

# Amplify your ELLs' Voices

English-language learners (ELLs) come to us with a host of diverse learning needs — namely, more opportunities to practice using English in a variety of settings. The more we can get our ELLs speaking, writing, and communicating, the better. One engaging way to do this is through digital creation and storytelling activities. The “stories” our students create can be autobiographical, but they don’t have to be — they can relate to any topic we teach. What’s more, many digital storytelling tools empower students to share their work with others, creating opportunities for authentic language acquisition.

## Tips for Amplifying Your ELLs' Voices



- **Focus on what your ELLs *have*, not what they lack.**
  - When using digital tools with ELLs, think beyond translation.
  - Look for multimedia-rich digital tools that help students create their own content as a way to communicate.
- **Use technology as a scaffold toward more in-person communication.**
  - Give your ELLs space to record themselves, listen back, and rerecord before sharing with others.
  - Kids can work on their own at times, but to encourage even more communication, also give them opportunities to work with partners or in small groups.
- **Give your ELLs an authentic audience for their work.**
  - As teachers, we shouldn’t be the only audience for our students’ work.
  - Having an audience of classmates, peers, friends, or family gives ELLs experience with authentic, meaningful communication in the world.

## Suggested Tools



### Tell About This

Photo and word prompts inspire storytelling; the app records the results.

[www.common sense.org/  
education/app/tell-about-this](http://www.common sense.org/education/app/tell-about-this)



### Shadow Puppet Edu

Resource-rich video slide show creator is a gem for a variety of classrooms.

[www.common sense.org/  
education/app/shadow-puppet-edu](http://www.common sense.org/education/app/shadow-puppet-edu)



### Explain Everything

Powerhouse tool for creating stellar multimedia presentations.

[www.common sense.org/  
education/app/explain-everything](http://www.common sense.org/education/app/explain-everything)