

### Chapter 1 : Every Story Needs a Hero - Get Storied

*Sep 29, Â· At its heart, innovation is a profoundly social phenomenon. More often than not, it is the story that makes the innovation, rather than the other way around.*

It does take practice and not everyone will be an expert but if you follow the guidelines below you should be able to create effective news items without too much stress. The Five "W"s and the "H" This is the crux of all news - you need to know five things: Any good news story provides answers to each of these questions. You must drill these into your brain and they must become second nature. For example, if you wish to cover a story about a local sports team entering a competition you will need to answer these questions: Who is the team? Who is the coach? Who are the prominent players? Who are the supporters? What sport do they play? What is the competition? Where is the competition? Where is the team normally based? When is the competition? How long have they been preparing? Are there any other important time factors? Why are they entering this particular competition? How are they going to enter the competition? Do they need to fundraise? How much training and preparation is required? What will they need to do to win? The Inverted Pyramid This refers to the style of journalism which places the most important facts at the beginning and works "down" from there. Ideally, the first paragraph should contain enough information to give the reader a good overview of the entire story. The rest of the article explains and expands on the beginning. A good approach is to assume that the story might be cut off at any point due to space limitations. Does the story work if the editor only decides to include the first two paragraphs? If not, re-arrange it so that it does. The same principle can apply to any type of medium. In your sports story, you might spend some time focusing on one or more individuals, or on how the team morale is doing, or how the supporters are feeling. Have an Angle Most stories can be presented using a particular angle or "slant". Examples of angles you could use for your sports story: If there is more than one side to the story, cover them all. Quote People For example:

### Chapter 2 : Every Lesson Needs a Storyline - Educational Leadership

*In fact, if you need help randomizing them, try this Story Idea Generator. It works according to these five elements, it has over a million combinations, and it's completely free. It works according to these five elements, it has over a million combinations, and it's completely free.*

I used to wonder how Pixar came out with such great movies, year after year. Then, I found out a normal Pixar film takes six years to develop, and most of that time is spent on the story. Want to become a writer? Get our free step guide to becoming a writer here and accomplish your dream today. Click here to download your guide instantly. I hope it makes writing your story a little easier, but more than that, I hope it challenges you to step deeper into your own exploration of how to write a story. Need a story idea? Get our top short story ideas here. You can do that once you know you have a story to tell in the first place. Your first draft is a discovery process. You are like an archeologist digging an ancient city out of the clay. The essential ingredient for every protagonist is that they must make decisions. Create Suspense and Drama To create suspense, set up a dramatic question. To do this well, you need to carefully restrict the flow of information to the reader. However, when placed next to the step above, it becomes very effective. Your readers have a right to see the best parts of the story play out in front of them. Show the interesting parts of your story, and tell the rest. Write Good Dialogue Good dialogue comes from two things: Write About Death Think about the last five novels you read. In how many of them did a character die? Good stories often involve death. Death is the universal theme because every person who lives will one day die. Tap the power of death in your storytelling. Edit Like a Pro Most professional writers write three drafts or more. Instead, the second draft is meant for major structural changes and for clarifying the plot and characters of your novel or the key ideas of your non-fiction book. The third draft is for deep polishing. Now is when everything starts to gel. This is the fun part! But until you write the first two drafts, polishing is probably a waste of your time. Great writers know all the rules and break them. They break them because their stories require a whole new set of rules. You serve your stories. Sometimes, to write better stories, you have to start by taking the pressure off and just writing. But when you share your writing , you face the possibility of failure. This will force you to write the best story you possibly can. One of the best ways to write a story and share your writing is to enter a writing contest. The theme will inspire a new creation, the deadlines will keep you accountable, and the prizes will encourage you to submit—and maybe win! We love writing contests here at The Write Practice. Why not enter our next one? Then, start your next one. What are your best tips on how to write a story? Let me know in the comments. Write the first draft in one sitting using the tips above. Then, share a few paragraphs of your practice here in the comments section. And if you share your practice, be sure to leave feedback on a few practices by other writers, too. Download the step-by-step guide and learn how to become a writer today. You can follow him on Instagram [jhbunting](#).

**Chapter 3 : How to Write a Story: The 10 Best Secrets**

*Oct 24, Â· If a picture is worth a thousand words, then how many PowerPoint slides is a compelling story worth? Storytelling makes business come to life.*

The kings told a story. Meles told a story. Abiy needs to tell one too. Ethiopian flags at a celebration in Addis Ababa. At the end of Zagwe dynasty around the 14th century, medieval Ethiopia was in disarray. Provincial warlords were battling for supremacy and the nation was on the brink of disintegrating. Ethiopia was at threat of breaking itself apart through internal fighting as its standing in the world diminished. It was at this fraught moment in time that the Kibre Negest emerged. However, ordinary citizens soon found surplus meaning in it. Still to this day, intellectuals debate whether or not Ethiopianness exists. Some claim that ethnicity is the overriding identity that cuts through and across the national. Others argue that the concept is the outdated invention of a Christian empire that has little relevance today. However, for many ordinary citizens, the idea of Ethiopiawinet transcends historical debates. It not only exists, but is a matter of survival, common belonging and celebration. Religiously, it emphasises the unity of humanity by weaving together Islamic and Christian teachings. Ethically, it offers moral guidance by critiquing the imperfections of earthly life. Politically, it urges negotiation and the striking of a balance between what is good to me and what is good to my ethnic and religious neighbour. For many Ethiopians, Ethiopiawinet also manifests as that electrifying and inescapable feeling when watching Abebe Bikila, Haile Gebrselassie, Deratu Tulu, Mesert Defar or Tirunesh Dibaba glide past their international competitors to win gold. This is as true now as it has ever been. His story came from a dark place, coloured by the painful past of the Tigrayan people and of himself. Its genesis went all the way back to the 18th and 19th centuries when Tigrayan and Amhara rulers tussled for power. This struggle continued up to , when last Tigrayan king, Yohannes IV, died in battle. With his dying breath, he declared his natural son to be his heir, but Menelik II proclaimed himself the rightful Emperor. Once on the throne, the Amhara leader used a combination of force, religion and the Amharic language to expand his kingdom. While there may have been well-intentioned reasons behind his campaign, it involved various atrocities and undermined the culture and identity of less powerful ethnic groups. This Ethiopian Empire continued until when the communist Derg took power. This new regime maintained a unifying narrative, but its rule was largely experienced as the repression of anyone who questioned it. The people of Tigray, fighting for self-determination, were among its many victims. The ruling coalition, made up of representatives from different groups, told a new story. Over the years, these anxieties grew. Notions of ethnic nationalism hardened along with feelings of systemic discrimination. Things worsened under Prime Minister Hailemariam Desalegne, who came to power in He had no story of his own and simply tried to re-tell that of his more eloquent predecessor. He resigned earlier this month after years of sustained and widespread protests, particularly amongst the Oromo and Amhara frustrated by feelings of marginalisation. He faces a wide range of complex challenges in trying to reform the political system, economy, military and much more. He will have to lead tough negotiations and come with myriad smart and sensitive policies to steer this country of million people back on track. However, in all this, he should not forget the importance of storytelling. In my previous piece here on African Arguments, I pointed out that Abiy has gained popularity across ethnic groups because of his inclusive rhetoric. His many allusions to Ethiopiawinet in his inaugural speech hit a chord with many. But in fact, it goes beyond that. His biography encompasses the marvellous messiness of Ethiopian society. He hails from an Oromo father and Amhara mother. He shares Islamic and Christian upbringings. He is fluent in several languages. Moreover, Abiy has the ability to spin this rich heritage into a tale that oozes positivity. The new PM has already been utilising these skills in his tour of the country, focusing on regions that may be apprehensive about his rapid rise. In Oromiya, from which he hails, he took pains to tie the protests and his own identity to the broader nation, emphasising: Meanwhile, in Tigray, the home of Meles, he contended: And he explains that the Ethiopian people have not inherited the nation from their parents but are borrowing it from their children. At this difficult moment in its history, Ethiopia desperately needs some wide-ranging and concrete reforms. But as relations fray and tensions simmer, the country also needs a

soothing story.

### Chapter 4 : What Makes a Good Story? (Tips for Young Authors)

*Every story needs a spark of something remarkable, so it can be remembered and shared. And in the world we live in today, honesty can be one of the most remarkable story elements of all. More storytelling resources on Copyblogger.*

Is it really that important? You bet it is. Would you rather your job resume say "salesperson" or "marketing representative"? One sounds commonplace; the other sounds impressive. Loses a little something, right? In the publishing world, a good title is like a good opening paragraph: At the very least, it should be appropriate to the rest of the piece. And remember this, too: The question is, how do you do it? What makes a good title? A Few Rules of Thumb: Titles should not be dull. So are editors, when they look over a stack of submissions. Titles should be easy to remember. Titles should be appropriate. Block says its title which refers to spies, who love secrets led some readers to believe it would be a romance instead. Examples of titles that "fit" their subjects: That should help you narrow the field a bit as you try to decide on the right title for your story. But the question remains: How exactly do you find a good title? Where do you begin your search? A Few Sources to Jog the Imagination: A title can be a popular expression. A title can be a play on words. Sometimes a "twist" of an existing expression. A title can have a hidden meaning, later revealed in the story. A title can come from an existing work. The Bible, Shakespeare, etc. A title can be a place name. A title can be a possessive. A title can be an association of ideas. Often these are words that have a "double meaning," and refer to more than one thing in a story. A title can be an "event" or "activity. A title can be a memorable line from the story itself. A title if long can have a "rhythm. A title if it fits the story can be simple. In fact, it has been said that most titles on bestseller lists are no more than three words long. But they have to be the right words. They create titles that follow a pattern unique to their particular "series" of stories. Janet Evanovich uses numbers: Sue Grafton uses letters of the alphabet: For James Michener, it was one-word titles: Chesapeake, Space, Hawaii, Caribbean, Alaska. Martha Grimes used names of English pubs: James Patterson chooses nursery rhymes: This kind of approach is of course not required to sell or publish your books and stories. Titles can provide that. Originality Titles are not copyrightable. But that should not be done intentionally. Whatever the source for your inspiration and whatever title you choose, remember that it needs to be a perfect fit for your story. Were the new titles better? And history will show that changed titles are sometimes a good thing. Since changes are known to occur, should you submit several alternate titles along with your novel or story? Select the best title you can, and leave it at that. Sending in a list of second-string choices makes you appear indecisive, and less confident.

### Chapter 5 : How to Write News Stories

*Poetry. African American Studies. The first anthology ever published of poetry from Eritrea written in Tigrinya, Tigre and Arabic, WHO NEEDS A STORY? contains English translations and the originals of thirty-six poems by twenty-two poets over roughly the last three decades.*

Your Startup Needs a Great Story. Develop your story with these 6 steps. Getty Images People love a good story. But more importantly, people buy from a good story. No matter your industry, a compelling story can make or break your ability to differentiate your startup from dozens of others. Follow these steps to develop and refine yours. This is the setting for your story. Every startup has a mission -- why else launch it? Put that mission into the context of the lives of your customers. We give them the no-frills basics required to get started. Empathize with their emotions. Get to the heart of their inner conflict. How do you connect with them? For us, our story touches on the fact that customers are excited about starting a business, but they feel uncertain about launching and promoting it. So we tell our story in a guiding and encouraging way. We drive home our story of making things easy and friendly. People really see that when interacting with our brand. We know that because it comes up time and again in our online reviews. Understand why your version of this story is different. Sure, many competitors are all trying to provide products and services to alleviate the same challenge. So what makes your resolution to their conflict different? And why is that compelling? This differentiation can stem from: Why did you launch your startup? How did you found your company? How do you do things differently? What does it do that none else can? For example, there are plenty of other small business branding and marketing tools out there. Our differentiation is that we started from nothing. Every one of our customers is in the exact same position we once were. So we truly understand their challenges. Part of our story is their story. Use your story to spark action. Action is the difference between creative writing and marketing. While your story must be authentic, the end goal of branding and marketing is to spark action -- to make customers believe in you and buy from you. That means you must tease them with the idea of a blissful world in which their conflict has been resolved. With our customers, our platform means that they will no longer struggle to promote their business. That means you must delete all that garbage jargon and simplify your story into a few quick sentences. On social media, in your ad campaigns, on your website, in your product briefs -- your story must sound and feel the same. To manage this, document your story in a few different standardized formats. That includes everything from a Tweet-length single sentence, to words, to words. These standard texts will help prevent a team member from going rogue with their own version. Storytelling is the key to a successful startup brand. Oct 10, More from Inc.

### Chapter 6 : How to Plot a Story (with Examples) - wikiHow

*What Makes a Good Story? Tips for Young Authors By Aaron Shepard. For more resources, visit Aaron Shepard's Young Authors Page at [like needs or feelings](#).*

At most the moldy remains of an idea you had in seventh grade. In that panel, he opened my eyes to what a good story idea looks like, and how to generate story ideas without any effort. A five-element idea generator that will rarely fail you. Character A story cannot take place without characters. The character might be a chair I wrote one like that! Age from toddler to elder and even eternal Marital status single, married, divorced, three-year marriage contract Family status parents, brothers, pets, etc. Desire Your character must have some desires in life. What makes her get out of bed in the morning? It can be an active desire, like running a marathon or getting a promotion. It can be a less active desire, like wanting to be left alone. But it has to be a specific, attainable desire that will move your character throughout your story. It can be physical, emotional, spiritual or cultural. It can be another person or a group of people. It can be a question of legality or consensus. It can be the very elements of nature. Whatever it is, make sure the resistance matches the character. With these three elements, Orson Scott Card claimed at that panel, you have a solid story idea that can be developed into any media and length. I like to add two more elements to the mix. For short stories, the change can be as simple as a single trait: A shy man overcomes his shyness in order to pursue true love. A skeptic woman must learn to believe before she can attain the career of her dreams. A haughty salt shaker must learn humility in order to find peace in its life. The longer the story, the more scope you have to mould your character in new ways. Settings The settings of a story are more than a backdrop. It is often a character in and of itself. It impacts the way your protagonist thinks, feels, and behaves. Choose an interesting backdrop that will really challenge your protagonist or highlight her journey. For example, if your protagonist is on a journey of inner and outer peace, why not paint her story against a background of war, strife, or unrest? Character, desire, resistance, change and settings. In fact, if you need help randomizing them, try this Story Idea Generator. Now, go make up some ideas and write!

**Chapter 7 : How to Write a Short Story (with Sample Stories) - wikiHow**

*Washington Redskins outside linebacker Ryan Anderson will be trying to stop the New Orleans Saints' offense on Monday night. And if you have trouble falling to sleep after the game, Anderson has.*

I left for work. So then, what is a story? Centuries ago, Aristotle noted in his book *Poetics* that while a story does have a beginning, a middle and an ending, the beginning is not simply the first event in a series of three, but rather the emotionally engaging originating event. The middle is the natural and causally related consequence, and the end is the inevitable conclusive event. In other words, stories have an origination, an escalation of conflict, and a resolution. But at its most basic level, a story is a transformation unveiled—either the transformation of a situation or, most commonly, the transformation of a character. Simply put, you do not have a story until something goes wrong. At its heart, a story is about a person dealing with tension, and tension is created by unfulfilled desire. Without forces of antagonism, without setbacks, without a crisis event that initiates the action, you have no story. The secret, then, to writing a story that draws readers in and keeps them turning pages is not to make more and more things happen to a character, and especially not to follow some preordained plot formula or novel-writing template. Instead, the key to writing better stories is to focus on creating more and more tension as your story unfolds. Understanding the fundamentals at the heart of all good stories will help you tell your own stories better—and sell more of them, too. You mix together certain ingredients in a specific order and end up with a product that is uniquely different than any individual ingredient. In the process of mixing and then baking the cake, these ingredients are transformed into something delicious. In essence, you want to set reader expectations and reveal a portrait of the main character by giving readers a glimpse of her normal life. If your protagonist is a detective, we want to see him at a crime scene. Something will soon rock the boat and he will be altered forever. The story might begin while your protagonist is depressed, hopeless, grieving or trapped in a sinking submarine. Which brings us to the second ingredient. Typically, your protagonist will have the harmony of both his external world and his internal world upset by the crisis that initiates the story. One of these two imbalances might have happened before the beginning of the story, but usually at least one will occur on the page for your readers to experience with your protagonist, and the interplay of these two dynamics will drive the story forward. Mythic, fantasy and science-fiction novels often follow this pattern. In crime fiction, the crisis might be a new assignment to a seemingly unsolvable case. In romance, the crisis might be undergoing a divorce or breaking off an engagement. In each case, though, life is changed and it will never be the same again. Larry finds out his cancer is terminal. Whatever it is, the normal life of the character is forever altered, and she is forced to deal with the difficulties that this crisis brings. There are two primary ways to introduce a crisis into your story. Either begin the story by letting your character have what he desires most and then ripping it away, or by denying him what he desires most and then dangling it in front of him. His deepest fear will be abandonment. It all has to do with what the main character desires, and what he wishes to avoid. Escalation There are two types of characters in every story—pebble people and putty people. But if you throw a ball of putty against a wall hard enough, it will change shape. Always in a story, your main character needs to be a putty person. When you throw him into the crisis of the story, he is forever changed, and he will take whatever steps he can to try and solve his struggle—that is, to get back to his original shape life before the crisis. But he will fail. Putty people are altered. Pebble people remain the same. And they are not very interesting. So, exactly what kind of wall are we throwing our putty person against? First, stop thinking of plot in terms of what happens in your story. Plot is the journey toward transformation. As your story progresses, then, the consequences of not solving those two struggles need to become more and more intimate, personal and devastating. If you do this, then as the stakes are raised, the two struggles will serve to drive the story forward and deepen reader engagement and interest. During the escalation stage of your story, let your character take steps to try and resolve the two crises internal and external and get back to the way things were earlier, before his world was tipped upside down. Discovery At the climax of the story, the protagonist will make a discovery that changes his life. While mentors might guide a character toward self-discovery, the decisions and courage that

determine the outcome of the story must come from the protagonist. In one of the paradoxes of storytelling, the reader wants to predict how the story will end or how it will get to the end, but he wants to be wrong. So, the resolution of the story will be most satisfying when it ends in a way that is both inevitable and unexpected. Change Think of a caterpillar entering a cocoon. Once he does so, one of two things will happen: He will either transform into a butterfly, or he will die. But no matter what else happens, he will never climb out of the cocoon as a caterpillar. So it is with your protagonist. Although genre can dictate the direction of this transformation—horror stories will often end with some kind of death physical, psychological, emotional or spiritual—most genres are butterfly genres. This change marks the resolution of the crisis and the culmination of the story. As a result of facing the struggle and making this new discovery, the character will move to a new normal. The old way of life has been forever changed by the process of moving through the struggle to the discovery and into a new and different life. And most assuredly, they are all stories. What readers really care about is the forward movement of the story as it escalates to its inevitable and unexpected conclusion. Often the people who advocate funneling your story into a predetermined three-act structure will note that stories have the potential to sag or stall out during the long second act. And whenever I hear that, I think, Then why not shorten it? Or chop it up and include more acts? Why let the story suffer just so you can follow a formula? Once I was speaking with another writing instructor and he told me that the three acts form the skeleton of a story. I realized that it got along pretty well without a skeleton. So, stop thinking of a story as something that happens in three acts, or two acts, or four or seven, or as something that is driven by predetermined elements of plot. Rather, think of your story as an organic whole that reveals a transformation in the life of your character. The number of acts or events should be determined by the movement of the story, not the other way around. Because story trumps structure. The ingredients come together, and the cake tastes good. Always be ready to do it for the sake of your readers. Not sure if your story structure is strong enough to woo an agent?

**Chapter 8 : Ethiopia: A nation in need of a new story - African Arguments**

*Of course, stories also need a vulnerable character, a setting that's integral to the narrative, meaningful choices that determine the outcome of the story, and reader empathy. But at its most basic level, a story is a transformation unveiled—either the transformation of a situation or, most commonly, the transformation of a character.*

Overview[ edit ] The series follows Zara White, a strong-willed girl who is prone to helping others. Following the death of her stepfather, she is sent to live with her step-grandmother in Maine as part of her recovery. Zara discovers that her new town is home to a slew of vicious pixies, headed by a king, and becomes a prominent figure in the opposition. Amidst the conflict, she meets several new friends and allies, including a paranormal romantic interest named Nick. The author was particularly interested in writing about pixies, believing them to be a largely unexplored subject in folklore. There are still a lot of damsels in distress, which is okay, but I wanted some variety, some female leads who become tough and still are girls, who have bravery and empathy. She can be in distress sometimes, but not all the time. She and often takes note of various phobias which she discovers around her. At the beginning of the story, she moves to Maine to live with her grandmother while recovering from the loss of her stepfather. Soon afterward, she meets several new friends, and learns of a struggle against violent pixies within her town. He is something of a loner, but shares a romantic relationship and a close bond with Zara amidst the conflict. Despite his slight loner nature, he protects others, but to a different degree than Zara. He is described as tall and attractive. He has a major temper and an even more major tendency to do reckless things in order to save others. She possesses an unusual array of talents for her age, and supports those who oppose the pixies. She is also a "were" who can turn into a tiger. She is the town paramedic, so is constantly being called away in a medical state of emergency. She is a terrible cook. She usually wears plaid flannel shirts, despite being a grandmother. Despite these various quirks, she is also a strong grandmother to Zara. She has wild brownish hair, and a bright style. She has a love of bunny rabbits. She also has a romantic interest in her friend Devyn. While being a human without any notable abilities, she provides aid to all of her friends in the fight against the pixies. Devyn, also like Nick, is part were, and is capable of transforming into an eagle. He was paralyzed from the waist down when an arrow lodged into his spine. He and Issie are suggested to have romantic feelings for each other. It is eventually revealed that he wishes to make Zara his queen. Her bond with Devyn eventually makes Issie jealous. Ian Ian is the once innocent friend of Zara. Ian is killed by Betty for attempting to turn Zara to his side, the pixie side.

**Chapter 9 : How To Come Up With A Great Title For Your Book (Or Story Or Poem) | Writer's Relief**

*How to Write a Short Story. In this Article: Article Summary Sample Short Stories Brainstorming Ideas Creating a First Draft Polishing the Draft Community Q&A For many writers, the short story is the perfect medium.*

Ermeling and Genevieve Graff-Ermeling Planning for coherent instruction not only engages students, but also leads them toward mastery. More than a decade ago, after comparing hundreds of classroom videos across five countries, researchers from the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Studies TIMSS made a disturbing observation about science lessons in the United States. Our observations suggest that "activity" and "engagement" are still the primary drivers of lesson content in many U. A group of high school English teachers wanted to teach students to revise their own writing with less attention to mechanics and more emphasis on clarity of written arguments. The teachers were developing a lesson to help students revise their first drafts of a research paper. One teacher proposed that they build the lesson plan around a new peer-revision strategy in which students would work in groups, with each student filling a specific role: They also hoped it would help students pause and think more carefully about the revision process. As we worked with these teachers, however, they realized that their initial lesson plan lacked a coherent storyline that would move students toward the lesson objective. For students to master the skill of revising their writing to clarify their arguments, the teachers needed to create a more thorough lesson plan to explicitly teach students what revising for clarity actually looked like. Then, in a whole-class discussion, teachers would discuss the sample revisions, noting particularly strong student justifications and modeling their own thinking as they ranked the revisions. The teaching team anticipated that this series of modeling and analysis tasks would help students understand the desired shift from mechanics to clarity of content. The teachers would end the lesson with their original peer-revision idea of group role assignments reader, recorder, commentator, but now with an explicit emphasis on helping students pause and think more carefully about the quality of their revision work. Teachers would instruct the group commentators to stop the readers whenever they noticed specific errors in clarity or content, drawing on their earlier whole-class discussion of sample revisions. As the teaching team reflected on the lesson results, they agreed that without the development of a coherent lesson storyline that incorporated modeling and ranking exercises, the peer revision activity would have engaged students—but it would likely not have enabled students to achieve the lesson goal. Establishing a Design Rationale A coherent lesson storyline requires that teachers develop and articulate a design rationale for the lesson. As teachers construct and combine lesson elements and activities, they must consistently ask, How will this sequence of learning activities support the learning goal and advance students toward deeper understanding? For teachers who have little or no experience articulating a design rationale, the connections between an instructional activity and the desired outcome are often assumed. But teachers can learn to create a more complete rationale. We worked with a team of math teachers who were discussing ways to help students "visualize and understand the context of open-ended trigonometry problems" instead of memorizing solutions. They planned a lesson focused on solving right triangle problems with trigonometry and inverse trigonometry. When the teachers first discussed the rationale for the lesson, they focused on how the high-interest activities would increase engagement. The teachers believed that getting students out of their seats to find triangles in their immediate surroundings would offer a change of pace, increase student interest, and make the mathematics concepts seem more relevant. But when prompted to further explain their rationale, the teachers realized that engagement alone would not help students become fluent with these complex concepts. The teachers shifted the focus of their discussion to the potential of VoiceThread, not just to get students excited about the activity, but also to enable students to explain and monitor their own thinking. The new lesson rationale was that as students annotated solutions and recorded their commentary in writing and speaking for various right triangle images, they would actually be teaching the concepts to themselves and their peers. In previous years, teachers had occasionally asked one or two students to demonstrate their problem-solving process on the board and questioned those students to elicit their thinking. Teachers hoped that other students would vicariously think through the process while they watched and listened to these examples from peers—but in actuality, only the

presenters were engaged in the heavy lifting of articulating mathematical reasoning and receiving direct feedback to advance their understanding of trigonometry. By incorporating the voice-overlay function in VoiceThread, teachers moved beyond the constraints of this traditional method. They directly engaged all students in narrating their mathematical ideas about the triangles and broadened the range of examples available for teaching core concepts, such as congruence, similarity, and symmetry. As both the English and math examples illustrate, learning to develop and articulate a lesson rationale requires facilitation and practice. Figure 1 provides two more specific examples from teaching teams. One column shows an incomplete design rationale; the other column shows how teachers revised their original lesson design to produce a more thorough storyline, clarifying how the combined sequence of learning activities is expected to advance students toward the learning outcome.

**Two Examples Subject Advanced Rationale 6th Grade Science**

By being engaged in learning stations about the structures of the eye, students will better understand how these individual structures are related to their functions. By giving students time to study the introductory video on their tablets, we will enable them to gain basic familiarity with the essential structures and functions of the eye. By engaging in learning stations about each of these structures, groups of students will further explore and discover the relationship between the specific structures and functions. Because these stations will break the eye into individual components, students will more easily relate each structure to its function. By using the Socratic method questioning and dialogue at each station, students will develop deeper understanding of the structure and function than they might through simply memorizing information.

**High School Social Studies**

By being taught the definition of inference and engaging in feedback with small groups, students will recognize and distinguish levels of inference. By initially learning about the definition of inference through direct teaching, students will gain a foundation for recognizing and distinguishing levels of inference in their subsequent activities and writing. By writing a paragraph in groups, students will receive continued support from peers while increasing their responsibility for independently generating inferences and placing these ideas in paragraph form.

**What Professional Learning Communities Should Ask Many of the teaching teams**

that we observe focus on isolated tasks, such as unpacking standards, designing assessments, analyzing student work, or reflecting on assessment results. When they discuss teaching, these teams often gravitate toward brief exchanges of so-called "best practices" and ideas for increasing variety and engagement. They rarely take time to articulate rationales for their instructional plans or to develop coherent lesson storylines that connect instructional activities with desired outcomes. In contrast, professional learning communities or even pairs of teachers that are engaged in collaborative instructional inquiry or lesson study spend significant time planning, observing, and reflecting on the intricate elements of teaching. They work through a series of nuanced questions and tasks, such as the following: What do we want students to understand or be able to do at the end of this lesson or series of lessons? What evidence will we collect during and after the lesson to help us evaluate student progress and study the relationship between teaching and learning? What prior knowledge and background experience will students bring to this lesson? What will most students already know? What assumptions will they have? What common misconceptions might we expect? What related content or prerequisite knowledge will be covered before the lesson? What combination and order of learning activities will help students progress toward these learning goals? How will each activity connect and build on the previous activity? How will it pave the way for subsequent learning activities? What specific teacher and student roles for each activity will best facilitate the desired outcome? How did our instructional plan contribute to this, and what teaching is required to address continuing needs? What did we learn about our design rationale? How would we revise the rationale on the basis of our latest evidence and insights? How should we revise this lesson for future use? What key insights about teaching and learning did we gain from this lesson that might apply to our general teaching practice?

Start with a Few Lessons Teachers are responsible for planning hundreds of lessons each year, and most of these lessons cannot be planned or analyzed with the level of detail described above. But teachers and teacher teams can strategically select a few key lessons for each unit or quarter and treat these as research lessons that they use to address the questions described here. Just as a rich drop of food coloring gradually diffuses through water, this type of deep planning and reflection with selected lessons has a rich, permeating effect on practice. It shifts the emphasis

from cursory selection of activities and spontaneous classroom decisions to careful analysis of cause-and-effect relationships and coherent instruction. What science teaching looks like: Educational Leadership, 64 4 , p. Learning to learn to teach: An "experiment" model for teaching and teacher preparation in mathematics. Journal of Mathematics Teacher Education, 6 3 , â€” Ermeling is an independent education consultant and member of a research team from the University of California-Los Angeles and Stanford. Genevieve Graff-Ermeling is assistant head of school for teaching and learning, Concordia International School, Shanghai. They are coauthors of Teaching Better: Igniting and Sustaining Instructional Improvement Corwin, Enter the periodical title within the "Get Permission" search field. To translate this article, contact permissions ascd.