

The Stories We Carry: Lessons for the Present, Gifts for the Future

Student Guide

This guide will help you interview your partner and use their story to create a monologue. As you begin the process, remember to listen carefully, pay attention to important details, and identify the main point of your partner’s story. Your goal is to understand their experience and represent their voice and perspective as accurately as possible.

Part I – the Interview Process |

In this section, you will interview your partner. As you listen, pay attention to the descriptive words they use, the emotions they express, and the main point of their story.

Use the space below to write down important details, phrases, and moments that will help you accurately capture your partner’s voice, perspective, and experience.

Interview Questions:	Responses
Describe a major event that happened and had an impact on you and your community. <i>(Be sure to include as many details as possible, including when and where the event happened.)</i>	
What do you remember seeing, hearing, smelling, or noticing around you in that moment?	

Was there anything in that moment that captured your attention? Maybe something someone was wearing, a song or show playing in the background or even a small detail you still remember?	
Is there a specific word, phrase, or sentence you remember thinking, saying or hearing?	
Why do you think this event still matters to your community today?	
What do you wish other people understood about that experience?	

Part II – Organizing the Thoughts and Words |

In this section, you will organize the information you gathered from your interview. Stories may come out in different ways during a conversation—as full ideas, short phrases, emotions, or individual details.

Use the sections below to put your partner’s story into a clear order. Later, when you write your monologue, you will use this same order to help guide your writing. Try to use as much of your partner’s original language as possible.

The Beginning of the Monologue

Setting: *[Where and when the story takes place. “When” can mean the time of day, the time of year, or a specific moment in someone’s life.]*

Exposition: *[The beginning of the story that gives the audience important background information, such as who is involved, where and when the story takes place, and what is happening. In this section, use descriptive language to help the audience picture the world of the story.]*

Conflict: *[The problem, challenge, or struggle in the story. This is what the person is dealing with, trying to solve, or working through.]*

The Middle of the Monologue

Rising Action: *[The part of the story where things start to happen and the story begins to build. In this section, include the important events, feelings, and choices that lead to the biggest moment in the story.]*

Climax: *[The most exciting, important, or emotional moment in the story. This is the moment everything has been building toward.]*

The End of the Monologue

Falling Action: *[The part of the story after the biggest moment. This is where things begin to calm down and we see what happens next.]*

Resolution: *[The ending of the story. This is where we find out how things turn out, what has changed, or what the person takes away from the experience.]*

Using everything you collected in Part 1 and organized in Part 2, it's time to put your partner's story together and create your monologue. Start with the Beginning of the story: Setting → Exposition → Conflict. You may introduce these parts in the order that works best for your story. Next, move into the Middle: Rising Action → Climax. Keep these in this order because the Rising Action builds toward the biggest moment of the story. Finally, move into the End: Falling Action → Resolution. The Falling Action shows what happens after the biggest moment and leads us to the final Resolution.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on the right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.

Word Bank

Use the word bank below to help bring your story to life. Descriptive words can make a story feel exciting, intense, peaceful, funny, serious, or anything in between.

The words you choose help create the mood of the story and show the audience how the moment felt. Be creative, make thoughtful choices, and have fun!

Setting	Conflict	Emotions	Action
bright dark crowded empty noisy quiet warm cold messy	difficult confusing unfair scary stressful frustrating awkward overwhelming uncertain	happy angry scared nervous excited anxious overwhelmed conflicted determined	grabbed rushed froze reached stumbled stared whispered shouted hesitated

More Descriptive Words...
afraid • airy • alert • amazed • bold • brave • bright • bright-eyed • bumpy • carefree • careful • cautious • charming • cheerful • close-knit • cloudy • cold • conflicted • crowded • curious • damp • daring • dark • delicate • dirty • drained • dramatic • dry • energetic • excited • expressive • faded • faraway • fast-paced • fearless • fierce • focused • foggy • fresh • friendly • gentle • glad • gloomy • graceful • grassy • harsh • heavy-hearted • hopeful • hurt • jumpy • leafy • lively • memorable • misty • moody • muddy • nearby • neat • nervous • open-minded • patient • peaceful • playful • powerful • proud • puzzled • reflective • relaxed • reserved • restless • rocky • rough • run-down • rusty • sandy • serious • shaded • shaky • shiny • shy • silly • sincere • sleepy • slow-moving • soft-spoken • sparkling • steady • stormy • striking • stunned • sunlit • swift • tender • tense • thoughtful • tired • uncertain • uneasy • unsure • untidy • upset • warm-hearted • watchful • welcoming • well-kept • worn-down • worried