

Digital Story Telling Project

Imagine that you have been transported back in time to the year 800 AD. The city of Tikal is a bustling, vibrant city in the middle of the jungle. Tikal is one of the largest cities in Meso America at this time, with thousands of people living in and near the city. The city is home to many different groups of people: royalty, nobles, merchants, farmers and slaves.

The Maya had a class structure that played an important role in determining one's life.

Maya Class Structure

- Rulers
 - Hereditary Ruler/King
 - Royal family
- Nobility/Elite
 - Scribes
 - Astronomers
 - Mathematicians
 - Families of nobility
- Common People
 - Farmers
 - Stone cutters
 - Carpenters
 - Architects
 - Merchants
- Slaves
 - Prisoners of War
 - Orphans
 - Convicted criminals
 - Children of slaves
 - Poor commoners who sold themselves into bondage

You will be creating a digital story about a person from one of the above groups living in Tikal in the year 800 AD. A digital story is a short 3 to 5 minute story told using digital media, including photos, drawings, video, music and sound. The digital story will be based on your own fictional story about a character living in Tikal and be created using movie editing software or slide presentation software. Your story should reflect what you have learned about the Maya and Tikal from your own research and classroom lectures. Once you have completed your digital story you will present it to the class.

There are many programs that can be used to create a digital story.

Software

Microsoft PowerPoint

PowerPoint is popular slide and presentation creating software. Available for both Mac and PC.

Microsoft Photostory 3

A free photo slide show creating software that includes special effects, soundtracks and personalize your stories with titles and captions. Available for PC computers.

Download Photostory for free:

<http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/using/digitalphotography/photostory/default.aspx>

Comic Life

Comic Life allows users to create comic strips using photos and allows users to add captions, voice bubbles and other comic effects. Comics can then be saved as images or as PDFs. Currently only available for Macs.

iMovie

Apple's movie editing software that comes installed on Macs with OSX. iMovie is easy for users with no movie editing experience. Available only on Mac.

Adobe

Adobe Premiere Elements- Adobe's basic video creating/editing software. Only available for PC.

Adobe Premiere Pro - More suitable for users who want to go beyond basic video editing. Available for PC and Mac.

MovieMaker

Windows Movie Maker is a video creating/editing software that is included in recent versions of Microsoft Windows.

Online Resources

Voice Thread

<http://voicethread.com/>

Voice Thread is a web-based multimedia narrative service, letting users record audio tracks and text attached to images.

YouTube Remixer

http://www.youtube.com/ytremixer_about

YouTube is an online video sharing site. The YouTube Remixer allows users to edit video using their online software.

Step 1: Brain storming

Imagining the Past

1. Your Character

Create a name for your character

What social class does your character belong to?

What job does your character have?

What does your character look like? Describe your character's physical characteristics.

What kind of personality does your character have? Describe your character's personality.

2. Daily Life for Your Character

Where does your character work at Tikal?

Where does your character live at Tikal?

What roles does religion play in your character's daily life?

What buildings would your character see everyday at Tikal?

What other groups of people would your character interact with?

Step 2: Online research

Content

Use the Internet or check out books from the library to research the Maya culture and the site of Tikal. You will incorporate your research into the your digital story, depending on how relevant they are to your character's life. Some types of items to research include Maya social structure, religion, housing, clothing, food, and daily lifestyle.

Be sure to write down the URL of any website you use. To make copying URLs easier, you can copy and paste the website URLs into a text document on your computer. At the end of the project you will be required to have a page listing the sources you used. You should have at least 5 web resources listed. If you are using books, magazine and other resources, you should create a bibliography of your sources.

Here are some suggested websites:

<http://www.cyark.org>

<http://www.tikalpark.com/generalinfo.htm>

http://encarta.msn.com/encyclopedia_761576077/Maya_Civilization.html

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tikal>

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maya_civilization

Media Resources

While you research information on the Maya on the Internet, you can also start to start searching for the media that you will use in your digital story.

Some examples of media that you can use in your digital story project:

- Photographs
- Clip art
- Maps
- Movie clips
- Computer animations
- Music
- Sound effects
- Your own drawings, paintings and photographs (To transfer these types of media to a computer you should use a digital scanner or camera)

If you find media you would like to use in your project, save it folder on the computer. You should also write down or copy into a text document the URL of the website where you obtained the media. You should write down the exact URL of the media the page appears on.

For example:

Image Credit:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Image:TikaltempleV.jpg> (This is the URL of the image)
or

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tikal> (This is the URL of the web page where the image appear)

are the best ways to site an image

<http://www.en.wikipedia.org/> is NOT sufficient for an image credit.

At the end of your digital story you will be including a "media credits" section containing the source of your media. This is why it is important to write down the URL of any media you use.

To save an image on a PC, right-click on an image and select "Save as"

To save an image on a Mac, drag the image to your desktop.

Images and Video

CyArk <http://archive.cyark.org/sites.php?v=media&p=TIK>

BigFoto <http://www.bigfoto.com>

Creative Commons Images <http://creativecommons.org/image>

Dreamstime <http://www.dreamstime.com/freephotos>

Free Images <http://www.freeimages.com/photos>

Open Photo <http://openphoto.net>

Flickr <http://www.flickr.com>

Music/Audio

Creative Commons Audio <http://creativecommons.org/audio>

Download.com <http://music.download.com>

Free Play <http://www.freeplaymusic.com>

The Freesound Project <http://freesound.iaa.upf.edu>

Ghost Note <http://ghostnotes.blogspot.com>

Magna Tune <http://www.magnatune.com>

Opsound <http://www.opsound.org>

Partners in Rhyme <http://www.partnersinrhyme.com>

Step 3: Writing the Story

Write a 1-2 page creative story about your character's daily life in Tikal. Your story should be written from the perspective of your character in the first-person point of view. In your story you will describe what life is like for your character at Tikal. You can choose to tell a story about one typical day or write about one particularly unusual day for your character at Tikal. Be creative!

Some important elements to include in your story include: a clear plot, suspense, good pacing. Your story should also reflect what you have learned about the Maya and Tikal from the classroom, books and your Internet research.

Step 4. Storyboarding

Good planning is key to creating a good digital story. One way to organize your story is a storyboard. Storyboards are a planning tool to help you outline and organize your digital story scene by scene. Viewed in sequence, your storyboards become a road map for your digital story.

Use the storyboard worksheet to create a visual outline of your digital story. The storyboard has a format similar to a comic strip with boxes for your own images/drawings and an area for text. The storyboard will help you determine the order of the pieces of your story-what happens first, next and last in the digital story. Using your 1-2 page written story, break the story into scenes. Use the boxes to sketch what types of images you want to appear on the screen of your digital story. Using the lines below the boxes, you will write the parts of your story that correspond to each image.

Storyboarding can also be a good time to think about voice over narration in your movie. Some people like to read their whole story aloud, while others prefer to only narrate certain parts of the story. Write down parts of your story you would like included in the voice over in the lines under each of the boxes corresponding to the appropriate slide/screen.

Step 5. Putting it all together

Now it's time to start making your digital story! You will use either a slide presentation software or a movie editing software to create the movie version of the story you wrote.

1. Organizing images

Using your storyboard, you will place your images in a slide show or movie editing software. Your storyboard should act as an outline for where you place your images in the slide program or in your movie. You can read the PowerPoint and iMovie tutorials for details about how to create add images, movies, sound and text to these programs.

2. Transitions and Animations

In your slide show or movie, add transitions between each scene. Adding transitions and effects animate and bring your images to life!

3. Recording a narration

Adding a narration to your digital story adds a powerful element to your piece-your voice! You can use your voice to add drama to you story by changing the tone and pace of your voice. You will add a narration to your digital story using either a digital voice recording, text or by reading your story aloud during the classroom presentation of your story.

If you have not done so already, you should use your storyboard and finalize what parts of your story would like read aloud for your voice over. Use the storyboard worksheet and write down the parts you want included in your voice over under each slide. This will serve as your script when you record or when you give your classroom presentation.

For the best results, use an external microphone. You can also use your computer's internal microphone, although the quality of the sound from an internal microphone can vary. After you record your narration you will be adjusting the timing of your digital story. You can read the PowerPoint tutorial for more information on how to add a narration to PowerPoint and how to adjust the timing.

If you do not have a microphone or if the sound quality from your computer's internal microphone is less than satisfactory, you may want to use text on the screen to describe what is happening in the movies. If you decide to use text instead of a voice over, you may want to consider editing your story slightly. It is good to reduce the words on the screen so that your viewer has time to read all the text. You can also try techniques like having one slide of text and then one slide of images.

Another option to consider if you do not have access to a microphone is to read your story aloud while your slide show plays during your classroom presentation. You will need to practice the timing of your slide show along with the parts of your story you plan to read. You should read your story aloud while at the computer so you can easily adjust the timing of your slides. Your digital story slide transitions should be timed and automated so you can focus on reading your script during the class presentation.

4. Adding music

Music can help create a mood to enhance your story and add a sense of drama. Choose a musical piece that complements your story.

One important note: If you are using PowerPoint to create your digital story, you should know that PowerPoint does not allow you to add both music and a voice over.

5. Rehearsing Your Digital Story

Before your classroom presentation, it is a good idea to review your digital story. Review your PowerPoint slide show or your movie. This is a good time to perfect the timing of your animations and transitions and make sure that your narration is synced up with the correct images.

6. Citing your sources

At the end of your digital story, be sure to include a slide or frame for Resources and Image Credits. Under Resources you will write down the names of the website you used in your Internet research on the Maya and Tikal.

Under image credits you will list the URL of any website you used in your digital story. You should copy the exact URL of the photo or the page that it appears.

Step 6. Classroom Presentations

Burn your digital story to a CD and turn it in to your teacher. There will be a classroom presentation of all the digital stories. Your digital story will be graded by the digital story rubric attached to this sheet.

Remember, a digital story is supposed to be creative -and fun!