SSHRC CRSH

STORYTELLERS CHALLENGE

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en sciences humaines du Canada

Canada

Agenda

Part 1: What is the SSHRC Storytellers Challenge?

Part 2: Eligibility & Application (Are you eligible? How to Apply)

Part 3: Judging Criteria

Part 4: Tips & Tricks for a Submission

Part 5: Q&A Session

What is the SSHRC Storytellers Challenge?

What is the Challenge? To make your research accessible, engaging, and relevant, within 3 minutes or 300 words.

What is the Goal? To communicate the value and impact of social sciences and humanities research to a broad non-academic audience.

What do the 15 Finalists, and 5 Winners receive?

- The 15 Finalists receive $3,000 and the opportunity to participate in a communications workshop.
- The 5 Winners receive $4,000 and the opportunity to participate in a communications workshop.

What are the Submission Formats?

- Video or audio clip: **up to 3 minutes**
- Written Narrative or infographic: **up to 300 words**

Update: No live Showcase portion of the Challenge will be held this year. This change is driven by the cross-government initiative to reduce spending and identify operational efficiencies.

Eligibility & Application

Are you Eligible?

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You are a **Canadian citizen, people with permanent resident status or international student** with a valid study permit.

You are **19 years of age** or older.

You are an **undergraduate** or **graduate student** at a Canadian post-secondary institution.

Your submission is based on a **SSHRC-funded project** happening at your institution. This can be your own research project **if you hold SSHRC funding**, or it can be part of a larger project funded by **your supervisor's SSHRC grant.**

Eligibility & Application

How to Apply

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Step 1: Find a SSHRC-funded project happening at your institution if you yourself do not have any SSHRC-funding (you must ask permission from the Primary Investigator to use their research project).

Step 2: Create your 3 minute or 300-word submission (video, audio, written narrative or infographic). **BE CREATIVE**!

Step 3: Submit your entry by the deadline.

- **January 19, 2027, at 5:00 p.m. (Eastern)**

Judging Criteria

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Eligible submissions will be reviewed by a panel of judges selected by the SSHRC. The criteria are based entirely on your submitted work.

- **30% Creativity/Engagement** (compelling your audience)
  - Does the story grab the audience's attention? Is it compelling and memorable?
  - Engaging tone and style.
  - Effective use of visuals, audio or creative narratives.

- **30% Persuasiveness** (communicating the impact)
  - Does the submission effectively communicate the real-world impact and significance of the research and its relevance to Canadians and the broader public?
  - The ability to inspire the audience with the value or social sciences and humanities research.

- **40% Clarity** (explaining the research)
  - Can the audience easily understand the research? Is the message clear?
  - The absence of academic jargon or technical language.
  - The flow and structure of the story.

Tips & Tricks
The Story (1/2)

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- **First,** start with the **“<u>why</u>”.** Don’t begin with your methodology or your literature review. Instead, **hook** your audience by starting with the core problem your research addresses.
  - **Ask yourself:** What is the public’s interest in this topic?

- **Next,** focus on the **<u>human element</u>**. Use relatable examples, personal stories or powerful anecdotes to connect with your audience.
  - **Ask yourself:** Who does this research affect?

Tips & Tricks
The Story (2/2)

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- **Third,** you must **avoid jargon**. This is a tough one, but it is critical. **Use plain language**. If you must use a technical term, explain it simply. If the term is not essential to the story, **cut it**!
  - **Ask yourself:** If I told my story to a family member or a friend, would they understand it?

- **And finally,** you'll need to **craft a strong opening**. You only have a few seconds or a very minimal number of words to get the audience's attention. Make your first sentence or two, or the first few seconds of your submission unmissable.
  - **Ask yourself:** Did I capture their attention from the beginning?

Tips & Tricks
The Content (1/2)

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- **Video or audio submissions:**
  - Every second counts (titles and credits do not count towards the 3-minute limit).
  - Focus on the quality over the production value. A smartphone is more than enough. However, a good microphone and/or a quiet space is recommended.
  - Be concise with your words.
  - **Be creative!**

Tips & Tricks
The Content (2/2)

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Written Narrative or infographic submissions:

- Every word is precious (titles and references do not count towards the 300-word limit).
- Make sure your title is strong and captivating.
- Use formatting, headings and bullet points to make your piece easy to read and understand.
- Keep in mind that you are writing for a public audience who wants information quickly and clearly.

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QUESTIONS?

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Still have some questions?

Send us an email:

Storytellers@sshrc-crsh.gc.ca

SSHRC Storytellers website:

https://sshrc-crsh.canada.ca/en/research-in-action/storytellers.aspx