



## Read Good Stories

**Outstanding examples of nonfiction storytelling, along with essays on the craft of narrative journalism, are available online at the Nieman Narrative Digest.**

In her essay, "News Feature v. Narrative: What's the Difference?" Rebecca Allen explains why some articles grab you while others don't.

"A traditional news feature," writes Allen, "starts with an anecdote or scene, moves to a nut graph that tells the reader where the story is going and then spends the rest of the piece explaining and supporting the nut graph." This format certainly makes life easier for editors who know they can trim any piece from the bottom up without losing important points. For readers, however, it can drain the story of drama and let them check out well before the entire tale is told.



"A narrative," offers Allen in contrast, "lets the story unfold through character, scene and action-usually without summing up

the story and telling readers what it's about." Well-constructed narratives, she adds, offer a mystery or pose a question, "something that compels the reader to keep reading and find out what happens." When it's critical that your readers get the *full* story with all the key facts, a narrative will probably serve you better. (To read Allen's entire essay, [click here](#).)

For public interest communicators looking to write more compelling pieces for websites, blogs, brochures, etc., this distinction is worth nothing. And it's just one insight among many to be found at the [Nieman Narrative Digest](#).

Launched by the Nieman Foundation for Journalism at Harvard University, the Narrative Digest serves as a home for outstanding examples of storytelling in newspapers, magazines and on the web. Visitors can read articles from such expected sources as *The New Yorker*, Salon.com and *The Washington Post*, but also from

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## About Us

*free-range thinking* is written by Andy Goodman and edited by Lori Matsumoto. To read back issues, download free publications, and to learn more about our work, please visit [www.agoodmanonline.com](http://www.agoodmanonline.com) and [www.thegoodmancenter.com](http://www.thegoodmancenter.com).

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To subscribe to this newsletter,

FiveThirtyEight.com, *O: The Oprah Magazine*, and everyone's favorite weekly newspaper, *Farm and Dairy*.

The site's resources section includes more essays like Allen's, interviews with authors, and recommended reading. So whether you seek inspiration from reading good stories or how-to advice from top practitioners, the Narrative Digest probably has something for you.

*(Special thanks to my colleague Susan Parker of Clear Thinking Communications for calling attention to this excellent resource.)*

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GOOD IDEAS FOR GOOD CAUSES

**a goodman**

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## Watch Good Stories

***Tired of reading? Sit back and enjoy the Master Storytellers at TED.com.***

TED is a nonprofit that first became known for hosting conferences of leaders in the field of technology, entertainment and design. The best presentations from these gatherings are available on the web, and since the sheer volume of choices can be overwhelming, TED has neatly categorized them to help visitors find what they want.

[Master Storytellers](#) is one channel worth checking out, especially for public interest communicators who want to tell stories as part of their presentations. Even if you're not talking about anything as dramatic as skiing to the North Pole (like Ben Saunders); as personal as your relationship with God (like Julia Sweeney); or as familiar as boy-meets-girl (like Rives, a poet who tells his story in a most unfamiliar way), you can still learn a thing or two about holding an audience's attention when it's just you, the words, and a few pictures behind you.



The channel offers dozens of stories to choose from, but I recommend you start with these:

- [Ben Saunders skis to the North Pole](#)
- [Julia Sweeney on letting go of God](#)
- [Rives tells a story of mixed emoticons](#)

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## Write Good Stories

***Now that you've read and heard good stories, learn and apply the techniques that will help you tell better stories about your good works.***

"Storytelling: Tapping the Power of Narrative," the most popular class at The Goodman Center, returns in September and registration is now open. In four one-hour classes spread over four successive weeks, we will show you:

- How to structure your story in ways that create more reader interest and engage more people in your cause
- How to develop scenes, use dialogue, and include descriptive elements to create stories that people will remember and want to retell
- The six different kinds of stories you need to collect and how to go about collecting them
- How to use stories as part of your advocacy, fundraising, recruiting, internal communications, and public relations



Classes will be held online on September 8, 15, 22 and 29 from 9-10a Pacific (12n-1p Eastern) each day. Tuition is \$500 per student, and discounts are available for organizations that register five or more students. To learn more and register online, [click here](#).

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## September Classes at The Goodman Center

***Polish your presenting skills and learn to avoid common design mistakes that could be driving people away from your website, annual report, and more.***

### **Presentations: Bore No More!**

*September 16th and 23rd (9-10a Pacific)*

Based on unprecedented research and incorporating the advice of twenty highly regarded public-speaking experts, "Presentations: Bore No More" is a two-hour online class designed to help presenters at all levels, from newbies to seasoned veterans. Curriculum in this two-hour course includes:

- The five most commonly made mistakes in presenting and how to avoid them
- How to structure presentations to ensure your audience learns more
- Why PowerPoint should never be used as a presentation and a handout
- Techniques to help you deliver talks with greater confidence



Classes will be held on September 16th and 23rd from 9-10a Pacific each day (12n-1p Eastern), and tuition is \$250 per student. (Group discounts are available.) To learn more and register online, [click here](#).

### **Design: Deciding on Design**

*September 18th, September 25th, and October 2nd (9-10a Pacific)*

Even if you don't work directly with print or web designers, you may have to evaluate and approve designed materials before your audience sees them. Learn what to look for (and what to avoid) in this fast and informative overview of graphic design.

In three one-hour classes conducted over three successive weeks, we'll cover:

- Basic principles of page layout for print and the web
- Using color and typography to convey your message
- Techniques for getting the most from photos and illustrations
- Fundamentals of website design
- How design contributes to your brand



Classes will be held on September 18th and 25th and on October 2nd from 9-10a Pacific each day (12n-1p Eastern), and tuition is \$375 per student. (Group discounts are available.) To learn more and register online, [click here](#).

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