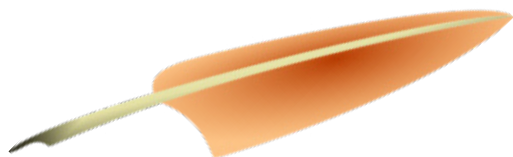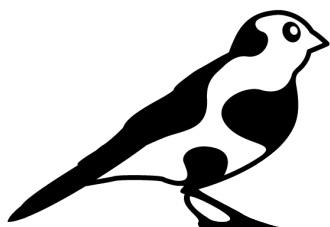# Storytelling Tools

Publish to the web with these great, FREE tools

Helping students care about their assigned reading isn't our only challenge to engaging them with the subject; students need to care about the media they create just as much, or more, than the media they consume. These tools can excite students about the act of creation and lift them out of the doldrums of the five-part essay. They aren't only for students, however. As teachers, we also look for new ways to present, to students and colleagues both, and these tools are great for that as well.

COWBIRD.COM

Cowbird recontextualizes the social aspects of storytelling by encouraging users to not only "Retell" each other's stories (similar to retweeting in Twitter), but to "Sprout" new stories off of old ones, creating a chain of connected narratives that is both collaborative and fun. Additionally users may create constant elements with their stories, such as characters, settings, and themes, which can be utilized by other storytellers in their own work. All of these qualities combine to make a Cowbird a healthy environment for developing a community of storytellers within a classroom.

Stories are told with images, text and audio.

TELESCOPICTEXT.ORG

Telescopictext.org is a storytelling tool which is only possible, now, with digital documents and the internet. The concept is simple: Storytellers write a line of text and then choose words or sets of words within that line which, when clicked, expand to form new lines. Hence, "I am happy" can be expanded, upon the reader clicking "am," to read, "I *was driving home when I saw a moose. It made me* happy." Expansion is practically unlimited, and as a web tool it is one of the easiest to use. The unique manner by which storytellers can shape the user's experience of words is great for both re-experiencing language and couching information (i.e., the definitions of words, the authors of quotes, etc.) in new and exciting ways.

Stories are told with collapsable, interactive text.

INKLESTUDIOS.COM

Inkle makes slick, interactive, branching storytelling easy with their Inklewriter tool. Branching storylines allow teachers to lead students through question-answer dialogue trees, and students to deviate from the familiar, linear essay format. Students can use Inklewriter to write variagated essays which tackle several topics at once around a central thesis, or lead their classmates through "if-then" scenarios in, say, an ethics class. As with the other tools listed here, many of the possibilities have yet to be written.

Stories are told with interactive, branching text.

UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS