Teacher's Guide to StoriumEDU

StoriumEDU.com

v5-7-21

Introduction

StoriumEDU is a multiplayer online game that helps teachers motivate their students to write. It transforms writing into an engaging group activity where students work together and lift each other up instead of struggling alone.

The game uses concepts and mechanics inspired by popular tabletop, card, and video games — things that are familiar to most students of reading age and higher. These mechanics motivate students' writing, helping them overcome the dreaded "writer's block" and build stories with clear structure and compelling characters, and have fun along the way.

Installation and requirements

StoriumEDU is a web application, which means there's nothing to install. All that you and your students need is a Web browser pointed to **StoriumEDU.com**. The latest versions of Chrome, Firefox, Internet Explorer, Edge, or Safari will all work.

Desktops, laptops, Chromebooks, tablets, and even smartphones are all supported (although since this is a writing game we recommend that your students use devices that have a physical keyboard.

Ages and grades

StoriumEDU has been developed and tested with students from the 3rd through 12th grades. It can also have applications for college-age students, as well as adults in the context of professional development.

Educational uses

You can think of StoriumEDU as a sandbox — an open-ended tool that helps you get your students writing. As such it has a wide variety of potential applications in your classroom, including (but not limited to):

1. **Language Arts**: students can explore the themes and characters of major works of literature by continuing or expanding the narrative.

2. **Creative writing**: StoriumEDU provides a structured, collaborative environment for creative writing that encourages creativity, character development, plotting, and — crucially — story completion.

3. **History**: students can demonstrate their comprehension of historical events and context by writing historical fiction.

4. **Project-based Learning**: StoriumEDU's writing environment and support for collaboration make it a good fit for PBL classrooms.

5. **ESL**: StoriumEDU provides a supportive environment for students to practice their English through immersive writing.

6. **Learning other languages**: while the interface for StoriumEDU is currently only offered in English, writing in any language is supported.

7. **Social-emotional learning**: as a collaborative exercise that involves reading, writing, character development, and fictional decision making, StoriumEDU is a uniquely powerful way to put students in other people's shoes and help them consider other perspectives.

Concepts

Classrooms

StoriumEDU is organized around virtual **classrooms** that are created and managed by the teacher. Students are only able to play and interact with other students that share the same

classroom. This ensures that student privacy is always protected, and that the teacher always knows and controls who their students are playing with.

Storyworlds

Storyworlds are a big part of the magic of StoriumEDU. Every game your students play starts with a storyworld, which is a set of digital playing pieces which help your students write stories in a certain style or with a specific goal.
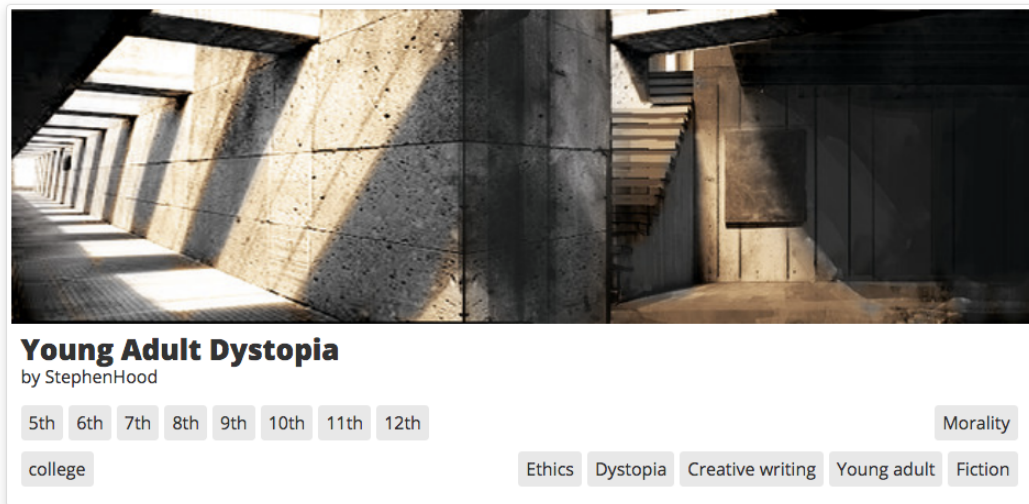
Information about an example storyworld.

Say you're an English teacher. You might make a storyworld about the book your students are reading in class. By playing with that storyworld, your students could more deeply explore the book's themes by writing about what happens to the characters after the original story ends. Or maybe you're a history teacher. You might make a storyworld about a period in history that your students are studying, and ask them to write historical fiction about people living in that era.

Storyworlds include a variety of content, including **story cards** and **character types** (described below), **scenarios** (pre-made story arcs), **artwork**, and optional **materials** and/or handouts. As a teacher you can use storyworlds from our library or you can create your own. You can also choose to share your storyworlds with other teachers by publishing them in the Library.
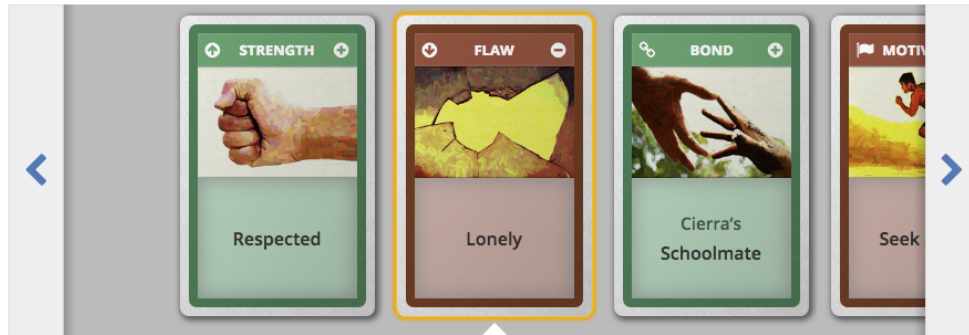
Games

Student play StoriumEDU in small groups of 2-4, with each group playing their own **game**. Thus in a typical classroom you will often have multiple games being played concurrently. StoriumEDU makes it easy for you, the teacher, to facilitate these games without having to play along yourself.

A student move in progress.

Each game represents a story that the students write collaboratively in the course of play. Games are divided into **scenes**, much like books are divided into chapters. In each scene students take turns making **moves**, each of which results in writing. When the game's final scene is finished then the game is completed and it becomes a permanent artifact that students can print out, share, or export to another format for further writing or editing.

Story cards

Story cards are the primary game mechanic in StoriumEDU. They drive gameplay and inspire student writing, serving as virtual writing prompts and helping players decide what happens next in their story.

Example story cards.

There are several types of story cards, each with their own meaning and rules. Some help students determine what their story is about, others help them set the dramatic goals for each scene, and still others help them develop and write about the story's protagonists. Every storyworld comes with its own deck of cards.

Characters

Each student playing a StoriumEDU game gets their own **character** to control. Each character is a protagonist in the story. Students create their character at the start of game by picking a **character type** from among those included in the game's storyworld. Each character type comes with a hand of cards that represent strengths and flaws of character, personal motivations, and relationships with the other protagonists. Players then give their character a name and choose or upload a character avatar.

An example character.

As each student takes their turn they choose one of their cards to play and then use that card as inspiration to write about their characters actions to further the story. Then they draw a new card to replace the one they just played. Students can also write **flashbacks** that develop their character's backstory. In this manner, characters grow and evolve in the course of play, just like they do in good stories.

1. Set up your classroom (rostering)

Once you have logged into StoriumEDU with your teacher account, click "Classrooms" in the upper-left corner of your homepage.

🏠 Home		
🎓 Classrooms	0	
☰ Games	0	
🌐 Storyworlds	0	

🎓 Your classrooms   [Create a classroom]
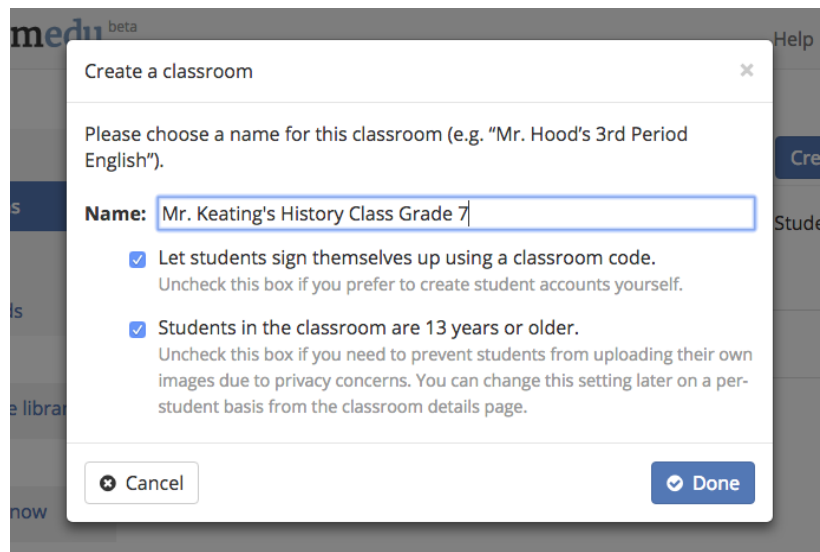
Next, click the "Create a classroom" button.

Classrooms are virtual spaces where students play and learn together. Students who share the same classroom can play together and read each other's stories.

Now, give your new classroom a descriptive name. By default students can join your StoriumEDU classroom by using a simple classroom code (which you'll receive in the next step). If you prefer to create student accounts yourself you can uncheck this option now. Additionally, if you have students under the age of 13 you may choose to disable image uploads to further protect student privacy.

Create a classroom ✕

Please choose a name for this classroom (e.g. "Mr. Hood's 3rd Period English").

Name: [Mr. Keating's History Class Grade 7]

☑ Let students sign themselves up using a classroom code.
Uncheck this box if you prefer to create student accounts yourself.

☑ Students in the classroom are 13 years or older.
Uncheck this box if you need to prevent students from uploading their own images due to privacy concerns. You can change this setting later on a per-student basis from the classroom details page.

⊗ Cancel   ✅ Done

Mr. Keating's History Class Grade 7   [Rename] [Delete]

Classroom code: **mh5xkr**
Students can use this code to log into StoriumEdu by visiting **storiumedu.com** and clicking the "Enter class code" button.
**Student self sign-up** 🟢

After clicking "Done" you'll see your newly-created classroom. To have students join, simply tell them to visit StoriumEDU.com and enter the **classroom code** (in green).

2. Add a storyworld to your classroom

Now that you've created a classroom, you need to add a storyworld to it. Your students can't start playing until you do this.

Click "Browse the Library" in the upper-left corner of your homepage. All available storyworlds are found in the Library.
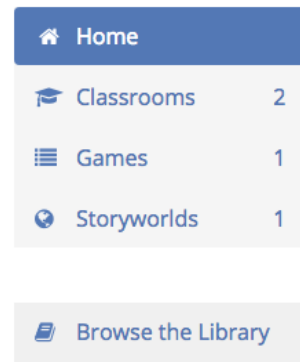
Review the list of available storyworlds. If you see one that seems close to your goals, simply click on it to learn more.

At the top of the page you'll see a summary of your selected storyworld, including a written description and the grade levels and subject areas it's designed to support. You can also click through all of the storyworld's content, including story cards, available character types, scenarios, artwork, and any attached materials or handouts.

Young Adult Dystopia
by StephenHood

5th 6th 7th 8th 9th 10th 11th 12th   Morality

college   Ethics Dystopia Creative writing Young adult Fiction

This storyworld is inspired by popular works of young adult fiction such as The Hunger Games, Divergent, The Maze Runner, The Giver, and others. You can use it to explore a wide variety of themes common to these settings such as morality, personal responsibility, relationships, growing up, politics, and authority.

Cards (180)   Character Types (8)   Scenarios (2)   Artwork (37)   Materials (1)

If you decide that you want to use this storyworld, click the "Add to classrooms" button. This will make the storyworld available to all your students, enabling them to select it when starting a game.

If you find a world that is *close* to what you're looking for, or one that contains elements that you think you can reuse, then click the "Create your own copy" button, instead. This will create a personal copy of that storyworld that you can then modify to suit your purposes. You can add, remove, or edit whatever content in the storyworld you want. This enables you to "jumpstart" your own worlds instead of starting them from scratch.

Creating your own storyworld (either from scratch or by using a copy) is a powerful and rewarding way to offer your students a learning and writing experienced tailored for your specific educational goals. To learn more about creating your own storyworlds, watch our tutorial videos on storyworlds and scenarios.

3. Have students to join the classroom

Your students are now ready to join the classroom you created.

On your homepage click on "Classrooms," and then click

🎓 **Your classrooms**   Create a classroom

Classrooms are virtual spaces where students play and learn together. Students who share the same classroom can play together and read each other's stories.

Mr. Keatings's English Class   Manage

the "Manage" button for your classroom.

Note the **classroom code** for your classroom (in green). This is the code your students must enter to join your classroom. Share it with them via email, by writing it on the board, or by whatever method works best for you.
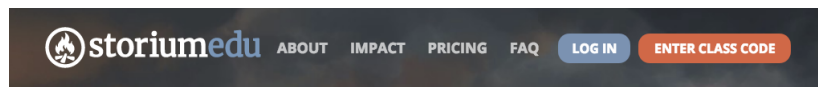
Mr. Keating's History Class Grade 7

Rename Delete

Classroom code: **mh5xkr**
Students can use this code to log into StoriumEdu by visiting **storiumedu.com** and clicking the "Enter class code" button.
Student self sign-up ◯

Instruct your students to visit StoriumEDU.com and click the "Enter class code" button.

🔥 **storiumedu**   ABOUT   IMPACT   PRICING   FAQ   LOG IN   ENTER CLASS CODE

Your students should then enter the classroom code you shared with them.

Students must also choose a **user name** by which they will be identified. For privacy purposes we recommend that students use their first name, plus their last initial if necessary to avoid confusion with another student's name.

Join a classroom

Classroom code
This is the code your teacher gave you.

User name
This is is the name you'll use to log in, and what other students and your teacher will see. One word with no spaces. Use your first name plus your last initial.

e.g. MaryS

(All fields required)

Join

By signing up, you agree to our Terms of Service.

4. Give your students direction

Now that your students have joined, they're ready to start playing!

StoriumEDU is played in groups of 2-4 students. If you have more than 4 students in your classroom then you'll need to divide them up into groups. It's up to you how to do this. You might ask them to self-organize, or you might group them by table, or you might pick some other method.

Once this is done, ask each group to pick one student as the **organizer**. This student is responsible for creating the game and inviting the others in their group.

Give your students clear direction on how you want them to play. This includes telling them which storyworld to use and what settings to select (including use of a scenario, if desired).

5. Approve their games

Once the organizer in each group invites their peers and everyone creates their own character, the organizer must submit their game for your approval. This ensures that students cannot play games other than what you have instructed them to play, and that they play with the correct group of peers.

On your homepage you'll find a section titled "Pending games." This section is automatically updated in real time to show the status of your students' games. Once a game is fully set up you'll see an "Approve" link next to it.

Pending games

These games need your approval before your students can start playing.

Mr. Keatings's English Class

Name	Invited	Joined	Status
Beyond the Wall		Gabrielle Anne Mateo	Ready to play Approve

Once each game has been approved, play can begin!

Learning how the game works

The easiest way to learn how the game works is to [watch the same tutorial videos](#) that your students will watch. They're just a few minutes each and will walk you through all the core game mechanics of StoriumEDU.

While as a teacher you don't have to actually *play* the game yourself, understanding the rules will put you in a better position to help your students both to have fun and to produce better writing!

Printing or exporting student work

Every game played on StoriumEDU is automatically saved, but you or your students may want to export their work to another destination. To do so, log into StoriumEDU with your teacher account, go to the game in question, and click the "Print" link, located just under the list of players.
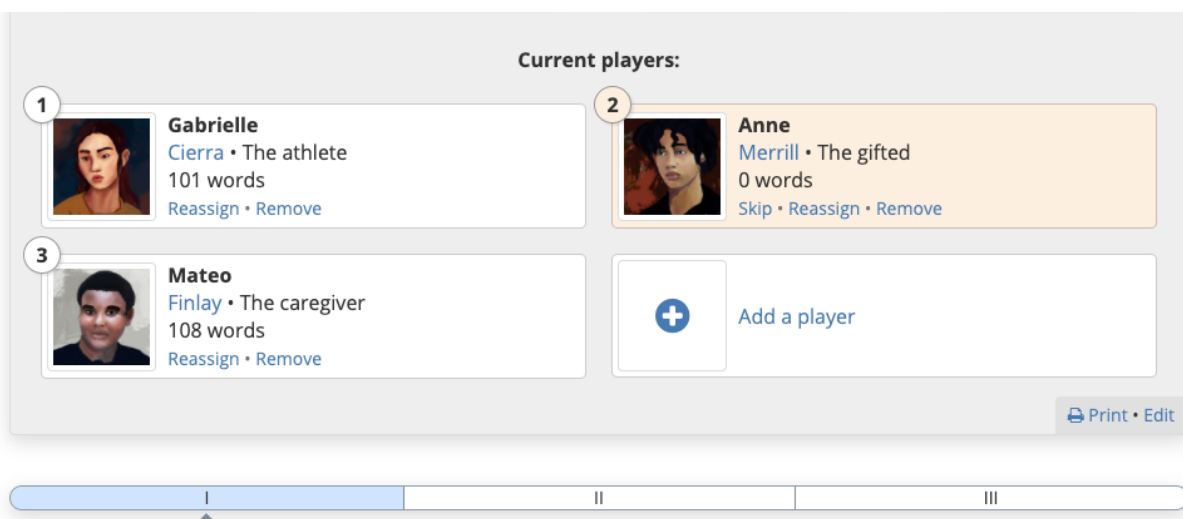
When you click this link you'll be presented with a web page that includes just the prose for the entire story. From this page, you can do several things:

- Print out the story.
- Save the story as a PDF (using your browser's built-in "Save as PDF" feature).
- Copy and paste the prose into another document or different format.