



Storytelling



Competition Information 2026-27



Entries due Friday, February 5, 2027
Entry fee \$40

Wisconsin Future Problem Solving Storytelling Competition 2026-2027



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 2026-27

- Digital Dark Age
- Disappearing Cultures
- Influencer Marketing
- Health Security

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 2026-2027

Please 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 <i>as though the future were the present</i> . 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 5, 2027

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



Scenario Performance Topics 2026-27

Digital Dark Age

The Digital Dark Age is an inability to access previously collected documented files, photos, and other information stored in outdated file formats, software, or hardware. Data becomes corrupt, scarce, or otherwise inaccessible as technology changes and physical media decays.



How should archivists decide which data to prioritize saving? What methods can be used to modernize outdated file types? How might the loss of information affect the future of humanity?

Disappearing Cultures

Disappearing cultures, also called endangered or vanishing cultures, represent the unfortunate phenomenon where unique and often ancient ways of life, traditions, languages, and customs face the risk of extinction. These cultures are typically marginalized and/or indigenous. They are threatened by factors such as globalization, urbanization, assimilation, environmental changes, conflict, and government policies.



What role does cultural changes as a result of globalization have on cultures? What strategies are being employed to revitalize and renew cultural practices? In the face of cultural loss, how are individuals and communities impacted? What are some ways to prevent the vanishing of cultures?

Influencer Marketing

Influencers combine marketing with their presence in the public eye to persuade others. By establishing devoted fan bases for specific brands and profiting from their visibility, they have revolutionized the advertising industry. Marketing influencers impact a variety of platforms such as online sources, television, music, and print media. These strategies aim to build trust and credibility by associating products with a respected figure, thereby influencing consumer behavior.



What risks do brands face when partnering with influencers whose personal actions might affect brand reputation? How does the integration of advertising content impact an Influencer's perceived authenticity? What role do platform algorithms play in determining which sponsored content reaches which audiences? What are the legal and ethical implications of disguising advertisements as personal content? How does commercialization of personal content affect follower trust and engagement?

Health Security

Health security is a critical component of public health and global well-being, encompassing measures and strategies to protect populations from the threats of infectious diseases, biological hazards, and other health emergencies. It involves various activities from disease surveillance, early detection, and rapid response to developing effective vaccines and medical countermeasures.



How can we ensure that everyone can have proper access to medical care? Is medical care something that can be equalized?

Tips for Scenario Performance 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.

(Tips for Scenario Performance Coaches continued)

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.

(Tips for Scenario Authors continued)

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!
 - Telling: He got out of bed and sat at his desk to start the day.
 - Showing: 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.



Scenario Performance 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 1-15)

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 1-10)

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)



Resources

Use these links to learn about the Storytelling program. This program is also known as Scenario Performance in some affiliates. These links are from [fpspi.org](https://www.fpspi.org) and resources.futureproblemsolving.org.

Learn about the program

[Storytelling program page](#) (includes three examples of storytelling performances)

[Tips for Storytelling submissions](#)

[How is Storytelling evaluated?](#)

[How to evaluate Storytelling on FPSOnline](#)

Watch examples of student performances

[2022 World Champion performances - Antibiotic Resistance](#)

[2021 World Champion performances - Neurotechnology](#)

Coming soon to our [YouTube channel](#) - 2025 World Champion performances

Learn about our topics

[2026-27 Topics – Topics by hemisphere](#)

[Digital Dark Age topic & suggested readings](#)

[Disappearing Cultures topic & suggested readings](#)

[Influencer Marketing topic & suggested readings](#)

[Health Security topic & suggested readings](#)

Purchase specific publications

<https://www.fpspimart.org/product-category/fps-storytelling-program-materials/>