



Game lesson title	What's the Story? Non-linear storytelling in videogames		
Brief intro	Videogames usually cast the player at the centre of a predetermined narrative, but these two games invite the player to direct the narrative, and create the story themselves. This lesson will help students understand what non-linear narrative is, and how it functions in video games to create and alter stories.		
Lesson hook	Who controls the story, and what's really going on?		
Suggested year level	Year 11 (though can be adapted to a year 10 game studies unit)	Suggested age level	16-17
Number of lessons	1 x 50 minute session	Costs involved? (detail below)	Yes
Author	You are free to copy, communicate and adapt this lesson plan which was created by Dean Ashton, Alora Young and Sophia Simmons licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 2.0		
Subject/s			
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Multimedia	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Visual Arts	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Digital Technologies	
Curriculum/Capabilities Alignment (VIC/AC) and Skills			
Unit 2 O1 Knowledge	Media pre-production, production and post-production techniques to represent ideas and achieve particular effects.		
Unit 2 O1 Knowledge	Media codes and conventions used to construct meaning in media products.		
Unit 2 O1 Knowledge	The characteristics of a range of media representations in media forms.		
Unit 2 O1 Skills	Describe the characteristics of specific media audiences and explain how productions can be designed and produced to engage audiences.		
Unit 2 O1 skills	Apply media codes and conventions to construct meaning in media products.		



Unit 2 O1 skills	Evaluate the characteristics of a range of media representations in media forms.
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Game used	<i>Her Story</i> , or <i>Not for Broadcast</i> (choose one, or both, depending on preference).
Game play required?	Ideally, a video playthrough could also work.

Specifications	CLASSIFICATION	CONSOLE	INTERNET REQUIRED?	COST (RRP)
<i>Her Story</i>	M	Mac or PC	No	\$14.50 on GOG or STEAM
<i>Not For Broadcast</i>	MA15+	PC	No	\$35.95 on STEAM

Important note about game classification
As classifications can change, teachers are responsible for checking the latest videogame classification and suitability for their class age group. Please visit https://www.classification.gov.au/ and https://www.common sense.org/education/ to guide you.
How are games used by students in the lesson?
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Watchers – observing, analysing and evaluating. Learning about the world and ourselves through understanding the impact of games culture and industry. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Players - learning by playing video games - learning things applicable to life outside of (and in) the game e.g. flight simulators, esports, etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Makers - learning through making games (coding, creative production, teamwork, leadership, e-sport roles etc). <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Explorers (Minecraft) – imaginative, self-directed, exploratory/sandbox learning.

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Shining through play.

eSafety considerations

Not For Broadcast contains adult themes, please consider whether this game is suitable for your students. From the developers:

“This game contains content unsuitable for children or adults. There is frequent strong language, brief pixelated nudity, and themes including euthanasia, conspiracy theories, radical politics, and atheism. Jokes about social issues are made throughout. There is occasional comic violence.”

Technical notes

Both games require at least one person to operate controls, **Not For Broadcast** could have up to three as there are multiple buttons to operate.

Download **Her Story** ([STEAM](#) or [GOG](#)) or **Not For Broadcast** ([STEAM](#) or [GOG](#)) game onto macOS or PC device.

Set up a projector to play through as a class.

NOTE: **Not For Broadcast** is a windows only game as of time of writing.

Prior knowledge/skills (Required/Recommended/References)

Prior knowledge of video games is helpful but not required.

Student outcomes

Learning goals	KNOW: What non-linear narratives are, how they can function in a video game format, and how they can affect a player's experience of a story.
	BE ABLE TO: Identify elements of non-linear narrative within a game, make choices and use their agency within a narrative structure, and analyse and apply critical thinking to a video game story.
	IMPROVE: Collaboration skills, reflection skills, critical and creative thinking skills, ICT capabilities.

LESSON SEQUENCE: Introduction to video game narratives

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<p>Prep & introduction activities</p>	<p>Teacher prep: Download either <i>Her Story</i> (STEAM or GOG) or <i>Not For Broadcast</i> (STEAM or GOG) game onto macOS or PC device. Have a projector or screen to watch downloaded/streamed videos with the class.</p> <p>Class introduction (20 minutes):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the difference between linear and nonlinear storytelling. Share examples of non-linear media (books, film, tv, games) the class have experienced. • Get into groups of two or three, choose one example of non-linear media and answer these questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How did you know the story was non-linear? ○ What was your role as the audience? ○ How did the non-linear elements make you feel? ○ Why do you think the creators decided to use non-linear narrative? • Share responses with the class. 										
<p>Main lesson activities</p>	<p>Critical and Creative activity (30 minutes):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Either as a class or in small groups of 2-4, play (or watch a playthrough) of the game <i>Her Story</i> or <i>Not For Broadcast</i> on a computer/projector. • Swap who is operating the controller every few minutes so everyone gets a chance to be in the 'driver's seat'. • While one person plays, the others decide what choices to make in the game. They also complete this: <table border="1"> <tr> <td><i>What are the elements of non-linear narrative?</i></td> <td><i>How does the narrative structure make you feel?</i></td> <td><i>Is there one true 'story' and if so what is it?</i></td> <td><i>Who is the author of this story?</i></td> <td><i>How do you think the creators of this game went about making the narrative?</i></td> </tr> <tr> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> <td> </td> </tr> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share responses to questions if there is time. 	<i>What are the elements of non-linear narrative?</i>	<i>How does the narrative structure make you feel?</i>	<i>Is there one true 'story' and if so what is it?</i>	<i>Who is the author of this story?</i>	<i>How do you think the creators of this game went about making the narrative?</i>					
<i>What are the elements of non-linear narrative?</i>	<i>How does the narrative structure make you feel?</i>	<i>Is there one true 'story' and if so what is it?</i>	<i>Who is the author of this story?</i>	<i>How do you think the creators of this game went about making the narrative?</i>							
<p>Reflection activity</p>	<p>End of lesson (10 minutes):</p>										



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Complete an exit card with the following questions, either hand written onto paper and collated in a visible space, or typed into shared document: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ How does non-linear narrative in video games create a sense of authorship for the player? ○ What is an example of a non-linear narrative that sparked an emotion for you today?
Differentiation : modification, extension and inclusion notes	<p>Modification: Questions are reduced in the group table for gameplay activity to only include: ‘What are the elements of non-linear narrative?’ and ‘How does the narrative structure make you feel?’</p> <p>Extension: Play part of both games and contrast and compare the use of narrative structure between them.</p> <p>Inclusion: For students with different sight abilities, verbal descriptions of the games could be communicated.</p>
Student Homework/Further Work	
Watch this video on linear vs non-linear story structure: https://study.com/academy/lesson/linear-vs-nonlinear-narratives-definition-structure.html	
Assessment	
Formative and observational: student input on an exit card, student contributions to class discussion, student answers to game questions, student group participation and collaboration	

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