INTRODUCTION
Telling a story is a good way to connect with your students, especially in an online course. Telling a story is a natural way to communicate and hold the listeners’ attention.

You can use stories:
• Before or during narrated lectures.
• To introduce units or lessons.
• With weekly news items.
• To guide discussions.

Well-done stories stimulate learners and help them internalize new information.

EXAMPLE
Using stories in your narrated lectures is a great way to illustrate concepts, demonstrate best practices, encourage reflective thinking, and punctuate key concepts. In the example below, the instructor uses a story to differentiate terms that are commonly and incorrectly used interchangeably.

Physical Activity and Fitness Terminology

• Physical activity
  ◦ Any bodily movement produced by the contraction of skeletal muscles that results in a substantial increase over resting energy expenditure
• Exercise
  ◦ A type of physical activity consisting of planned, structured, and repetitive bodily movement done to improve or maintain one or more components of physical fitness
• Physical fitness
  ◦ A set of attributes that relates to the ability of the body to function efficiently in work or play

“Back in 2003 my wife and I decided that we were going to begin a landscaping project in our yard. And we foolishly believed that this project would last two, maybe three, years at the most. Well, it’s presently 2012 with the summer of 2013 coming up, and we’re still landscaping. And it involves a lot of stuff. It involves lifting 85 pound blocks. It involves shovelling and moving cubic yard after cubic yard of sand and black dirt and gravel, and bending over and planting and digging holes and all of that kind of stuff....”

Tip sheets website: https://ce.uwex.edu/resources
A CLOSER LOOK

For a story to be a useful teaching tool, it must be relevant to the goals or objectives of the course or lesson and be well-paced or timed. If you will be using a story as a primary focal point for a lesson or activity, it's especially important to have it well thought out. Planning your story will help you make sure it is just the right length and includes the right information. Follow these eight steps* to make the most of your stories.

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<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td>1.</td>
<td>Set the stage</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>Introduce the characters</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>Begin the journey</td>
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<td>Encounter the obstacle</td>
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<td>Overcome the obstacle</td>
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<td>Resolve the story</td>
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<td>Make the point</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>Ask a question/debrief</td>
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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Explaining the moral of the story by Cognition Journal
- Storytelling in eLearning: The why and how by eLearn Magazine
- Learning through storytelling in higher education: Using reflection and experience to improve learning by Routledge & CRC Press

*Source: Human Resource Prescriptions, LLC