

## MODULE 04

# DIGITAL STORYTELLING FOR LOCAL HERITAGE

DIGITAL RURAL EUROPEAN ART  
AND MEMORY



Project partners



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## How to use this E-book

You can read this material before, during or after the learning session. The first part introduces cultural heritage, community participation and the principles of digital storytelling. In the Final Activity, you can choose one of two practical pathways: a Knowledge Holder Story or an Object and Place Story.

Each section includes a short practical activity. These activities help you connect the theory with a local example and gradually prepare the final output. You do not need professional equipment. A smartphone, a quiet space, basic editing functions and careful planning are enough for a first story.

The final story is deliberately short. A 60-90 second format encourages you to choose one central message, use media with purpose and avoid overwhelming the audience. A clear story plan is also a valid outcome when recording or editing cannot be completed during the session.

*Fujara – a traditional Slovak  
wooden wind instrument.*



## MODULE INFORMATION

|                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                 |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  <b>Module number</b><br>04                                     |  <b>Level</b><br>Beginner                      |
|  <b>Topic</b><br>Digital Storytelling<br>through Local Heritage |  <b>Format</b><br>Hybrid learning              |
|  <b>Duration</b><br>3 hours                                    |  <b>Main output</b><br>Digital Heritage Story |

### About this module

Every community holds stories worth remembering. They may live in a family photograph, a local expression, a working method, a song, a recipe, a landscape or the memory of a person who has witnessed change. These stories may never appear in an official archive, yet they help people understand who they are, where they come from and what knowledge they want to pass on.

Digital storytelling can help make these local meanings visible and audible. However, recording a story also creates responsibility. A storyteller must consider consent, privacy, accuracy, representation, accessibility, ownership and the possible effects of public sharing. The aim of this module is therefore to combine creative confidence with respectful community practice.

This e-book supports the DREAM module on digital storytelling for local heritage. It is designed for beginners and for adult learners who want to use a smartphone or another accessible digital device to document one local story respectfully. The emphasis is not on advanced filmmaking. It is on recognising meaningful heritage, listening carefully, making ethical decisions and shaping a clear 60-90 second story that can be saved, shared or developed further.



## Learning Objectives

- Recognise tangible, intangible and living heritage in a local community.
- Explain why heritage is connected to memory, identity, belonging and cultural participation.
- Understand why people connected to heritage should participate in decisions about its documentation and representation.
- Describe digital storytelling as the purposeful combination of narrative and digital media.
- Ask open and respectful questions and listen actively
- Apply informed consent, privacy and ethical storytelling principles.
- Document an object or place using reliable information and a clear human connection.
- Plan, record and edit a 60-90 second digital heritage story or a complete story plan.
- Review accessibility, technical quality, attribution and permission before sharing.

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## 0. Before You Begin: My Starting Point

Before starting the module, rate each statement from 1 to 5. Use 1 when you cannot do the task yet and 5 when you can do it independently. This is not a test. It is a way to notice your starting point and later recognise your progress.

- I can recognise local heritage in everyday objects, memories, skills, and traditions.
- I can explain why people connected to a story should help decide how it is recorded and shared.
- I can ask open and respectful interview questions and listen without taking control of the story.
- I can check whether I have permission to record and publish a person, object, photograph or place.
- I can organise image, voice, sound and text into a short digital story with a clear message.

Keep your ratings. You will return to the same statements at the end of the module.

## 1. Unpacking Cultural Heritage: Key Perspectives & Frameworks

Cultural heritage can be understood from several complementary perspectives. This is important because heritage encompasses a wide range of places, practices, knowledge, traditions and cultural expressions. Heritage may be a historic building, an everyday object, a traditional skill, a song, a local celebration, a memory or a place that has particular meaning for a community. Different international frameworks therefore help us notice different dimensions of heritage and understand why they may need different forms of protection, documentation and participation.

The *1972 UNESCO Convention* defines cultural heritage for the purposes of world heritage protection through monuments, groups of buildings and sites that may have outstanding universal value. This perspective is important for formally recognised physical heritage and the systems created to protect it (UNESCO, 1972).

The *2003 UNESCO Convention* expands attention to intangible cultural heritage: practices, representations, expressions, knowledge and skills that communities, groups and individuals recognise as part of their heritage. Such heritage is transmitted across generations, recreated as circumstances change and connected to a sense of identity and continuity (UNESCO, 2003).

The *2005 Faro Convention* takes a broad social and democratic approach. It defines cultural heritage through resources inherited from the past that people identify as expressions of evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions. It therefore places strong emphasis on meaning, participation and shared responsibility (Council of Europe, 2005).

## Heritage Perspectives

| Perspective          | Main focus                                                                    | What it helps us notice                                           |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| UNESCO 1972          | Monuments, groups of buildings and sites of outstanding universal value       | Formal protection of physical heritage and places.                |
| UNESCO 2003          | Living practices, expressions, knowledge and skills recognised by communities | Transmission, continuity, adaptation and community participation. |
| Faro Convention 2005 | The meanings, values and uses that people attach to inherited resources.      | Heritage as a human-rights, participation and community issue.    |



### Practical Task

Choose one heritage example from your community. Describe how it could be understood through each of the three perspectives.

*Example:* a historic mill may be a physical building, a place connected to working knowledge and memories, and a community resource whose meaning depends on the people connected to it.

## 2. Recognising Different Forms of Cultural Heritage: Tangible, Intangible, and Living

**Tangible heritage** consists of physical resources that can be seen and touched. It includes buildings, monuments, archaeological sites, tools, household objects, clothing, photographs, documents, artworks, cultural landscapes and historic places. A physical object becomes especially meaningful when its history, use and relationship to people are also understood (UNESCO, 1972).

**Figure 1**

Example of Tangible Heritage



*Note.* Photograph of the Roman Aqueduct of Segovia. From AcueductoSegovia [Photograph], by Mario modesto, 2008, Wikimedia Commons (<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:AcueductoSegovia.jpg>). CC BY-SA 3.0.

**Figure 2**

Example of Tangible Heritage



*Note.* View of the ruins of Spiš Castle in Slovakia. From Spis Castle - Slovakia [Photograph], by P. Kratochvil, 2007, Wikimedia Commons ([https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Spis\\_Castle\\_-\\_Slovakia.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Spis_Castle_-_Slovakia.jpg)). In the public domain.

**Intangible cultural heritage** concerns living knowledge and practice. Stories, songs, dances, recipes, dialects, celebrations, craftsmanship, working methods and knowledge of nature are examples. UNESCO (2003) stresses that this heritage is recognised by the communities, groups or individuals who create, maintain and transmit it.

**Figure 3**

Example of Intangible cultural heritage



*Note.* A performance by dancers from the traditional Slovak folklore ensemble Lúčnica. From Lucnica 0834 [Photograph], by P. Cepcek, 2017, Wikimedia Commons ([https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lucnica\\_0834.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lucnica_0834.jpg)). CC BY-SA 4.0.

**Figure 4**

Example of Intangible Cultural Heritage



*Note.* A traditional flamenco musical and dance performance in Seville, Spain. From Flamenco in Sevilla 01 [Photograph], by Schnobby, 2014, Wikimedia Commons ([https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Flamenco\\_in\\_Sevilla\\_01.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Flamenco_in_Sevilla_01.jpg)). CC BY-SA 4.0.

The term **living heritage** refers to the knowledge, skills, practices, and traditions that are still actively practiced, shared, and transmitted within communities today (UNESCO, 2003). It is closely related to intangible cultural heritage and highlights that heritage is not merely preserved as a vestige of the past, but continues to be used, adapted, and recreated as communities and environments change.

**Figure 5**

Example of Living Heritage



*Note.* Traditional Slovak Bobbin Lacemaking Equipment Set. From Zestaw do wyrobu koronki klockowej Słowacja [Photograph], by Krzysiu, 2017, Wikimedia Commons ([https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Zestaw\\_do\\_wyrobu\\_koronki\\_klockowej\\_S%C5%82owacja.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Zestaw_do_wyrobu_koronki_klockowej_S%C5%82owacja.jpg)). CC BY 4.0.

### 3. Heritage and Identity

Cultural heritage connects past experience with present identity. It can support belonging to a family, place, language group or community, create continuity between generations and give recognition to local knowledge. It can also provide a space to discuss change, loss, migration, adaptation and relationships between different groups.

The *Faro Convention* overview explains that objects and places are important because of the meanings, uses and values that people attach to them. In this sense "**objects and places are not, in themselves, what is important about cultural heritage**" (Council of Europe, n.d., para. 1). The same photograph or building can therefore carry different meanings for different people.

Memory is not identical or neutral. People and groups may remember and interpret the same place or event in different, and sometimes conflicting, ways. Heritage research therefore cautions against treating communities as homogeneous or assuming that one interpretation represents everyone connected to a place or tradition (Waterton & Smith, 2010).

Responsible  
storytelling  
identifies whose  
perspective is  
being presented  
and leaves room  
for other  
memories and  
experiences.



#### Reflection

Think of a familiar place, tradition or local story. Write one sentence about what it means to you or what you know about it.

Then identify one other person or group who may experience or remember it differently, for example an older or younger generation, a newcomer, a minority group or someone who was less involved in the community.

What question could you ask them to understand their perspective?

## 4. How Heritage Can Disappear Quietly

Heritage does not disappear only when a building is demolished or an object is lost. It can disappear quietly when a tradition is no longer practised, a language or expression is no longer used, a skill is not passed on, a photograph loses its names and context, or the last person who remembers an event is no longer able to tell it.

UNESCO (2003) describes intangible heritage as fragile because its continued existence depends on people transmitting knowledge and skills. Safeguarding is not the same as freezing a tradition in a supposedly pure form. It means supporting the transfer of knowledge, practice and meaning while recognising that living heritage continues to evolve.

Digital storytelling can help preserve traces of experiences that may otherwise remain absent from public memory. A short recording will not capture everything, but it can save a voice, explain the meaning of an object, demonstrate part of a skill or create a starting point for future documentation.



### Practical Task

Complete the sentence: "A local story, skill, word, place or memory that could be lost is \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_."

Then identify one person, group or source that could help document it responsibly.

## 5. Who Has a Voice in Heritage?

Participation in cultural life is a **human right**. Article 27 of the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* states that everyone has the right to participate freely in the cultural life of the community (United Nations, 1948). This means that people should not be treated only as audiences for culture created elsewhere. They should also have opportunities to recognise, interpret, practise and share the heritage that matters to them.

The *Faro Convention* describes a **heritage community** as people who value particular aspects of cultural heritage and wish to sustain and transmit them to future generations. A heritage community may be a village, a family, a minority-language group, craftspeople, cultural performers, people connected to a place or tradition, a local association or an informal network (Council of Europe, 2005).

This understanding moves heritage away from an expert-only activity. Experts and institutions remain important, but local people should also be able to decide which stories matter, whose voices should be heard, how traditions are represented, what should remain private and what image of the community is shared online. UNESCO similarly requires the widest possible participation of communities, groups and individuals who create, maintain and transmit intangible heritage (UNESCO, 2003).



### Practical Task

For one possible story, identify the relevant heritage community.

Who values the story?

Who maintains the knowledge?

Who might be affected by recording or sharing it?

Who should be invited into the decision?

## 6. Ethical and Responsible Heritage Storytelling

The ability to record something does not automatically create the right to publish it. Heritage stories may include personal data, family memories, grief, conflict, sacred knowledge, minority-language material, private photographs or places that are vulnerable to damage. Ethical storytelling begins before the camera is switched on and continues after the file has been exported.

UNESCO ethical principles state that communities, groups and individuals should have a primary role in safeguarding their intangible heritage. Interactions should be based on transparent collaboration, dialogue and free, prior, sustained and informed consent. Communities should also help identify risks such as decontextualisation, commodification and misrepresentation (UNESCO, 2015).

For interviews, the Oral History Association (2025) recommends explaining the project and possible uses, obtaining and documenting informed consent, agreeing on preservation and access, and, when possible, offering the narrator an opportunity to approve the recording before public release. Consent is therefore a process of understanding and choice, not only a signature.

### **Before recording or sharing, ask the following questions:**

- Who creates, maintains, owns or remembers this heritage?
- Who should participate in the decision to record or publish it?
- Does each identifiable person understand the purpose, audience and possible future use?
- Could the story reveal private, sacred, sensitive or harmful information?
- Are photographs, recordings, music and archival materials permitted for this use?
- Will contributors be named, credited or kept anonymous according to their choice?
- Could editing simplify, stereotype or change the meaning of what a person said?
- Does the person have a realistic way to withdraw or change permission before publication?

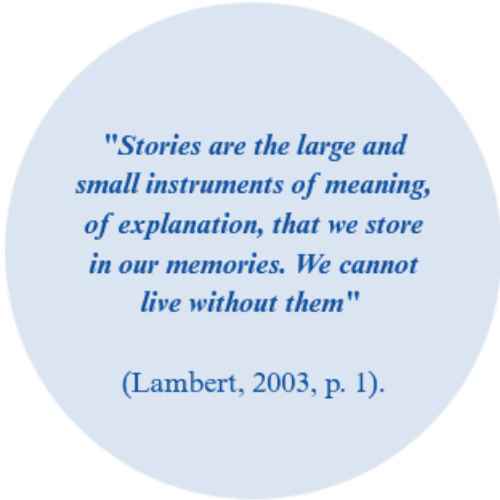
**Remember:** *When permission, ownership or possible harm is unclear, pause the project. Ask the person concerned, the facilitator or the responsible institution before sharing.*

## 7. What Is Digital Storytelling?

Before we think about digital storytelling, it is useful to remember that storytelling itself is much older than any digital tool. People have always used stories to share experience, pass on knowledge, explain the world around them and connect one generation with another.

Stories give meaning to facts and events by showing how they were experienced by people. A date, building, object or tradition can tell us something about the past, but a story can help us understand what it meant to live through it, use it, remember it or pass it on. The ways we tell stories have changed over time. Stories have been shared through conversation, song, images, writing, photographs, radio, film and, today, digital media. The tools may change, but the purpose remains similar: to make an experience understandable and meaningful to someone else.

A strong story is therefore more than a sequence of events with a beginning, middle and end. It makes deliberate choices about whose perspective is heard, which details matter and what the audience should take away from the experience. In heritage storytelling, these choices are especially important because stories help shape how people, places and traditions are remembered.



*"Stories are the large and small instruments of meaning, of explanation, that we store in our memories. We cannot live without them"*

(Lambert, 2003, p. 1).

**Digital storytelling** builds on this long human tradition. It simply adds new ways of combining voice, images, sound, video and text so that local experiences and knowledge can be documented and shared with others.

Digital storytelling combines narrative with digital media. A creator selects a topic, gathers information, shapes a story and combines it with elements such as photographs, recorded voice, text, video, sound and music. Robin (2008) describes this process as the traditional work of choosing a topic, researching, writing and developing a story, followed by

the purposeful use of multimedia. The technology is only one part of the process. A collection of clips is not automatically a story. A story has a perspective, a central meaning and a relationship with an audience. It makes choices about what to include, what to leave out and how the parts should be organised.

Digital storytelling can also be participatory. It gives people skills to communicate personal or community stories in their own words and imagery. In this sense, the method can create opportunities for voices that are often missing from public representations of rural communities to be heard.

## 8. Audience, Point of View and Central Message

Before creating a digital story, decide three things: **(1) who the story is for, (2) whose perspective it presents** and **(3) what you want the audience to remember**. These choices guide everything that follows, including the information you include, the questions you ask and the media you use.



### Key Concepts

#### Audience

The audience is the person or group for whom the story is created. Different audiences may need different information.

A private family story may include personal details that would not be appropriate for a public website. A story for local residents may assume that people already know the place, while a story for visitors may need more explanation, translation or context.

Possible audiences may include family members, local residents, schools, museums, tourists, cultural organisations or a wider online public.

#### Before recording, ask yourself:

*Who will see or hear this story?*

*What do they already know about the topic?*

*What might they need explained?*

*Is all of the planned content appropriate for this audience?*



## Key Concepts

### Point of view

Point of view means whose perspective guides the story.

The story may be told from the perspective of a family member, a community group or the creator. In some stories, more than one perspective may be included.

A clear point of view helps the audience understand who is speaking and where the interpretation comes from. It is important not to present one person's experience as if it represented an entire community.

### Before recording, ask yourself:

*Whose voice is at the centre of the story?*

*What is their relationship to the heritage?*

*Are there other perspectives that should be acknowledged?*



## Key Concepts

### Central message

The central message is the main idea you want the audience to understand or remember after the story ends.

The topic and the central message are often **not** the same.

#### For example:

Topic: An old village mill.

Central message: The mill shows how traditional working knowledge shaped everyday life in the community and why that knowledge is worth remembering today.

### Central message formula:

This is a story about \_\_\_\_\_, told from the perspective of \_\_\_\_\_, so that \_\_\_\_\_ can understand why \_\_\_\_\_ matters today.

## 9. Seven Elements of Digital Storytelling

A digital story becomes meaningful through the choices made about whose story is told, what keeps the audience interested, how meaning and emotion are communicated, and what is left out. The Center for Digital Storytelling identified seven elements that can help creators make these choices more deliberately.

| Element              | Meaning for a heritage story                                                                 |
|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Point of view     | Make clear whose perspective and interpretation guide the story.                             |
| 2. Guiding question  | Use one question or tension that encourages the audience to keep listening.                  |
| 3. Emotional content | Show why the subject matters to a real person or community without forcing emotion.          |
| 4. The gift of voice | Use narration or testimony to communicate personality, language and context.                 |
| 5. Soundtrack        | Use music or sound only when it supports the story and is permitted.                         |
| 6. Economy           | Use only the images, words and sounds needed for the central message.                        |
| 7. Pacing            | Create a rhythm that gives important moments enough time without becoming slow or confusing. |

## 10. Using Media with a Purpose

A strong digital story uses each medium for a reason. Image can show details that are difficult to explain. Voice can communicate personality, language and emotion. Natural sound creates a sense of place. Text can provide names, dates, translation and credits. Music can shape mood, but it should not overpower the speaker or manipulate the story unnecessarily.

Media should add **meaning** rather than repeat exactly the same information. For example, if the narrator says that a workshop was noisy, the audience may understand the place more deeply by briefly hearing the tools rather than reading the word "noisy" on screen. Similarly, a close-up of worn hands may communicate long experience without an additional explanatory sentence.

| Medium               | What it can communicate                                      | Useful questions                                                                            |
|----------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Image</b>         | Place, people, objects, action, contrast and visual detail.  | <i>Does it show something the audience needs?</i><br><i>Do I have permission to use it?</i> |
| <b>Voice</b>         | Language, personality, emotion, testimony and point of view. | <i>Can the speaker be heard clearly?</i><br><i>Is the voice represented in context?</i>     |
| <b>Natural sound</b> | Atmosphere, environment, work processes and soundscape.      | <i>Does it help the audience feel the place without making speech difficult to hear?</i>    |
| <b>Text</b>          | Names, dates, context, translation, subtitles and credits.   | <i>Is the text necessary?</i><br><i>Is it readable and accurate?</i>                        |
| <b>Music</b>         | Mood, transition and rhythm.                                 | <i>Is it permitted, appropriate and more quiet than the narration?</i>                      |

## 11. Researching Context and Finding the Human Connection

A heritage story should be engaging, but it should also be trustworthy. Check names, dates, locations and claims using reliable sources. Depending on the topic, these may include family records, municipal information, a museum, archive, library, heritage institution, published history or another person with relevant experience.

One source may contain a mistake or present only one perspective. When a fact is important, compare it with another source. Distinguish clearly between verified information, personal memory, local legend and interpretation. A narrator can accurately describe what they remember even when the exact date remains uncertain; the story should communicate that difference honestly.

**Human connection** prevents the story from becoming a list of facts. Ask who made, used, maintained, visited, lost, repaired or remembered the object or place. A small detail - a name written on the back of a photograph, the sound of a tool, a route walked every day - can help the audience understand why the resource matters.

## 12. Recording Clear and Useful Material

Good recording begins with preparation rather than expensive equipment. Clean the camera lens, check battery and storage space, silence unnecessary notifications and test the microphone. Record in a stable position and avoid strong light directly behind the person. Move closer to the sound source instead of relying on digital zoom.

For an interview, choose the quietest available place while still respecting the setting. Record a short test and listen with headphones if possible. Ask the person to look toward the interviewer rather than at the screen unless direct address is part of the plan. Record a few seconds of silence and natural sound for editing.

Capture more than one type of image: a wider view of the place, a medium view of the person or action and close-ups of meaningful details. Hold each shot still for several seconds. Avoid recording personal documents, addresses, unrelated people or sensitive details that are not needed.

### Recording Checklist

- ✓ Permission has been confirmed for the person, object, photograph and location.
- ✓ The device has enough battery, storage and available recording time.
- ✓ The lens is clean and the image is stable.
- ✓ The voice can be heard above background noise.
- ✓ The group records a wide view, useful details, action and natural sound.
- ✓ No unnecessary personal or sensitive information is visible.

## 13. Editing

Editing turns recorded material into a story. Begin by importing the clips and recordings, then remove mistakes and long pauses that do not serve the meaning. Place the strongest material in a clear order, adjust sound levels, add only necessary titles and create subtitles before exporting.

### Step by step

1. **Import:** Copy clips, voice recordings, photographs and notes into one organised project folder
2. **Select:** Choose only material that supports the central message and has appropriate permission
3. **Arrange:** Build the beginning, middle and end; keep the Knowledge Holder's intended meaning intact.
4. **Mix sound:** Make speech clear; use natural sound and permitted music at a lower level.
5. **Add text:** Add a title, names, dates, translation, subtitles and brief explanations where needed.
6. **Add credits:** Credit people, sources and media according to agreements and licences.
7. **Export and save:** Export a shareable file and keep an editable project copy and original recordings securely.

At this point, you may also choose to add **subtitles**. Subtitles and captions should be readable, accurate and timed so that the audience can follow them. Use clear contrast, avoid very small text and do not place text over important faces or details. When a story uses a language unfamiliar to part of the audience, translated subtitles may increase access while preserving the original voice.

### Final Technical Check

- ✓ The voice and important sounds can be heard clearly.
- ✓ The visuals are stable and relevant to the story.
- ✓ The story has a clear beginning, middle and end.
- ✓ The final length is approximately 60-90 seconds.
- ✓ Subtitles or captions are accurate and readable.
- ✓ Consent, privacy, permissions and restrictions have been respected.
- ✓ Names, sources and media have been credited correctly.

✓ The editable project and original files have been saved securely.

### **Additional Resources for Editing**

*VN Video Editor*

*CapCut*

*iMovie*

*OpenShot*

*Shotcut*

## 14. Final Activity: Digital Heritage Story

The main task is to create or fully plan one 60-90 second digital heritage story. Work in a small group and **choose the pathway that best fits the people, material and your interest.**



### The process explained

Both pathways lead to the same type of final outcome, but the process is slightly different:

- **Pathway 1:** Knowledge Holder Story begins with a person and their lived experience. The interview provides the main material for the story.
- **Pathway 2:** Object or Place Story begins with an object, photograph, building, landscape or other heritage element. The story is planned through a storyboard before recording begins.

**Remember:** *A clear and responsible story plan is a successful outcome when recording or editing cannot be completed. The plan should still include the central message, structure, media list, permissions, accessibility and credits.*

# Choose One Pathway

## 1. Knowledge Holder Story

**Starting point:**

A person who carries local memories, knowledge, skills or traditions.

**Core material:**

Interview excerpt, footage of the person, relevant objects or actions, place and natural sound.

**Main responsibility:**

Keep the person's voice and intended meaning central.

or

## 2. Object or Place Story

**Starting point:**

A meaningful object, photograph, building, landscape or local place.

**Core material:**

Reliable background information, a human connection, narration, visual details, action, and natural sound.

**Main responsibility:**

Explain why the resource matters to people, not only what it is.

## Pathway 1: Knowledge Holder Story

In this pathway, the **interview is the starting point of the story**. Prepare the interview carefully, listen to what emerges and then build the final story around the most meaningful material.

A Knowledge Holder is a person who carries memories, skills, experience, language or traditions that are meaningful to a community. The person may be an older resident, craftsperson, farmer, musician, cook, family member, local worker, organiser or anyone whose lived experience connects them to the chosen heritage. A Knowledge Holder is not a source to be extracted and left behind. The relationship should be based on respect, clear expectations and an understanding of how the recording may be stored and used.



### The final story may combine:

- a short interview excerpt
- footage of the Knowledge Holder
- close-ups of relevant objects or actions
- views of the surrounding place
- natural sound
- optional permitted music
- subtitles
- credits

**Remember:** *The person's voice should remain central whenever appropriate. The creator may add context, but should not take control of the person's meaning.*



## Key Concepts

**Active listening** means allowing time, not interrupting unnecessarily, following the person's language and asking clarifying questions without judgement.

Do not pressure the narrator to discuss a painful or private topic. The person may pause, refuse a question or stop the recording.

### Step 1: Preparing and Facilitating Respectful Interviews

Preparation helps the interview feel safe and focused. Here is a short list of steps that you can take as part of the preparatory phase:

1. **Explain the project in plain language:** who is involved, what will be recorded, the approximate length, the intended audience, where the result may be stored or published, whether the person can review it and whom to contact with questions.
2. **Obtain informed consent before recording.**
3. **Prepare an open-ended guide of questions.** It is better than a script that forces short answers. The Oral History Association (2025) recommends open-ended questions and a pre-interview discussion that helps establish rapport and clarify topics that are meaningful to the narrator.

**Quick tip:** A **phenomenological approach** can strengthen the interview by focusing on lived experience and meaning. Instead of asking only for dates and facts, explore how the person experienced an event, what it meant to them, how they felt and why the memory remains important (Moustakas, 1994). This does not replace factual checking, but it helps the story remain human.

**Preparing a Simple Informed Consent:** Informed consent does not need to be a long or complicated document. Its purpose is to make sure that the Knowledge Holder clearly understands the activity and agrees to participate before recording begins.

A simple consent form should explain:

- **who is carrying out the interview** and the purpose of the activity
- **what will be recorded**, for example audio, video, photographs or the person's words
- **how the material may be used**, such as in a digital story, educational activity, exhibition, website or social media
- **where the final story may be shared or published**
- that **participation is voluntary** and the person does not have to answer any question they do not wish to answer
- whether the person can **ask for the recording to stop or withdraw their permission**
- **who to contact** if they have questions about the recording or its use

**Quick tip:** *When collecting or recording personal information, follow GDPR principles.*

Apart from that, the form should include a clear statement such as: *“I understand the purpose of this activity and how my interview, image and/or voice may be used. I have had the opportunity to ask questions and I voluntarily agree to participate”*

Leave space for the **Knowledge Holder's name, signature** and **date**, as well as the name of the person conducting the interview.

**Remember:** *Consent should be discussed, not simply collected as a signature. Before recording, explain the activity in clear language, give the person time to ask questions and make sure they understand where their story may appear.*

### **Additional Resources on Informed Consent**

*Implementing continuous consent in qualitative research* (Klykken, 2022)

<https://doi.org/10.1177/14687941211014366>

*Guidance: How to gather and store informed consent* (UK Department for Education, n.d.)

<https://user-research.education.gov.uk/guidance/informed-consent-26/6>

## Pathway 2: Object or Place Story



Unlike the Knowledge Holder pathway, this story should be **planned visually before recording begins**. It works with a meaningful physical resource: a photograph, tool, piece of clothing, document, artwork, building, path, landscape, river, marketplace or another local site. The story should move beyond description and **reveal the human relationship** connected to the resource.

First identify the object or place and confirm permission to record it. Then gather reliable background information, identify the people connected to it, define one central message and plan

a short narration. Where possible, show an action, use, change or contrast. Natural sound can help the audience experience the setting.

### **The story should answer five basic questions:**

*What is it?*

*Who is connected to it?*

*How was it used or experienced?*

*Why does it matter today?*

*What could be lost if its meaning is forgotten?*

### **Step 1: Research and Define the Story**

Identify the object or place and gather enough reliable information to understand its context.

Answer the following questions:

- What is it?
- Who is connected to it?
- How was it used or experienced?
- Why does it matter today?
- What could be lost if its meaning is forgotten?

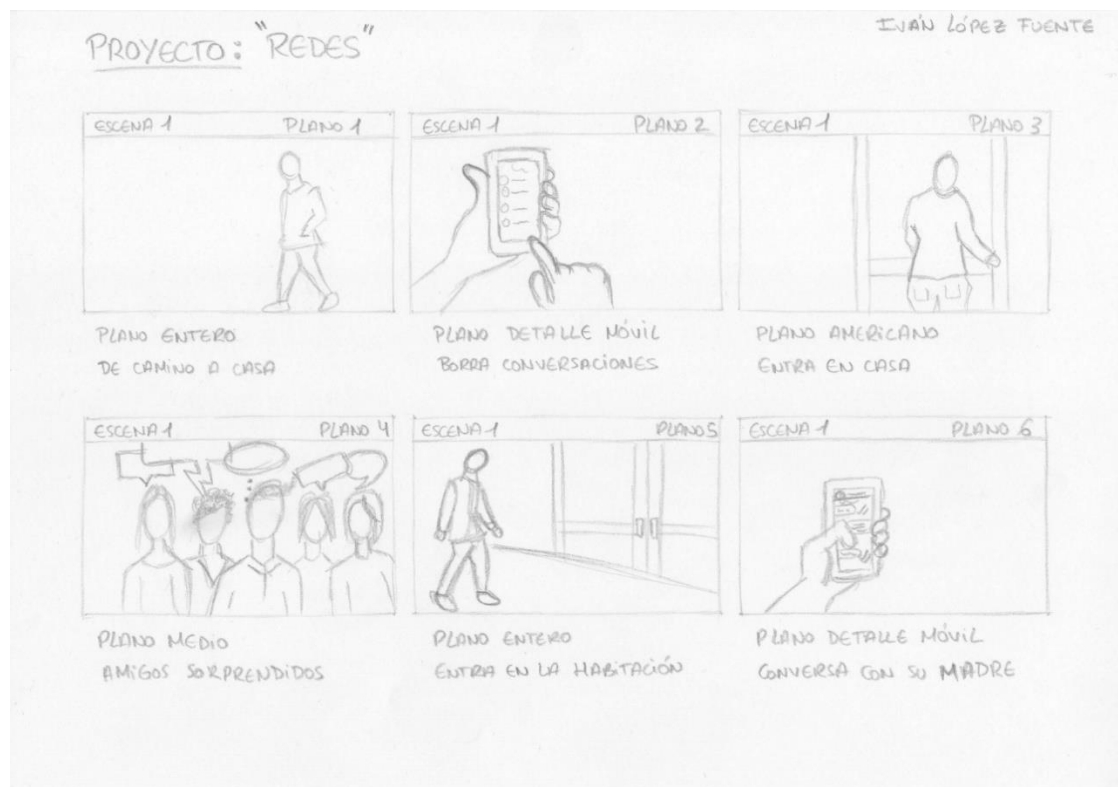
At this stage, it is important to define and keep in mind the **central message of the story**, as you had learned in previous chapters.

### Step 2: Create a Storyboard

A **storyboard** is a visual plan of the story. It shows what the audience will see and hear before you begin recording. For a 60–90 second story, plan approximately 5–7 scenes.

**Figure 5**

Example of a Storyboard



Note. From Storyboard - Iván López Fuente [Drawing], by I. López Fuente, 2021, Wikimedia Commons ([https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Storyboard - Iv%C3%A1n L%C3%B3pez Fuente.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Storyboard_-_Iv%C3%A1n_L%C3%B3pez_Fuente.jpg)). CC BY-SA 4.0.

Complete your storyboard before recording. You can use your storyboard as a guide when collecting photographs, video and sound. You do not need to follow it rigidly. If you discover something important during fieldwork, you may adapt the plan.

**Method of Storyboarding:** You may create a storyboard using a **simple table** in a Word document, PowerPoint Presentation, or **draw it by hand**. However, there are several free or free-access storyboarding tools that you can utilise.

### **Additional Resources on Storyboarding**

*Canva Storyboard Creator*

<https://www.canva.com/create/storyboards>

*Storyboard That*

<https://www.storyboardthat.com>

## 15. Assembling Your Story

This phase is about finalising a 60-90 second digital heritage story using either the Knowledge Holder pathway or the Object or Place pathway. The goal is not technical perfection. The goal is a meaningful, ethical and understandable output that another person could watch or continue developing

**Remember:** *A successful short story does not try to cover an entire history; instead, it focuses on one meaningful core idea. Structuring your story before editing saves time, prevents confusion, and ensures your central message comes through clearly to your audience.*

### Step by Step

1. **Review Your Central Message:** Keep your one-sentence central message in front of you as your guiding anchor.
2. **Divide your selected material into three distinct phases:**

### **Beginning**

*Who or what are we meeting?*

Possible material: A strong image, a voice, a name, a place sound or one clear sentence.

### **Middle – The core narrative**

*What happened, how was it used, or why is it important?*

Possible material: Interview excerpt, action, detail, contrast, memory or brief context.

### **End**

*Why should people remember this today?*

Possible material: A reflection, hope, question, present-day image or invitation to learn more.

### Project Sheet

| Project element              | What to create or keep in mind                                                              |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Working title</b>         | A short title that reflects the story rather than only naming the topic.                    |
| <b>Heritage focus</b>        | The person, memory, skill, tradition, object, photograph, building, landscape or place.     |
| <b>Heritage community</b>    | Keep in mind that the people who value, maintain, remember or may be affected by the story. |
| <b>Audience</b>              | Keep in mind that there will be an audience receiving your story and message.               |
| <b>Central message</b>       | One sentence explaining what the audience should understand and why it matters today.       |
| <b>Permission and ethics</b> | Consent, privacy, restrictions, sensitive information and review arrangements.              |
| <b>Reliable context</b>      | Sources used for names, dates, facts and background information.                            |
| <b>Beginning</b>             | How the person, object or place will be introduced.                                         |
| <b>Middle</b>                | The experience, change, action or detail that gives the story meaning.                      |
| <b>End</b>                   | Why the story should be remembered now.                                                     |
| <b>Accessibility</b>         | Captions or subtitles, readable text, translation or transcript where appropriate.          |
| <b>Credits</b>               | People, sources, institutions, media and project partners to acknowledge.                   |
| <b>Saving</b>                | Name your file and save it.                                                                 |

## 16. Share and Peer Review

Share the draft with another group before making it public. Reviewers should first watch or read the story without an explanation from its creators. This shows whether the message is understandable on its own.

### Peer-Review Questions

- Can we identify whose story or perspective is presented?
- Is the person, object or place introduced clearly?
- Does the story explain why the heritage matters today?
- Do the images, voice, natural sound and text each add useful meaning?
- Is the story concise, well paced and approximately 60-90 seconds?
- Are facts, personal memories and interpretations communicated honestly?
- Is the Knowledge Holder's voice represented respectfully?
- Are consent, privacy, permissions and sensitive information handled safely?
- Are captions, subtitles and credits readable and accurate?
- Would the intended audience understand the story without additional explanation?

**Remember:** *Feedback should be specific and constructive. Instead of saying "make it better", identify one strength, one point that is unclear and one realistic improvement. The creators then decide whether the change supports the story and respects the people involved.*

## 17. Digital Wellbeing Tip



### Digital Wellbeing Tip

#### *Protect Your Quiet Time*

Being constantly available online can make it difficult to fully rest. Messages and notifications can create the feeling that you should respond immediately, even when the matter is not urgent.

**Try this:** Choose a short period each day when you do not check messages, social media or email. You might silence notifications during a meal, while resting or before going to sleep. Let important contacts know another way to reach you if something is genuinely urgent.

**Reflection question:** When during the day would a short period without notifications help you switch off and recharge?

## 18. Basic Glossary

**Audience:** The person or group for whom a story is created.

**Caption:** Synchronised text that represents speech and important non-speech audio in video.

**Central message:** The main idea the audience should understand or remember.

**Consent:** A person's informed and voluntary agreement to participate in recording and specified uses.

**Credit:** Acknowledgement of a person, source, institution or media creator.

**Digital storytelling:** The purposeful combination of narrative and digital media.

**Heritage community:** People who value aspects of heritage and wish to sustain and transmit them.

**Intangible cultural heritage:** Living practices, expressions, knowledge and skills recognised by communities.

**Knowledge Holder:** A person who carries relevant memories, experience, skills, language or traditions.

**Living heritage:** Heritage that is transmitted, recreated and practised by people over time.

**Natural sound:** Sound recorded in the place where the story happens, such as tools, water, birds or footsteps.

**Point of view:** The perspective from which a story is told.

**Storyboard:** A visual or written plan showing the sequence of images, voice, sound and text.

**Subtitle:** Text that represents or translates spoken language on screen.

**Tangible heritage:** Physical heritage such as buildings, objects, photographs, documents and landscapes.

**Transcript:** A text version of speech, important sound and, when descriptive, relevant visual information.

## 19. Module Closing

Digital storytelling can help communities preserve voices, skills, memories, objects and places that may otherwise be overlooked or forgotten. The most valuable story is not necessarily the one with the most effects or the newest technology. It is the story that has a clear purpose, respects the people connected to it and helps an audience understand why the heritage matters.

By the end of this module, you should be able to recognise several forms of local heritage, identify the relevant heritage community, choose an audience and central message, obtain permission, ask respectful questions, plan and record useful media, create a short structure, add accessibility and credits, and make a careful decision about sharing.

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