

Roll-A-Story Challenge

A bit about Storytelling

Telling a story is hard. It's not easy 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. Trying to define a [setting](#), the place, time and mood in which a story takes place, takes thought and consideration. And creating [conflict](#), by understanding the motivations of your characters and recognizing the challenges that those motivations present, can be mentally and emotionally exhausting!

Fortunately, being able to tell a good story is also one of the most rewarding things a person can do, regardless of whether it's for fun, or on a professional level. So much so that many people choose storytelling as their career.

The first step to becoming a good storyteller is learning the critical elements of a story and how they work together in a narrative. The following challenge introduces students to the critical story elements by guiding them through the process of selecting and defining these elements for their own story. These selections are made at random and students will then answer questions about their selections. The answers will then be used to build their own simple story.

Implementation

Go to the following web address:

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

Follow the directions and answer the questions. This interactive form creates random story elements then asks you, the user, questions about those elements. With each sub section, the page teaches you about critical story elements. Then at the end, you "roll your story".

By clicking the ROLL YOUR STORY button, the page will use your input to auto generate a simple narrative. You get to see how all of your creative input works together to tell a story! Also, if you don't like how some of your answers work, or you want to change some of your answers, you can simply scroll up, make the changes and 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 your 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, encountering of 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 its 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 beginning written by *the author* and illustrations by *the artist*.

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