

# Instagram Stories

<b>Link to digital tool</b>	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/">https://www.instagram.com/</a>
<b>Level of knowledge</b>	Intermediate <a href="#">EQE</a>
<b>Learning objectives</b>	<p>LO1: Be able to create, design and implement relevant contents (non-conventional city tours) through relevant channels.</p> <p>LO2: Be familiar with the concepts, tools, and strategies of gamification and storytelling, and apply them to content creation.</p> <p>LO3: Identify and use different communication strategies according to the specific engagement target.</p>
<b>Linked to module</b>	3, 4, 5

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<p><b>Description of the tool</b></p>	<p><b>Instagram Stories</b> are a free feature on the Instagram app that you can use from a mobile device such as a smartphone or tablet.</p> <p>With the Stories feature on Instagram, you can share photos and videos that disappear from your profile, Feed and messages after 24 hours, unless you add them to your profile as story highlights.</p> <p>When you post a photo or video to your story, it appears in the following places:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On your profile: A colorful ring will appear around your profile picture, and people can tap it to see your story. Photos and videos from your story don't appear on your profile grid.</li> <li>• At the top of Feed: Your profile picture will appear in a row at the top of your followers' Feeds, and they can tap it to see your story.</li> <li>• In Feed, next to posts you share: When you share a post, a colorful ring will appear around your profile picture in Feed. People can tap it to see your story.</li> </ul>
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- In your Direct inbox: A colorful ring will appear around your profile picture in Direct inbox and threads, and people can tap it to see your story.

If your account is set to public, your story may also appear:

- In Search & Explore.
- In shared stories, if you've added a sticker connected to a large moment or event (for example: holiday, election) to your story.

There are plenty of tutorials on how to use the Instagram Stories feature online, and basic instructions can be found on the Instagram platform itself.

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## How to use the tool as part of the course

For our purpose of Storytelling and Engagement of the public, Instagram Stories are very versatile tools for sharing virtual urban tours.

### For Storytelling

**0)** Whether you choose to have a dedicated Instagram account or use your own personal account, you can easily use stories to share virtual urban tours on the platform. To get the most out of it, and according to our purpose of creating a virtual urban tour accessible to a wider audience, our suggestions are:

- **To make sure that the profile you are posting the stories on is set as public.**
- **To collect the stories on your profile as highlights.** They will remain accessible below your profile photo, even after they disappear.

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1) First of all, you have to choose what kind of “story” you want to tell while presenting the tour, and how you want to tell it.

**You can do that following different approaches.** According to the learning objectives of Module 3, our suggestions for organizing your virtual urban tour through Instagram Stories are:

- Create one collection (Highlight) per each tour or topic to be added in your profile:
  - **Case a)** If the narrative behind your profile is to tell the story of a “user/ profile” that explores/travels/works in different locations, each highlight will include all the video content that you will create about a single location. (i.e., collect them by neighbourhoods such as “Corviale Rome”, “Ortica Milan”, “Stoke Newington London” ...)
  - **Case b)** If the narrative of your profile is to tell the story of a “place/community”, the stories highlighted in your profile can be dedicated and focused on single aspects of the specific

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location. Each highlight will be a chapter, or section, of the whole virtual tour. The whole profile will be considered the digital urban tour. (i.e., the profile name could be “DiscoverYourPlace” and each highlights may be “events in YourPlace” , “food in YourPlace”, “fun facts of YourPlace”, etc.)

- Every time you record a story relevant to a specific tour or topic, make sure to collect it in the relevant highlight.

2) Choose a format for your stories. You can use the same format for all the stories and tours or different ones each time, though it’s important that if you start one video tour with a format, you should stick with the same format for the whole duration of that content.

- Keep yourself updated with the most current formats on Instagram by following and checking profiles that focus on similar topics.

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- Some popular formats that can help you to get the most out of your virtual urban tour are video blogs (vlogs), to-do lists (x things to do in YourPlace), checklists (x events you don't want to miss when in YourPlace), interviews (a day with Ms Sunshine in YourPlace), pathways to follow, etc. **You can really get creative, finding inspiration through the online community.**

3) Whatever the format you choose for your content, it's **highly recommended to jot down a script or storyboard to organise your ideas**. It doesn't need to be professional, but it's essential to have some structure or draft storyboard when designing and creating video content. The more you practice and create, the more you will become familiar with content creation, and you eventually will feel confident with just light guidelines to follow.

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4) **Include texts in your videos** to simplify the viewer experience.

- Titles and short headlines in the video as graphic elements.
- Explanatory and detailed captions using the feature “create”, where you can include longer texts.
- Eventually include external links to refer users to where they can find more detailed information.

### **For Engagement**

In order to keep your niche engaged and gain new audiences, the main suggestion is to keep consistency within your content, in terms of both the topics and the regularity of posting. It's also recommended to stay updated on formatting trends on the platform.

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Other aspects you should consider including in your story to keep a good rate of engagement could be:

1) **Incorporate relevant hashtags in your stories.**

- Make sure that the hashtags are collapsed as much as possible in order to keep the video clear and pleasant to watch.

2) Don't go too heavy on filters and special effects while showing locations; instead, **try to have good quality audio and video to keep the viewing enjoyable.**

- The stories feature is originally created for portrait orientation (having your device in a vertical position), so keep this in mind to get the best results.

3) **Include both voiceover and written texts in your content** to be inclusive for people with auditive or visual disparities and to engage the wider public.

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4) **Include catchy headlines in your stories** in order to hook their interest in going further with your videos.

5) **Engage your viewers in taking some actions and participating as much as possible.** The feature “create” + the tool “sticker” will allow you to be creative and add interactive functions such as Polls, Quizzes, Questions, Answers, etc.

- Place a **Call to Action**, usually at the end of the video. Here, you can get creative. You can invite them to follow your account for more tours, or to comment below the video and share their opinions, ideas, suggestions, etc. You can also invite them to share their videos using a specific hashtag, engage them in asking you a question or answering your questions, and more (i.e., “3 fun facts about Main Street of YourPlace, guess what the 4th is”).
- Launch a Challenge or a Treasure Hunt. This can be a good way to engage and bond with your niche (i.e., “Explore YourPlace in X days”).

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6) Last but not least, on top of the previous points, you should aim to **engage, create and keep a positive and proactive online community.**

- Maintain a safe virtual space, providing positive and ethical behaviour. **Do not engage** in hate speech or misleading or “fake news”. If you experience being attacked by haters or cyberbullies, use the tools provided by the platform such as “report”, “ban” and “block”, and eventually consider reporting these instances to authorities and proceeding with legal action.
- Interact with others as much as you can, both in your community and in the larger community on Instagram. Keep your attitude positive and ethical. Interactions are meant as comments, likes, visualisations of others’ stories, replies, mentions, etc.

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