



Your Story, Our Story: Frequently Asked Questions

This section includes questions we have received from group leaders. Questions are organized into three categories: About Your Story, Our Story, its Technology and Functionality, and Curricular Connections.

Have a question you don't see here? Email yourstory@tenement.org and we would be happy to assist.

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1. Why was *Your Story, Our Story* created?

Conceived in 2014, *Your Story, Our Story* sought to expand the Museum's storytelling beyond its physical walls so that it could tell a more holistic story of American identity in ways that honor the complexity and multiplicity of individual experience. The use of a website ensured that there would be enough space to hold everyone's stories. It also created a flexible framework for making connections across stories beyond time, culture, race, and geography, and for providing historic context and scholarship to accompany similarities and differences the growing collection reveals. Over the years, the exhibit has continually evolved through the brilliance of our partners and feedback of participants.

2. Who is *Your Story, Our Story* for?

Your Story, Our Story is for all Americans, ages 13 and older. The project is designed to be expansive enough to hold the diversity of participant's unique identities. Everyone can participate, regardless of whether they have a direct connection to migration or immigration, know a lot about their family history or very little, or hold specific racial, ethnic, religious or other social identities.

3. What types of stories can participants include in *Your Story, Our Story*?

Stories on *Your Story, Our Story* use an object to reveal the ways moving to a new place impacts identity and one's understanding and experience of the world. These include the movements of ancestors and one's personal lived experience, moves that were welcomed and those that were forced, and span moving from another country, to another state, or even across the street.

These movements hold countless possibilities for story topics, including:

- Traditions preserved or adapted from one place to another (e.g. food, music, attire, religion)
- New rituals invented to bring comfort or mark important moments or milestones
- Objects or stuff one cares about
- Successes and struggles encountered (e.g. dreams, opportunities, challenges, disappointments)
- Emotions and feelings that surfaced as a result of the movement (e.g. joy, hope, discomfort, confusion)
- Important people in their lives (e.g. family members, caregivers, friends, neighbors, or community members connected to a location)
- Parts of their identity and family history one is curious about
- Things we haven't yet considered. We are learning together and are grateful to be co-creating this with smart people like you who can help us identify and expand our ideas.

4. How can I integrate *Your Story, Our Story* with a museum visit?

Your Story, Our Story is an ideal complement to a museum visit. We particularly recommend that groups submit their stories after the museum visit as the visit can inspire participant stories and also generate excitement about having their stories be part of the museum's collection.

5. How can *Your Story, Our Story* be used to center equity and empathy, and an orientation towards a just society?

Your Story, Our Story counters ideas about who is American and shifts the story from a dominant, rigid, white, and Christian identity to a narrative that is multifaceted, complex, and dynamic. The site reveals

stories that have been traditionally left out of museums and textbooks and forges a fuller and expansive understanding of the American experience.

Being published on a nationally recognized museum site gives participants credibility and confidence in sharing parts of themselves and having those parts be seen and honored. By creating space for participants to share their experiences, *Your Story, Our Story* has the potential to deepen understanding about unfamiliar groups and identities, to combat racism, prejudice, and to promote empathy and equity. As participants deepen their understanding of the commonalities and differences they share, they become skilled at recognizing and appreciating diversity in all its forms.

6. How can I connect with someone at the Tenement Museum to get help with using *Your Story, Our Story*?

We love to hear from you! Please write yourstory@tenement.org with other questions or ideas.

Technology & Functionality

7. What are the technology requirements for participants?

Access to wifi and a camera are the only technology requirements for participation as participants will need to submit their story and corresponding images online.

8. What choices do I have with regards to where and with whom my participants' stories are shared?

The Tenement Museum is committed to protecting the privacy of our contributors. Group leaders embarking on this project should support participants in sharing only what they want to share. Stories may be submitted anonymously, and names may be abbreviated or removed from stories containing sensitive personal information.

You decide the privacy permissions for the stories your participants submit when you create your group page. Options include:

- Use only initials, not full name, as signature in story
- Not using photos of author's face
- Can include stories in this group in global public search results

At any time you can change your privacy preferences, or have your story edited, made anonymous, or removed from the collection by contacting us at yourstory@tenement.org.

9. How can I edit my participants' stories?

When you create a group page, you will receive an email from the Museum that contains your "secret link" to the editing mode, which will give you access to your administrative page and to all the stories submitted. Click on the story you would like to edit.

10. How can I find my group page on the main website?

Visit your <https://yourstory.tenement.org/stories> and type your group name or tag in the search field at the top of the page. The search will result in a grid that includes your group page. The word "GROUP" will be listed in the bottom left corner of the square.

11. What is tagging and how does it work?

When submitting your story, you will be able to add tags that will help connect it to other stories. Popular tags include places, object type, time periods, and relationships.

Curricular Connections

12. How does *Your Story, Our Story* benefit schools?

This interdisciplinary project connects to English Language Arts, Social Studies, American and Global History, and Technology and Media. At its core, YSOS helps participants to see themselves as historians and authors with stories that are valuable and exhibit worthy. It also helps them to get curious about other people's identities and experiences within their school and create opportunities to make connections, honor differences, and contribute to building a fuller understanding of the past and present.

Teachers can use Your Story, Our Story to:

- Create opportunities to learn about students' identities.
- Digitally publish student stories.
- Create an exhibit online and or in their school.
- Teach content and skills related to storytelling and writing, history, primary source investigation, oral history and interviewing, digital publishing and photography, media consumption and privacy.
- Build community within the class and school community by exploring similarities and honoring the differences of experience.

Students can use Your Story, Our Story to:

- Choose what parts of their identities they want to share.
- Deepen relationships with teachers, classmates, and members of their school community.
- Publish their work in a digital museum exhibit.
- Develop an awareness of other identities and experiences, respectfully learn about them, and think critically about them.
- Connect their personal history to larger historical trends.

13. When in the school years is the ideal time to use *Your Story, Our Story*?

Your Story, Our Story is easily adaptable to multiple moments during the school year. Used at the beginning of the year, the project helps participants get to know each other. Later in the year, it can help them deepen relationships. The project can also be tied to core curricular themes such as immigration, migration, culture, identity, moments in American history being taught, and skill-building including storytelling, photography, writing, and digital media and publishing.

14. What essential questions from social studies and history does *Your Story, Our Story* connect to?

Your Story, Our Story explores big questions around identity, including:

- How am I a part of American history?
- Who am I and what is important to me?
- Why do we know some parts of our history and not others?
- How does my individual experience connect to my classmates and other people living in the United States?
- What circumstances, opportunities, and structures shape people's different experiences in America?
- How is ethnicity and race woven into an understanding of American identity for different people at different times?