![Future Problem Solving Affiliate Wisconsin logo]

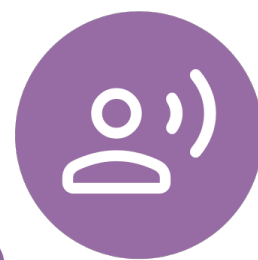# Storytelling

(formerly Scenario Performance)

Competition Information
2025-26

Entries due Friday, February 6, 2026
Entry fee $25

What is Storytelling?

In Storytelling, students choose from four annual topics that interest them as they project twenty years into the future and create a futuristic story related to the topic. This story is not written out in full, as it is going to be "told" and should be more "natural" and "spontaneous" in nature. Up to 10 cue cards may be used in the presentation.

Why Storytelling?

Storytelling was designed by Future Problem Solving Australia to develop and sustain the oral tradition of storytelling. This option is ideally suited to students who show thinking abilities in different ways - particularly for those whose cultural heritage and/or learning styles prefer oral communication. It is also ideal for developing thinking skills. A rubric-based authentic evaluation is provided for competitors, giving students tools for continuous growth.

Who can participate in Storytelling?

Students may participate in Storytelling in three divisions: Junior (grades 4-6 or the equivalent), Middle (grades 7-9), and Senior (grades 10-12). For students who participate in the Global Issues Problem Solving and/or Creative (Scenario) Writing components of Future Problem Solving, Storytelling can serve as an excellent complement to their work on any of the topics used in those components. Storytelling is also an excellent offering for students who do not participate in other components of Future Problem Solving; the creative storytelling may appeal to students who are not drawn to the writing and/or the team orientation of the other components. Storytelling can be used as a stand-alone activity by an FPS coach, a drama/debate teacher, a parent, or any instructor with students who are interested in creative storytelling.

Storytelling Topics 2025-26

- Invasive Species
- Space Exploration
- Video Games
- Surveillance

Do students need to know the problem solving process for Storytelling?

The creative problem solving process is used in the Global Issues and Community Projects components. Although knowing the process can help students to think about the future, it is not a prerequisite for Storytelling. However, students should do some reading about the topic they select for their story.

How can I get started with my students?

The best way to become acquainted with Storytelling is to view and listen to sample performances and storytelling presentations. See the Links for Coaches page for links to view student performances.

How much help should I give?

The student's story must be original. As coach, you may listen to the student practice, ask questions that occur to you as a listener, and make general suggestions for improvement in storytelling techniques. Cue cards, if used, must be created by the student.

How is Storytelling evaluated?

Storytelling entries submitted to Wisconsin FPS via video are scored by evaluators who consider these elements: storytelling techniques, audience awareness, use of voice, development of story, characterization, creative thinking, connection to topic, and futuristic thinking. Evaluation and feedback are provided via a rubric-based score sheet.

How do I enter student work for Storytelling?

Follow the requirements for submitting entries as outlined in this document. Entry forms can be found at wisfps.org. Click on Registration and Fees.

What is the timeline for Wisconsin performances?

Storytelling video entries are due in early February. Evaluation takes place in February, and results are announced in late February or early March. There will be three winners in each division.

What happens at State Bowl?

The winning storytellers will be invited to attend the opening activities on Thursday evening at State Bowl to receive their awards. Other activities for Storytellers will be announced with State Bowl materials.

What happens at the International Conference?

High quality first place Wisconsin Storytellers are eligible to participate in a live competition at the International Conference World Finals. For this competition, storytellers will create a new story based on the IC topic.

Storytelling Requirements 2025-2026
Read carefully & distribute to students who are preparing performances for competition.

STORY CONTENT

At least 20 years in the future	Storytelling is the **TELLING** of a story that might take place as a logical outgrowth of actions or events that took place earlier. It must be presented *as though the future were the present.* Futuristic concepts and trends are incorporated into the story, but a specific date is not required.
Related to one of the four FPSPI topics	The story must have a recognizable relationship to one of the topics for the year. It should be obvious which topic you are using when listening to the performance. You can find descriptors for the topics in this document, with links to more topic information.

VIDEO PERFORMANCE DETAILS – Coaches review before submitting!

Max time 5 minutes	The presentation may not exceed 5 minutes. Minutes and seconds of the video submitted must be indicated on the entry sheet. A presentation that is too short may not adequately convey a fully developed story.
Max of 10 cue cards	Cue cards are not required, but students may use up to 10 cards no larger than 4x6 inches that are created by the student. The cards are for quick reference; they should contain only brief notes or outline phrases, not sentences. Each card is limited to 20 words. If used, submit one pdf with scans or photos of the cards.
Continuous video	The recording must be continuous, with no cuts, edits, or movements of the camera location. The story must be **TOLD**, not **READ**.
Single camera focus	The focus must remain constant with the camera focusing on the head and shoulders of the performer OR a full body shot, sitting or standing. The location of the video may not "contribute" to the story.
Limited movement	The performer may use gestures and facial expressions and may sit or stand in one place. Moving around to "act out" the story is not allowed.

ENTRY SUBMISSION – All parts of the entry must be submitted by the COACH.

Document	Format	Label file	Submit
Storytelling Video	Digital video file	Junior Smith ST Video Middle Jones ST Video Senior Anderson ST Video	Via Dropbox or other large file transfer method to lynn.wisfps@gmail.com
Storytelling Entry Form	Microsoft WORD only	Junior Smith ST Entry Middle Jones ST Entry Senior Anderson ST Entry	By e-mail to lynn.wisfps@gmail.com
Publication Release & Cue Card images	PDFs	Junior Smith ST Release (stud) Junior Smith ST Cards (if used)	
Fees	$25 per entry. Check or cash mailed, POs mailed or e-mailed		Wisconsin FPS 3318 Conservancy Lane Middleton, WI 53562

All parts of the entry must be submitted, e-mailed, or mailed by February 6, 2026

Submitting a Video File with Dropbox

Dropbox is an easy way to share files that are too large for email. These directions apply to a Dropbox account as used through a web browser. (Dropbox can also install folders and icons for the account directly on the computer. The process would then be slightly different, but you can always access the account on the web at dropbox.com. You may also use other methods to transfer large files.)

- Be sure the file is in a digital video format, such as mp4
- Name the file as directed on the Requirements page
- Create a free account at dropbox.com or use an existing account
- Upload the video file to the account (look for a small picture of a document with folded corner and a plus sign)
- Hover over the name of the file, and click on the word SHARE to the right
- A box will come up with a link to the file and a place to enter an email. Send the link to lynn.wisfps@gmail.com

Storytelling Essential Publications

Important resources from the FPSPI Catalog.
(Available at **www.fpspimart.org**)

Research Guides

Provides essential background information on the topics for scenario performers:

- Terms and Definitions
- Topic Overview
- Questions for Discussion
- Internet Resources
- Article Summaries
    (Note: No chapter is provided for the International Competition topic.)

$76 PDF Download for all 4 topics
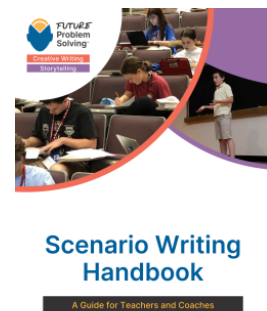
$22 PDF Download for each individual topic

FPSPI Scenario Handbook

Designed to help teachers effectively guide students in Scenario Writing AND Scenario Performance, this manual includes:

- Explanations of scenario development
- Classroom activities
- Award-winning student work

$44 PDF Download

Real World Topics

Invasive Species

Science & Technology

Practice Problem 1

How will we safeguard the biodiversity of our ecosystems against the rising threat of invasive species in the future?

Space Exploration

Science & Technology

Practice Problem 2

How might space exploration change the way humanity exists on Earth and throughout our universe in the future?

Video Games

Business & Economics

Qualifying Problem

How might evolving gaming technology, laws, and consumer expectations impact the business of video games in the future?

Surveillance

Civics & Society

Affiliate Finals Problem

How might surveillance be used responsibly to balance public safety with privacy and ethical considerations in the future?

International Conference

TBD

We invite regional affiliate champions to attend our International Conference and compete alongside their peers. We will announce a fifth problem topic on **March 1, 2026** for use at our world finals event in **June 2026** at Indiana University in Bloomington.

Visit our topic center to learn more about each topic and access topic-specific resources.

Future Problem Solving®

Practice Problem 1

Invasive Species
Science & Technology
How will we safeguard the biodiversity of our ecosystems against the rising threat of invasive species in the future?

Visit our topic center to learn more about our Invasive Species topic, view suggested readings and access additional resources.

Background
Invasive species are non-native organisms that, when introduced to a new environment, can cause harm to native ecosystems, biodiversity, and even economic activities. Due to a lack of natural competitors or predators, these species often outcompete or prey upon native plants and animals, disrupting the delicate balance of local ecosystems. Invasive species can be plants, animals, or microorganisms, and they are typically introduced through human activities, such as trade, travel, or deliberate release.

Context
The impacts of invasive species are far-reaching and can result in habitat degradation, loss of native species, and economic losses in agriculture and forestry. Prevention, early detection, and management efforts may lessen the damage caused by the invasive species. Management includes the removal of invasive species and restoration of affected ecosystems. This can be time-consuming, economically punishing, and not always successful. It is a critical challenge in conservation and environmental management, emphasizing the importance of vigilance and responsible practices to protect the integrity of natural environments.

Questions to Explore
- When an invasive species is introduced to an ecosystem, whether deliberately or by accident, what are the repercussions?
- Can species introductions and spread be predicted?
- How do scientists predict the introduction and spread of invasive species?
- How do invasive species impact social, economic, and cultural environments?
- How can we protect our environments from invasive species in the future?

Central Themes
1. What makes an invader?
2. Damage and destruction
3. Combating invasive species
4. The ethics of management

Practice Problem 2

Space Exploration

Science & Technology
How might space exploration change the way humanity exists on Earth and throughout our universe in the future?

Background
Space exploration involves the investigation, discovery, and utilization of outer space, including celestial bodies like planets, moons, and stars. It uses spacecraft, satellites, and telescopes to observe and study the universe. It also includes missions to explore, land on, and perhaps even establish a human presence on other celestial bodies.

Context
Space exploration has yielded remarkable scientific discoveries, including understanding the universe's origins, the search for extraterrestrial life, and technological developments such as advancements in materials, computing, and telecommunications. Government space agencies and private companies worldwide are engaged in ongoing collaborative efforts to explore the vastness of space. Space exploration promises to unravel some of the universe's greatest mysteries while pushing the boundaries of human knowledge and achievement.

Questions to Explore
- What type of discoveries will continued space exploration lead to?
- How might space exploration increase global collaboration in the future?
- Are humans likely to be able to settle on the Moon, Mars, or other planets or moons?
- Will we be able to save or supplement the Earth's resources with resources from the Moon, asteroids, or beyond?

Central Themes
1. Innovations from the space race
2. Ethical exploration
3. What are we looking for?
4. Pushing the limits

Qualifying Problem

Video Games
Business & Economics

How might evolving gaming technology, laws, and consumer expectations impact the business of video games in the future?

Visit our topic center to learn more about our Video Games topic, view suggested readings and access additional resources.

Background
Video games are a popular form of entertainment and interactive media that have evolved into a multi-billion-dollar industry. They encompass various digital experiences, from action-packed adventures and strategy games to immersive simulations and educational tools. Video games are typically played on computers, gaming consoles, or mobile devices and involve players engaging with digital worlds, characters, and challenges.

Context
Video games offer diverse experiences, from competitive eSports competitions to solo adventures and social experiences where players collaborate or compete with others online. Video games have become a significant cultural phenomenon, with a global fan base and dedicated communities. They are even recognized as art forms. These games continue to push the boundaries of technology, storytelling, and creativity, influencing not only entertainment but also fields like education, cognitive science, and virtual reality.

Questions to Explore
- What makes video games of all kinds so popular?
- How do video games influence societies?
- How will the rapidly expanding field of artificial intelligence shape video gaming of the future?
- What will be the next frontier for video games look like?

Central Themes
1. Healthy gaming
2. The economy of gaming
3. Games and culture
4. What's next in gaming?

Affiliate Finals Problem

Surveillance

Civics & Society

How might surveillance be used responsibly to balance public safety with privacy and ethical considerations in the future?

Visit our topic center to learn more about our Surveillance topic, view suggested readings and access additional resources.

Background

Surveillance is the systematic and continuous monitoring, observation, or tracking of individuals, groups, or activities, often conducted by governments, businesses, organizations, or individuals. Surveillance uses various methods, including electronic surveillance, video monitoring, data collection, and even physical surveillance by law enforcement or intelligence agencies.

Context

Surveillance can serve legitimate purposes such as public safety, national security, and crime prevention, but it also raises significant privacy and civil liberty concerns. In the digital age, issues surrounding surveillance have become increasingly complex, as personal data and online behaviors are subject to investigation by both public and private entities. The struggle to balance between security and privacy is an ongoing debate, with discussions focused on defining the limits, legality, and ethical implications of surveillance practices, especially in the context of technology and the digital landscape.

Questions to Explore

- What are the implications of surveillance for individuals and society?
- After surveillance data is gathered, how should it be stored and distributed?
- Beyond criminal investigation, what other applications does surveillance have?
- How does surveillance vary from country to country?
- How should surveillance be governed at an international level?

Central Themes

1. Crime and control
2. Surveillance capitalism
3. When surveillance gets it right
4. Protecting data

Tips for Storytelling Coaches

General

- A great place to start is to review the evaluation criteria with students; then listen to several scenario performances, discussing them in light of the criteria.
- When submitting a video for the competitive round, follow the Scenario Performance Requirements carefully.

Topics: Review each of the four topics with students.

- Which topic interests them the most?
- Read the topic overviews from the *Readings, Research, and Resources* publication for basic information.
- Generate imagined futures for the topics.

Research: Once a topic is selected, students should read as much material on their chosen topic as they need to understand its various facets.

- The appropriate chapters from the *Readings, Research and Resources* publication and other information that students find online or in the library are useful materials for understanding the topic.
- As students read, have them take notes on facts that may be useful in their story, as well as impressions, emotional reactions, or ideas they have while reading the materials.

Characterization: Scenario performers should develop a central, identifiable, sustained character(s) -- animate or inanimate.

- 1-2 main characters are usually enough for a story of this length.
- Character development should take place throughout the events of the scenario.

Futuristic Elements: Scenarios should be **TOLD** as though the future is the present.

- A strong portrayal of futuristic trends and predictions should be evident.
- Lengthy explanations and descriptions of technology devices and social trends can interfere with the flow of the story.

Help with storytelling techniques: All authors may have adult help to learn and practice skills for good storytelling.

Practice: Provide opportunities for performers to present their stories to a variety of audiences to gain confidence and to receive feedback and ideas for improvement.

Be an Active Scenario Performance Coach!!

The student's work must be original. However, before submission each student's story should be heard by one or more adults who will discuss the presentation with the student and provide feedback. Drama and forensics coaches may be especially helpful with this. Listeners may want to use the evaluation criteria to guide their feedback.

Feedback: Legitimate assistance provides feedback and food for thought but does not make decisions for students about the story or the performance.
- Point out strengths
  - (Good word choice here. Dramatic use of voice in a section. Etc.)
- Ask questions that occur to you as a listener
  - (Why did the spaceship land in the middle of the city? What happened to the rest of the travelers, who only showed up at the beginning? Etc.)
- Make general suggestions for improvement
  - (More variety in intonation might make it more engaging. More description might give us a clearer image. You might want to let us know more about the thinking of the main character. More futuristic details might be good. Etc.)

Author Decisions: It should be up to the student author to determine what revisions to make in response to the questions and suggestions.

Tips for Scenario Performers

General

- This is **STORY TELLING**, not **STORY READING**!
- Creative ideas *and* good vocal technique are both important!
- Identify a target audience for your story, and construct the plot for that group.
- When submitting your entry, follow the instructions carefully. See Scenario Performance Requirements for more information.

Pre-Storytelling

- Read and gather information in *Readings, Research and Resources; Omni*; *Futurist*; *Discover*, etc.
- Write an outline or rough plan of the main events in the story.
- Use key words or phrases to indicate the selected topic and the time period in which your story is set.

Character(s)

- Use a minimum number of characters, animate or inanimate (usually 1–2 protagonists).
- Introduce the main character(s) as soon as possible; place the lead character directly into the situation.
- Demonstrate how things have changed and how the main character is affected.
- If conflict is a central part of the story, lead to the point where the character(s) has a chance to "win, lose or draw." This sets up a moment of suspense.

Idea Development

- Imagine ideas for a society that will exist more than 20 years from now. List a variety of possibilities.
- Involve the audience (listeners) immediately as your presentation begins.
- Use conflict, adventure, suspense, humor (satire, parody) in the development of the story.
- Develop the idea of the scenario to point out positive social and cultural aspects or the consequences of doing without them.
- Form the climax as a logical outgrowth of the story line or character development.
- Provide a resolution to any conflict developed in the scenario.
- Provide a conclusion. Be sure to end; don't just stop without giving the listener something think about.

Technique

- Choose a story approach that suits your main idea and your strengths as a storyteller. This is a storytelling performance, not an "acting" performance. The telling of the story should show evidence of some spontaneous thought.
- Up to 10 cue cards may be used, with no more than 20 words per card. These are for reminders; do not READ them. Cue cards are optional.
- Use first or third person narrative. Incorporate dialogue, if appropriate.
- Demonstrate a suitable tone/voice throughout the performance.
- Vary the sentence structure. Use interesting vocabulary and appropriate grammar.
- Engage listeners by **TELLING** the story so as to elicit an emotional response.
- Exhibit the storyteller's personal touch through vivid, colorful description that gives the story life and spirit. Show, don't tell!
  - <u>Telling</u>: He got out of bed and sat at his desk to start the day.
  - <u>Showing</u>: Gradually, he rubbed the sleep from his eyes and shuffled out of bed, pulling on a worn corduroy robe before settling at his desk to start the day.
- Wrap up the performance with an appropriate ending.

Creative and Futuristic Thinking

- Incorporate creativity into your story ideas – use inventive, innovative, original, resourceful ideas.
- Incorporate futuristic thinking into your story – portray futuristic information and trends. It is fun to explain how inventions affect our future lives, but don't "overgadgetize."

Post-Performance

- Practice multiple times before recording, alone and with a live audience.
- Create a video and view to critique your performance!
- Listen for places to improve:
  - Is the story whole, unified, and on topic?
  - Is your vocal expression clear, coherent, and engaging?
  - Do you need to record the performance again? Remember, the recording must be continuous. No editing of any sort is allowed on the submitted video.
- Ask others to listen and to give you feedback based on the evaluation criteria.

Storytelling Evaluation Criteria

NOTE: If the story is READ instead of TOLD, it is **NOT** a scenario performance! Up to 10 cue cards may be used, with no more than 20 words per card.

Storytelling Techniques
Exemplary performances will exhibit clarity of the spoken voice, with effective pacing of the story performance and seamless transitions that enhance the flow of the story. The storytelling techniques will be easily understood by the audience. (Scored 1-5)

Audience Awareness
In exemplary performances, the storyteller establishes and maintains a strong awareness of and communication with the audience. The performance involves the listener, elicits emotional responses, and motivates the listener to consider consequences. (Scored 1-5)

Use of Voice
In exemplary performances, the storyteller shows a clear, distinctive personal touch and a contagious passion. Vivid descriptions and a variety of tone techniques make the story lively and engaging. Stylistic elements are uniquely mastered. (Scored 1-10)

Development of Story
Exemplary stories will include complex ideas supported by rich, engaging, and pertinent details, and will show strong evidence of analysis, reflection, and insight exploring different aspects of the topic. The plot is developed in depth and supported by elaborated details. (Scored 1-10)

Characterization
Exemplary stories will have authentic character(s) with dynamic nature enhancing the overall impact and effectiveness of the story. Characters will evoke an emotional response. The storyteller will achieve a sense of total involvement with the character(s). (Scored 1-5)

Creative Thinking
Exemplary stories will have a strong portrayal of innovative/ingenious/novel ideas with unusual/imaginative details and vocabulary that provide a unique and powerful experience for the listener. (Scored 1-5)

Connection to Topic
In exemplary stories, the storyteller maintains a strong connection to the topic that is artfully blended with the story line; the setting is clearly 20-30 years in the future. (Scored 1-5)

Futuristic Thinking
Exemplary stories will show a portrayal of futuristic trends that enhance the storyline, and will create a future society in language and ideas. (Scored 1-5)

Links for Coaches

Use these links from our international program to learn more about the Storytelling program. Share these links with students, parents, and supporters as needed.

Learn about the program
Storytelling program page

Watch examples of student performances
Criminal Justice Systems - Junior Division (2018)
Biosecurity - Middle Division (2017)
Antibiotic Resistance - Senior Division (2022)

Buy resources for Storytelling Topics
All Topics – Research Units
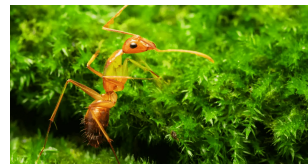Invasive Species Research Unit
Space Exploration Research Unit
Video Games Research Unit
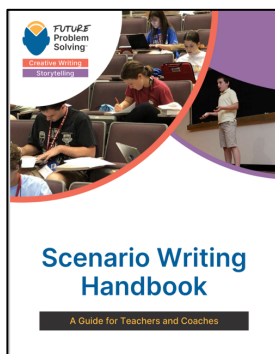Surveillance Research Unit

Buy resources for Storytelling support
Scenario Writing Handbook

Scenario Writing Handbook
A Guide for Teachers and Coaches

Links for Coaches to Learn More About Storytelling

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Jxtc4o4jnpVFQItKqkcH6ESOY6AIqWAoig72Q7Y4-Uc/edit?usp=sharing