history had a similar experience?”—link past and present emotionally.

11. Conflict Resolution + Peacebuilding

- Use stories of forgiveness or peacemaking to examine diplomacy, truth commissions, or restorative justice worldwide.

12. Undocumented Voices in History

- Let students explore: “Whose stories didn’t get recorded in world history—and how can we hear them now?”

13. Science + Story in Global Context

- Tie stories about public health, disease, or innovation to topics like the Black Death or vaccination campaigns.

14. Cross-Cultural Empathy

- Use stories that cross cultural lines to introduce perspective-taking exercises related to imperialism or trade.

15. Historical Roleplaying with Modern Voices

- Students rewrite a story from a historical figure’s POV or present-day storyteller placed in a past context.

16. Environment + Global Change

- Link climate concern or environmental justice stories to historical farming, resource extraction, or deforestation.

17. Myth, Legend, and Modern Storytelling

- Compare ancient storytelling traditions to today’s digital platforms and oral histories.

18. Revolutions + Youth Voice

- Use teen-led modern stories to discuss young people’s roles in revolutions (e.g., Iran, Hong Kong, South Africa).

19. Place + Meaning Across Eras

- Tie stories rooted in geography to studies of how land shapes identity (e.g., Nile River, Andes, Silk Road).

20. Recurring Themes in History

- End units by watching a story and asking:
“What world history theme does this reflect—power? inequality? resistance?”

These serve as a starting point; the possibilities are endless. Whether you are an educator, instructor, or group leader, we encourage innovation and practical application, as you likely know what best meets the needs of your audience. As you utilize The Story Exchange, please inform the Chalkboard Agency about what works for you and your viewers so we can share best practices with everyone who engages with The Story Exchange.

The Story Exchange video library is designed to share stories and expose learners to various types of people, helping to foster connections and empathy through storytelling. To that end, there really isn't a limit to how they can be shared and used.