

***Lessons as Storytelling:  
How Social Media and Digital Image Formats can enrich student engagement,  
drive enrollment and transform the classroom experience.***

***--Gina Crocenzi Masterson, PhD***

**Please view the following presentation in SLIDESHOW mode to enable animation**



Statistics show that during the pandemic, use of online apps and digital tools exploded\* -- and it appears the trend is here to stay. The downside? Attention deficit and passive learning. Online instructors are faced with black screens – students disengaging from online learning by turning off their cameras. Even in the in-person learning experience, an overwhelming number of students confess to a sense of detachment in the classroom



\*<https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10123536/>

Social media has made learning relevant again – we see it in platforms such as Duolingo and Babbel. Therein lies our challenge as instructors: how do we profit from the rebirth of learning – of storytelling – that an online culture has offered us? By leveraging the same social media apps and tools that students interact with outside the classroom, we can turn distraction on its head and create a learning environment that tells *their* story.



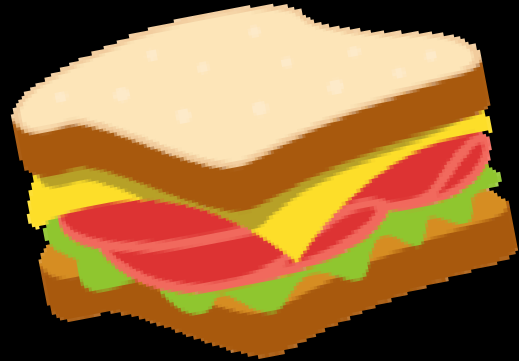
The next slides show some examples of how I use social media and GIFs in the classroom. They are adaptable to both in-person and online learning.

As Cuseum.com notes, "...from dancing dogs to pop culture references, GIFs have added another element of fun to how we communicate [and educate]. Animated GIFs are like ... digital flipbooks that allow images to come to life on your screen. While GIFs have been around since 1987 they didn't rise to mainstream popularity until the late 2000s. Since their new rise to fame and everyday use, GIFs have not only redefined how we communicate over social networks, email, and SMS, but they have also presented themselves as... a new tool to engage and educate younger, digital-centric audiences."



<https://cuseum.com/blog/2018/9/25/how-museums-are-leveraging-gifs-amp-giphy-to-boost-audience-engagement>

Let's start with the basic **GIF** (*Graphic Interchange Format*).  
Here are some samples of what I might use in class in my PPTs.



Incorporating GIFs throughout the PPT – some humorous, some just visually interesting -- gives students a reason to pay attention. This is a slide I used to introduce a chapter on reflexive verbs such as “bathing oneself.”



For this topic on food customs in France, by adding just a bit of movement in the slide students are welcomed into the learning space. The GIFs offer a teaser of what is to come in the lesson.



SUBJECT  
**André**

REFLEXIVE VERB  
**se rase** à huit heures.

Reflexive verbs		
se laver (to wash oneself)		
je	me lave	I wash (myself)
tu	te laves	you wash (yourself)
il/elle/on	se lave	he/she/it/one washes (himself/herself/itself/oneself)
nous	nous lavons	we wash (ourselves)
vous	vous lavez	you wash (yourself/yourselves)
ils/elles	se lavent	they wash (themselves)

- The pronoun **se** before an infinitive identifies the verb as reflexive: **se laver**.



- When a reflexive verb is conjugated, the reflexive pronoun agrees with the subject. Except for **se**, reflexive pronouns have the same forms as direct and indirect object pronouns (**me, te, nous, vous**); **se** is used for both singular and plural third-person subjects.

Tu **te** couches.  
You're going to bed.

Les enfants **se** réveillent.  
The children wake up.

Je **me** maquille aussi.  
I put on makeup too.

Nous **nous** levons très tôt.  
We get up very early.

- Note that the reflexive pronouns **nous** and **vous** are identical to the corresponding subject pronouns.

Nous **nous** regardons dans le miroir.  
We look at ourselves in the mirror.

**Vous** habillez-vous déjà?  
Are you getting dressed already?

**Nous** ne **nous** levons pas avant six heures.  
We don't get up before six o'clock.

À quelle heure est-ce que **vous vous** couchez?  
At what time do you go to bed?

GIFS are an adaptable tool for integrating diverse and inclusive images.

You can filter your browser search for images that highlight a particular ethnicity



On this page of the textbook, a GIF is inserted to animate the page and make learners feel included.

Mise en pratique

**1 Une lettre** Complétez la lettre que Christine a écrite sur sa journée. Mettez les verbes au passé composé.

Hier soir, je (1) \_\_\_\_\_ (se coucher) trop tard, et quand je (2) \_\_\_\_\_ (se réveiller), j'étais fatiguée. Mais je voulais jouer au basket, alors je (3) \_\_\_\_\_ (se lever) et je (4) \_\_\_\_\_ (se brosser) les dents. Mon amie est venue me chercher et je (5) \_\_\_\_\_ (s'endormir) dans la voiture! Je pense que mon amie (6) \_\_\_\_\_ (s'énerver) un peu contre moi. Nous (7) \_\_\_\_\_ (se préparer) pour le match et nous (8) \_\_\_\_\_ (se mettre) à jouer.

**2 Descriptions** Utilisez des verbes réfléchis pour décrire ce que (what) les personnages des illustrations ont fait ou n'ont pas fait hier. Mettez les verbes au passé composé.



Thomas

MODÈLE

Thomas ne s'est pas lavé.



1. mes amis



2. tu



3. je



4. vous

**3 Une mauvaise journée** Utilisez le vocabulaire de la liste pour raconter une mauvaise journée que vous avez vécue. Écrivez huit phrases.

MODÈLE

Je me suis trompé. Je me suis brossé les dents avec du savon!

- |            |                       |              |
|------------|-----------------------|--------------|
| se brosser | se sentir             | la cheville  |
| se casser  | se tromper            | la jambe     |
| se fouler  | le bras               | le pied      |
| s'habiller | les chaussures        | un rhume     |
| se laver   | du dentifrice         | du savon     |
| se lever   | la salle des urgences | du shampoing |

Communication

**4 Et toi?** Avec un(e) partenaire, posez-vous ces questions. Ensuite, présentez vos réponses les plus intéressantes à la classe.

- À quelle heure t'es-tu réveillé(e) ce matin?
- Avec quel dentifrice t'es-tu brossé les dents?
- Avec quel shampoing t'es-tu lavé les cheveux aujourd'hui?
- T'es-tu énervé(e) cette semaine? Pourquoi?
- T'es-tu disputé(e) avec quelqu'un cette semaine? Avec qui?
- T'es-tu endormi(e) facilement hier soir? Pourquoi?
- T'es-tu promené(e) récemment? Où?
- Comment t'es-tu détendu(e) le week-end dernier?

**5 Une enquête criminelle** Il y a eu un crime dans votre quartier et un agent de police vous pose des questions pour l'enquête (investigation). Avec un(e) partenaire, utilisez le vocabulaire de la liste pour créer le dialogue.

- |                     |             |
|---------------------|-------------|
| se coucher          | se trouver  |
| se disputer         | appartement |
| s'énerver           | blessure    |
| se lever            | corps       |
| se mettre en colère | quartier    |
| se réveiller        | déprimé(e)  |
| revenir             | grave       |
| se souvenir         | soudain     |

**6 Charades** Par groupes de quatre, pensez à une phrase au passé composé avec un verbe réfléchi et jouez-la. La première personne qui devine joue la prochaine phrase.



**7 Écrivez** Écrivez une histoire au passé composé dans laquelle deux personnages ont beaucoup de problèmes de santé. Ensuite, votre professeur va choisir deux acteurs, et vous allez lire l'histoire à haute voix (out loud) pendant qu'ils jouent la scène. Tout le monde va en faire la critique.

JE PEUX parler d'actions passées avec des verbes réfléchis.

Quand tu décides que ta  
vibe du jour. c'est la joie !

*@bienetreaufildesjours*



Instagram reels and stories have become increasingly popular among higher ed students. Used in the classroom or in online learning, they can help students clear their minds at the beginning of class (i.e., put down their phones), and can be an effective warm-up activity.

(click to play video)



At the beginning of class, you might start with a humorous clip from *Instagram*, like this one that was posted during the infamous Louvre heist.



*Instagram*

Social media reels can be an effective “ice-breaker”, helping to ease student anxiety, or can even generate a fruitful debate on current events.

(click to play)



For this class, students were assigned a reading on bachelorette parties in France. The textbook “comes alive” through this Instagram reel and the GIF of a graveyard digging ... (click to play video)



Social media highlights contemporary music that resonates with students. Here is an Instagram reel showcasing music by French artist, Vincent Odetto. I used it to reinforce our lesson on the past tense.



(click to play video)

Even comments from followers on Instagram can be instructive tools!

*"My man! Your beats are in repeat 24/7 and I'm dancing on Ukrainian streets during air alarm thinking, "if it hits me, at least I'm going down with a sick beat" 🤪❤️ merci so much for your talent ❤️"*

Grammar – usually a pain point or a sleeper for students -- can make its story more relatable through social media and GIFs . This Instagram reel teaches grammar in a relatable, “reel-life” way, by encouraging students to fill in the blanks. The cat poking in and out adds a bit of whimsy.

**FRENCH**  
**PREPOSITIONS**  
*you need to know!*



 A CUP of FRENCH®

Prepositions of location...  
in the life of cats!

(click to play video)



This Instagram reel could be useful in a psychology course – I used it to teach numbers in French. Students are asked to actively participate in the video, and then their minds would be read! Of course their curiosity is piqued....

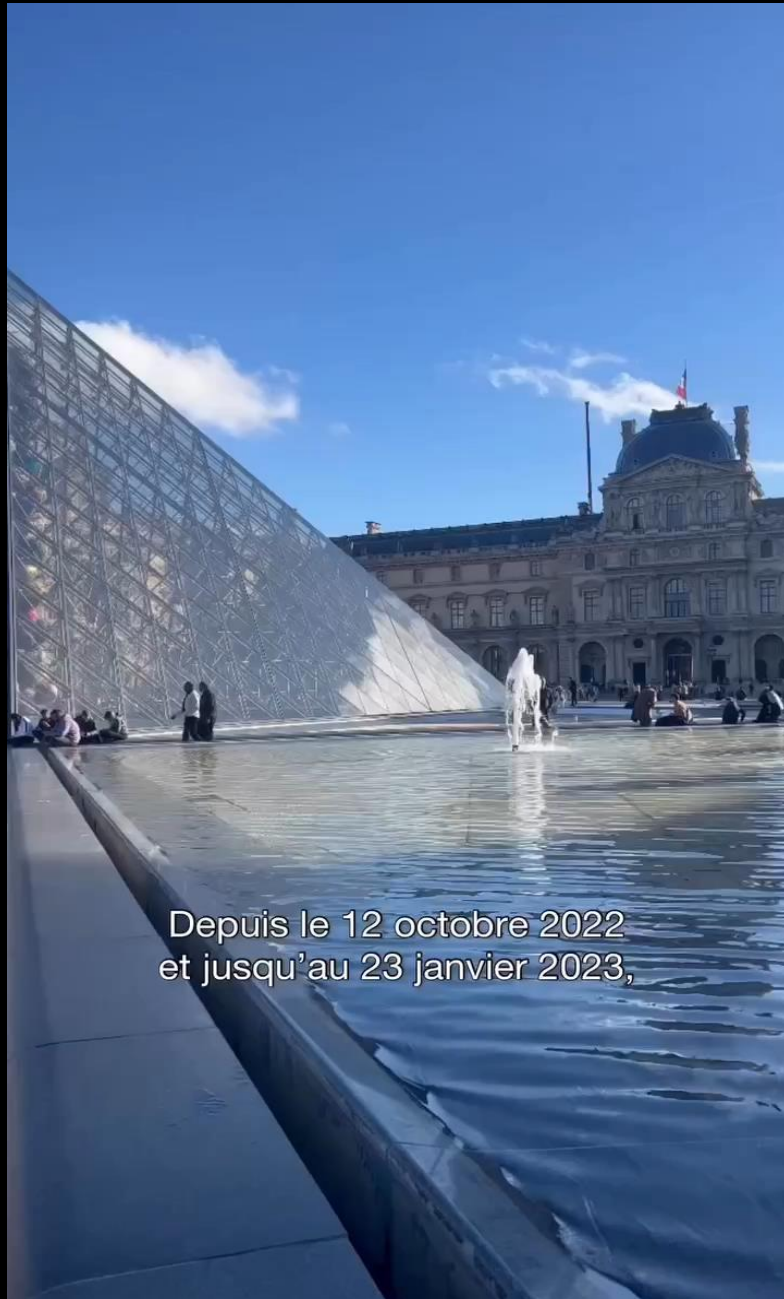


(click to play video)

Follow the instructions in the video to see if the mind-reading worked.



Share your number with the class in French!



This Instagram reel could be used in a class on contemporary art. The rich visual images and catchy tune can help generate a robust discussion that traditional PPT slides might not, simply because of their passive modality.  
(click to play video)



# So how do we get these files into the PPT?

Why not just go to your browser and show multimedia that way? Let me show you how simple it is to incorporate social media and GIFs seamlessly into a Power Point –no toggling back and forth from browser to PPT.



# This is how we do it!

For GIFs, simply type the topic you're looking for into your browser with the word **GIF** after it. Let's say you are presenting a lecture on art museums. Here I have typed **art museum gif** into the browser.

The image shows a search engine results page for the query "art museum gif". At the top, there is a search bar with the text "art museum gif" and a red circle around it with the word "here" written in red above it. Below the search bar, there are several filter buttons: "Animated", "Exhibit", "Modern art", "Ferris bueller's day off", "Metropolitan museum", "Milwaukee art", "Sculpture", "Art show", "Ferris bueller", and "Animated gif". Below the filters, the search results are displayed in a grid format. Each result consists of a GIF thumbnail, a source icon, and a title. The results include various art museum scenes, including galleries, sculptures, and people viewing art. The sources listed include GIPHY, Tenor, Pinterest, and Tumblr. The first result is titled "Art Museum GIFs - Find..." and is from GIPHY. The second result is titled "Art Museum GIFs - Fi..." and is also from GIPHY. The third result is titled "Museums GIFs - Fi..." and is from GIPHY. The fourth result is titled "Museum GIFs | Tenor" and is from Tenor. The fifth result is titled "Art Exhibition GIFs - Find & S..." and is from GIPHY. The sixth result is titled "Art Show GIFs | Tenor" and is from Tenor. The seventh result is titled "The Getty" and is from Pinterest. The eighth result is titled "Image tagged with gif, museum of ..." and is from Tumblr. The ninth result is titled "Remix the Museum" and is from Pinterest. The tenth result is titled "Haunted Painting Moving Museum GIF ..." and is from GIFDB.com. The eleventh result is titled "Metropolitan Museu..." and is from GIPHY. The twelfth result is titled "Museum Exhibits as A..." and is from Yahoo. The thirteenth result is titled "GIF from GIFER" and is from in.pinterest.com. The fourteenth result is titled "Posing Inside Art Institute Museum GIF ..." and is from GIFDB.com. The fifteenth result is titled "Museum GIFs | Tenor" and is from Tenor. The sixteenth result is titled "GIFDB.com" and is from GIFDB.com. The seventeenth result is titled "Tenor" and is from Tenor. The eighteenth result is titled "Metropolitan Museu..." and is from GIPHY. The nineteenth result is titled "Make A Gif" and is from Make A Gif. The twentieth result is titled "Tumblr" and is from Tumblr. The twenty-first result is titled "2020 Foundations" and is from 2020 Foundations.

# Select the GIF you want to use, drag it onto your desktop...

- Animated
- Exhibit
- Modern art
- Ferris bueller's day off
- Metropolitan museum
- Milwaukee art
- Sculpture
- Art show
- Ferris bueller
- Animated gif

These are results for art museum gif  
Search instead for art museum gif

Grid of GIF search results for 'art museum gif':

- 1. Art Museum GIFs - Find... (GIPHY)
- 2. Art Museum GIFs - Fi... (GIPHY) - **Circled in red**
- 3. Museums GIFs - Fi... (GIPHY)
- 4. Museum GIFs | Tenor (Tenor)
- 5. Art Exhibition GIFs - Find & S... (GIPHY)
- 6. Art Show GIFs | Tenor (Tenor)
- 7. The Getty (Pinterest)
- 8. Image tagged with gif, museum of ... (Tumblr)
- 9. Remix the Museum (Pinterest)
- 10. Haunted Painting Moving Museum GIF ... (GIFDB.com)
- 11. Metropolitan Museu... (GIPHY)
- 12. Museum Exhibits as A... (Yahoo)
- 13. GIF from GIFER (in.pinterest.com)
- 14. Posing Inside Art Institute Museum GIF ... (GIFDB.com)
- 15. Museum GIFs | Tenor (Tenor)
- 16. (GIFDB.com)
- 17. (Tenor)
- 18. Metropolitan Museu... (GIPHY)
- 19. (Make A Gif)
- 20. (Tumblr)
- 21. RELIGI (2020 Foundations)

Drag the photo from your desktop back onto your slide.  
Once you open your PPT in slide mode, your GIF will come alive!





**POV : Tu nages dans la piscine  
la plus incroyable de France...** 🏔️

What about social media reels, stories and videos, like the one seen here?

As you know, once you start following accounts for your subject matter, you will begin seeing them in your feeds. How can we incorporate these into a Power Point?



I use third party downloaders to convert the media to files on my desktop. From there they are easily dragged into the PPT in the same way that GIFs are. Here are some suggested sites I use to download content.



<https://toolzu.com/downloader/instagram/video/>

<https://www.mediamister.com/free-youtube-video-downloader>

<https://getmyfb.com/facebook-to-mp4>





expression

**Presser quelqu'un  
comme un citron** 🍋

squeeze someone dry



After downloading, your files are ready to be dragged back into your PPT and viewed slideshow mode, as seen here!



You can add a GIF if you wish 😊

Thank you for your time!

For more questions or comments, please feel free to contact me at [acrocenz@gmu.edu](mailto:acrocenz@gmu.edu) or [gmasterson99@gmail.com](mailto:gmasterson99@gmail.com)

Be aware...once you start, it can be addictive!

