Arts For Transformation

A classroom resource for creating meaningful change through the arts. This resource is a part of the WE Schools WE Film For Change campaign.

Grades 7 to 8
American Edition
Dear Educator,

Welcome to the WE movement. We are so glad you’ve joined us in our mission to inspire, educate and empower students to find their place and voice in the world. Throughout the last two decades, educators have stood by us. With over 16,000 schools thriving in WE Schools, we are delivering impressive results in academic engagement, life skills and civic engagement. Through experiential service-learning, students become more engaged in local and global issues.

We know the power of stories. As many of you know, our humble beginning was sparked by the story of the life and death of Iqbal Masih, a boy who stood up to fight child labor which he experienced firsthand. Twelve-year-old Craig read this story in the newspaper one morning and our lives have not been the same since. More than twenty years later, we continue our work, which in part is sharing the stories of child laborers like Iqbal, but also of children who are overcoming barriers that work to prevent them from attending school and of young people who are working to change their world locally and globally.

Arts for Transformation is designed to be a part of the process of creating and sharing stories. Students will learn about the power of a story and the mediums that stories can be told with, and have the opportunity to become storytellers—to share their stories or the story of another.

This is an exciting time to work in education. Together, we have the power to reignite the fundamental purpose of education: moving students to want to learn, and preparing them with the life skills to better the world and forge their own paths to success.

Thank you for having the passion to bring WE into your classroom. We are honored and encouraged to work with such a dedicated and enthusiastic group.

We are stronger together,

Craig and Marc Kielburger
Co-Founders, WE
Essential Question: What is experiential service-learning and how can I incorporate it into my classroom instruction with WE Schools curriculum resources?

WE Schools

WE Schools is a unique, step-by-step program that challenges young people to identify the local and global issues that spark their passion and empowers them with the tools to take action. Educators and students work together to learn about the world and to take action to create meaningful change. Delivered in 16,000 schools and groups across North America and the UK, the program provides educators and students with curriculum, educational resources and a full calendar of campaign ideas.

The Four Steps of WE Schools

1. **Investigate and Learn**
   Students explore topics related to a real-world challenge or opportunity.

2. **Action Plan**
   Students develop a plan to implement their service-learning project, including one local and one global action.

3. **Take Action**
   Students implement their action plan.

4. **Report and Celebrate**
   Students present the results of their service-learning initiatives.

What Is Experiential Learning?

Experiential service-learning is based on a structured academic foundation that goes beyond volunteering and community service. It’s a practice that engages teachers and students with their communities in a structured way and allows students to meet their learning objectives while addressing their community’s needs.

Setting Students Up For Success: In School, the Workplace and Life

WE Schools Introduction: [WE.org/we-at-school/we-schools/](http://WE.org/we-at-school/we-schools/)

**Living WE** is about improving our lives and our world by reaching out to others. It involves focusing less on “me” and more on “we”—our communities, our country and our world.

**Social Emotional Learning:** The WE Learning Framework is grounded in social emotional learning principles, helping students develop the skills to manage their emotions, resolve conflicts and make responsible decisions.

**Global Mindset:** The ability to operate comfortably across borders, cultures and languages is invaluable. WE Schools programming promotes global mindedness and cultural competency amongst student populations during their formative years.

**Active Citizenship:** Students act on their growing knowledge by connecting with others in their communities, thereby generating interest, further research and engagement in local and national causes.

**Reflection** is a key component of our experiential service-learning model. Our reflection activities direct students’ attention to new interpretations of events and provide a lens through which service can be studied and interpreted.

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Grades 7 to 8, American Edition 3
Arts for Transformation Overview

We are all storytellers. Through our communication with others in-person and online, through the way we choose to spend our free time and through the way we express ourselves with the arts. With the right tools and a little courage, students will feel empowered to become the kind of storytellers that change the world.

Arts for Transformation is a classroom resource that identifies the power of film for telling stories that change the world. This resource includes detailed plans, blackline masters and appendices. The activities inform, engage and empower students to become storytellers. Students will learn the power of storytelling, how to use various mediums such as film and will have the opportunity to share a powerful story that they want to tell.

Subject(s): Visual and Performing Arts, English Language Arts, Social Studies

Grade Level: Grades 7 to 8

WE Learning Framework Skills:

Rationale

Participant Media and WE believe that telling inspirational stories enables us to create real world impact. Through the art of film, Participant Media and their digital entertainment division, SoulPancake, are raising awareness on the most important social issues affecting our local and global communities today.

Assessing the Learning

You know your students best—their learning styles and preferences, skill levels and knowledge. You are in the best position to anticipate the habits of mind that will make this classroom resource successful. We are mindful that students may be at different reading levels, including English Language Learners (ELL), and may have learning differences. In response, the Educator Notes throughout the resource make suggestions for differentiation along with extension and enrichment ideas that can be used.

Teaching strategies include film, storytelling, carousel, jigsaw and graffiti exercises. Assessment strategies include entry tickets, graphic organizers, think-pair-share, discussions, reflection and peer feedback.

Source: Oxford Dictionaries oxforddictionaries.com

Materials and Resources

- Chart paper and markers
- Appendix 1: Classroom Observation Forms
- Blackline Master 1: Storyboards

Explore other resources and current campaign offerings at WE.org
Lesson 1:
The Power of Storytelling

Suggested Time:
45 minutes

Common Core Alignment (Grades 7–8)
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.7.1 - Cite several pieces of textual evidence to support analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.7.6 - Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author distinguishes his or her position from that of others.
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.1 - Cite the textual evidence that most strongly supports an analysis of what the text says explicitly as well as inferences drawn from the text.
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.6 - Determine an author’s point of view or purpose in a text and analyze how the author acknowledges and responds to conflicting evidence or viewpoints.

Learning Goals:
Students will:
• Explore the power of storytelling to connect people and potentially change opinions and behaviors

Investigate and Learn

1. Recommended Assessment For Learning: Ask students to turn to a peer and take turns telling a story in 60 seconds or less. Once everyone has had a chance to share their story, ask students whether the story they told was true or made up. Create a tally on the board under the heading “Fact or Fiction.”

2. Follow-up by asking students which stories have more of an impact on you and society? Explain why.

3. Explain to students that while some of these stories may seem insignificant, some stories have the power to change the way we think or push us to act. Assign groups of students one story each from the following list or use examples of your own choosing.

Educator’s Note: Some of these stories and images are disturbing. They were selected as examples of stories of moments in time that changed the way people think and behave. Please take caution before sharing with students.


4. From the story, ask students to identify the following:

   a. What are the key facts of the story?

   b. Whose story is it? (Consider whose story it was initially and whether it became part of a larger collective story, identify whose collective story it is a part of.)

   c. What feelings does it evoke in the people who consume the story?

   d. What makes this story powerful?

   e. Can this story change the world?

   For example:

   Rosa Parks refused to move back on a city bus to allow a white person to sit, as she was required to do by segregation laws—local and state laws put in place to keep people separated by race. Although the laws were identified as “separate but equal,” equality was not met and not intended by the white lawmakers, who sought to keep their upper status while attempting to push black people to a lesser status. Mrs. Parks was not the first black person to refuse to move; she herself had been thrown off the bus before. However, after her arrest and subsequent release on bail put up by NCAAP (National Association for the Advancement of Colored People) leader Edgar Nixon, her story was shared, and
the black population of Montgomery decided her story was the last one they needed to hear before taking action. They began a boycott of the segregated bus system. By walking or arranging car pools, the boycott continued for over a year while identified leaders of the movement were arrested and protestors endured lengthy commutes, ridicule, sore feet and more. The story not only rallied the people of Montgomery, it became one of the well-known stories of the Civil Rights Movement. It was further woven into the American story when a statue of Rosa Parks was unveiled by President Obama on February 27, 2013, as part of the U.S. Capitol Art Collection. (Source: Summary based on video.)

**5. Recommended Assessment As Learning:** Ask students to identify a story that means something to them, has made them think differently or has prompted them to act. The stories may be historical or modern and should be non-fiction or have real-world impact. Invite students to take turns sharing their selected story in groups of three to five students. Students should frame their presentation using the same questions as earlier in the lesson:

a. What is the story?

b. Whose story is it?

c. What does it or did it evoke in consumers of the story?

d. What makes this story powerful?

**Educator’s Note:** Remind students, when examining stories and preparing to be storytellers, keep in mind that the power of a story is not always in the storyteller’s control. Additionally, if you are telling someone else’s story, you should consider the responsibility you have to them.

**Enrichment:** Storytellers often have an expectation of how their stories will be received, discussed and understood, but sometimes stories take on a life of their own. Sometimes the story becomes a legend and the truths surrounding it are blurred. Once a story is released, the storyteller no longer has control over its life. Social media proves this to be true every day. How stories are received can take negative turns. Check out Exploring Digital Citizenship ([WE.org/weriseabove](WE.org/weriseabove)) to help students learn more about how to protect themselves and others while sharing stories online.
Lesson 2:
The Medium and the Message

Suggested Time:
45 minutes

Common Core Alignment (Grades 7–8)

• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.7.7 - Compare and contrast a text to an audio, video or multimedia version of the text, analyzing each medium's portrayal of the subject (e.g., how the delivery of a speech affects the impact of the words).

• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.7.5 - Analyze the structure an author uses to organize a text, including how the major sections contribute to the whole and to the development of the ideas.

• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.7 - Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of using different mediums (e.g., print or digital text, video, multimedia) to present a particular topic or idea.

• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.5 - Analyze in detail the structure of a specific paragraph in a text, including the role of particular sentences in developing and refining a key concept.

Learning Goals:
Students will:

• Explore various mediums and their effectiveness to share a story

• Identify the medium they believe is powerful for storytelling

1. Begin the class with a story: I was texting with my best friend the other day, like we normally do, but at some point I realized she must have misunderstood what I wrote because I stopped receiving texts. It wasn’t until I called her that we were able to clear things up.

Discuss the following:

a. Has this ever happened to you?

b. Why might she have misunderstood? I did not intend to upset her with what I wrote.

c. Is there any way to better convey tone in a text or written message?

2. Recommended Assessment For Learning: Using think-pair-share, ask students to respond to the following questions:

   a. What mediums do you use to communicate regularly?

   b. What information do you create? How much of this information can be considered a story?

Extension: Show students a video of Kid President using the Internet to share his video and help collect socks and other goods for homeless shelters with Socktober: “Hello Internet! It’s #SOCKTOBER! Love, Kid President”


   a. What is the medium?

   b. What is the message?

Robbie Novak (Kid President) is using video shared on the Internet to criticize what people share and consume on the Internet. He is also attempting to use the power of the Internet to raise awareness of the issues of homelessness and collect socks and other goods shelters and organizations that work with people who are homeless have a need for.

3. Ask students to consider the photoblog Humans of New York. Humans of New York features street portraits and interviews that tell the stories of people in New York. Share a story: www.humansofnewyork.com. Individually or with a partner, think about the mediums used to share the stories. How does the medium affect the content? How does it make the stories shared powerful?

Educator’s Note: In the next lesson, students will begin their own story-sharing process. Encourage students to begin the process with a reflection piece that will help them identify the story they want to tell. Students may choose to record their story through an art project such as photography, in writing, on film or another medium; however, to align with the WE Film For Change campaign, the lesson plan will focus on film.

4. Recommended Assessment Of Learning: On August 24, 2017, Brandon Stanton, the creator of the photoblog Humans of New York, announced that it will now air on Facebook as a video series. Stanton believes “video adds a deeper layer” and provides a closer opportunity to “actually be there.” As a storyteller, what medium (print, photo, music, dance, sculpture, painting and film) holds the most power? What kind of medium would you tell stories in? Invite students to write or record their reflection by answering the questions.

Educator’s Note: An important point to discuss is that texting, while a valuable method of communication, has its shortfalls. The way we communicate a message is shaped primarily by the medium or format. This is the basic premise of Marshall McLuhan’s famous quote, “The medium is the message.”
Lesson 3:
The Story I Want to Tell

Suggested Time: 90 minutes

Common Core Alignment (Grades 7–8)

- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.7.5 - Analyze the structure an author uses to organize a text, including how the major sections contribute to the whole and to the development of the ideas.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.7.3 - Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details and well-structured event sequences.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.8.5 - Analyze in detail the structure of a specific paragraph in a text, including the role of particular sentences in developing and refining a key concept.
- CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.8.3 - Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective technique, relevant descriptive details and well-structured event sequences.

Learning Goals:
Students will:

- Reflect on the story they want to tell
- Identify the sequence for the story they want to tell

Action Planning

1. Ask students to reflect on what they have learned about storytelling so far. Ask students to consider the kind of storyteller they would like to be. Do they want to tell a story that is personal or close to them, like those featured in Humans of New York? Or do they want to be like Brandon Stanton and select the medium, creating the platform and opportunity for people to tell their stories?

2. Recommended Assessment For Learning: Invite students to write or record a reflection that explores the story they want to tell.

3. Using the reflection piece, ask students to sketch out the story they want to tell. When they are ready, students may use Blackline Master 1: Storyboards to sketch out the story they want to tell in sequence.

4. Recommended Assessment As Learning: Invite students to share their storyboards and plans with a partner for peer feedback. Encourage students to provide constructive feedback using the following model:
   a. I really like ________.
   b. Have you ever thought of ________?
   c. I think people will respond to ________.
   Circulate and record observations using forms from Appendix 1.

5. In addition to the sequenced sketches, ask students to include a brief descriptive text with their final storyboards.

6. Students should consider the following elements in their final product:
   a. Target Audience—Who will be watching the video?
   b. Cause—What is the reason you are sharing this story?
   c. Message—What is an effective story?
   d. Music—This will set the tone of the video, so choose carefully.
   e. Pictures—Positive or negative images? A mix of the two?
   f. Call to Action—What do you want people to do after seeing the video? Share knowledge? Take action?

7. Recommended Assessment Of Learning: Ask students to submit their storyboards for assessment. Students may take turns privately presenting them to you. Record observations with forms from Appendix 1.
Lesson 4: WE Film For Change

Suggested Time:
60 minutes

Common Core Alignment (Grades 7–8)
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.7.5 - Include multimedia components and visual displays in presentations to clarify claims and findings and emphasize salient points.
• CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.8.5 - Integrate multimedia and visual displays into presentations to clarify information, strengthen claims and evidence, and add interest.

Learning Goals:
Students will:
• Use the medium of film to tell and share a story

Take Action

Educator’s Note: Students should now be ready to film or, if they cannot film, complete their stories using another medium. If students are telling someone else’s story, they may need to complete this step outside of the classroom. Allow students to use personal devices for filming or use school equipment, if available.

1. Provide students with time to record their stories.

2. Share with students WE Film For Change, a WE Schools campaign that promotes action through an art project, visit www.WE.org/wefilmforchange.

3. Keeping in mind what they have learned from the lessons, ask students the following questions:
   a. What are the goals of this campaign?
   b. How can I use my storytelling project to be a part of this campaign?
   c. How would participating in this campaign benefit our local community?

4. Encourage students to sign up for the WE Film for Change campaign by registering at www.WE.org/wefilmforchange.

5. Before interacting on or using social media review classroom and school guidelines. Before interacting with members of the wider community, review classroom guidelines on etiquette and respect.

6. Ensure students are actively participating and collecting data throughout the Take Action phase by recording observations on the forms in Appendix 1.

Report and Celebrate

7. Film can be used to create positive change, but films need to be shared. Invite students to share their films and art projects with the rest of the school and local community. Hold an event that displays art projects and screens the films.

8. Find ways to amplify the messages portrayed in the films and art projects through marketing beforehand. At the event provide information and ways for people to get involved in social justice issues raised in films and projects.
# Appendix 1: Classroom Observation Forms

**Classroom Observation Form 1**

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### Appendix 1: Classroom Observation Forms

#### Classroom Observation Form 2

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Lesson/Activity:
# Appendix 1: Classroom Observation Forms

## Classroom Observation Form 3

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Lesson/Activity:
Blackline Master 1: Storyboards