Roll-A-Story Challenge

Jesse's Story

Jesse Inventson is many things! He's super smart with scores and stats. He's brilliant and decisive when he needs to take action. He's limber and agile both on and off of the playing field. But Jesse freezes like a deer in headlights when faced with a creative writing assignment!

Trying to figure out different character roles like the Protagonist, the character that the story is about, or the antagonist, the character who stands in their way, just makes his head hurt! He'd rather run up and down a football field than spend 5 minutes trying to define a setting, the place, time and mood in which a story takes place. And his idea of conflict is trying to beat his Sister, Sue, at Fork-Knight Online, not describing the challenges of characters that have opposing goals!

Fortunately, Jesse's brother, Walt, has a great idea to help Jesse along. He turned Jesse's writing assignment into a game. Now Jesse can fill in a form on a web page to help create a story based on Jesse's answers. (Admittedly, Walt got the idea while playing his favorite role-playing game, Dungeons & More Dungeons!)

Implementation

Go to the following web address:

https://inventionlandinstitute.com/hour/rollastory/

Follow the directions and answer the questions. The page creates random story elements then asks you, the user, questions about those elements. The page teaches you about critical story elements. Then at the end, you "roll your story".

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By clicking the ROLL YOUR STORY button, the page will use your input to build a simple story. You get to see how all of your answers work together! Also, if you don't like how some of your answers work, or you want to change some of them, you can simply scroll up, make the changes, then click the ROLL YOUR STORY button again.

Best of all, if you'd like a snapshot of your story, there's a DOWNLOAD button which will save a PNG image of the story. Of course, you can also select and copy the text if you'd like to paste it into an email, word processor or text document.

Lessons Learned

In this challenge, students learn how to use critical elements to build a story. The structure of the challenge mirrors the standard structure of plot with setting and character introduction at the beginning, conflict in the middle and resolution at the end. Just as we used creativity to find a way to relate randomly chosen objects or people to each other in these stories, we can find a way to relate to almost any audience or need. To be good storytellers, we should tailor our message and style to respond to our particular situation or audience.

Additional Options

This challenge does not need to stop with the creation of the story itself. For an additional challenge, copy the story into a word processor and continue to add content. Add more details to explain how events unfold. Spend more time talking about the characters.

Another option is to print out the story or copy it on to separate sheets of paper. Cut each section out and put it on it's own page. Then make a front and back cover, and bind everything together to create a mini-book.

What about artwork? Regardless of whether you're working in a word processor or copying pages by hand, you may want to create artwork for your cover or to add on or in between pages of your book. Maybe you'd like to work with an artistic friend. Many books will say at the begging written by *the author* and illustrations by t*he artist.*

There are a wealth of opportunities with the Roll-A-Story Challenge.

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