

Hyperfiction How-Tos

By Lorrie Jackson

WHY A TECHTORIAL?

What will I learn today?

You will learn how to use hyperlinks to create hyperfiction for grades 3 and up.

What hardware and/or software does the techtorial apply to?

Word is referred to throughout this techtorial, hyperfiction can be created using most word processing, e-mail, and presentation programs.

Which National Educational Technology Standards for Teachers does the techtorial address?

The techtorial will help teachers accomplish standard IIIc in particular.

The International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) has developed a set of National Educational Technology Standards for Teachers. Standards or Performance Indicators are included for each techtorial to help teachers and administrators improve technology proficiency. For a complete description of the standards indicated, go to [NETS for Teachers](#).

HYPERFICTION BASICS

What if fiction could be as fun as a video game? Think about it. Often video games have a storyline with characters and plot. What sets the game apart from a typical short story, however, is the fact that the game and its storyline can change. Open the dungeon door or go up the tower stairs. Fight the dragon or run away. The player gets to interact with the story and make changes as he or she goes along.

Hyperfiction, like a video game, is a story that can change. Hyperfiction uses hyperlinks -- instead of doors and dragons -- to allow readers to choose what to do next. Sometimes the links take readers to a new part of the story. Sometimes they simply link to sound, images, or other digital content that enhances the story.

Take a look at [A Bug's Adventure](#), hyperfiction written by 7th and 8th grade students. Click Begin, then read the first page and select a bug. Note that each time you click a hyperlink, the story changes. As a walking stick you might do this or that, but as a black widow, you'll do something different. The user creates the storyline!

Writing hyperfiction can help students in grades 3-12 acquire storyboarding and

organizational skills, and build their creative writing abilities. Look at [Cinderella: Variations on a Theme](#). (Scroll down the page to the story; then scroll to the bottom of the page to see the many directions a single story can take.) In that piece of hyperfiction, you can see why hyperfiction authors need to apply logic and use a storyboard to create their works.

HOW TO WRITE HYPERFICTION

In this techtorial, you will learn how to teach your students to make a very simple "choose your path" story using Microsoft Word. The same principles can be used to create a hyperfiction piece on a Web page, in a PowerPoint presentation, and so on.

The Introduction

- Create a folder on your computer's desktop with an easy-to-remember name (such as "TriciaSillyStory").
- Open Microsoft Word.
- Type the words, "This is a story about a duck named Jonas who dreamed he could be a tap dancer on Broadway. [Click here](#) if you think the first thing Jonas did was buy a pair of taps shoes and take dance lessons. [Click here](#) if you think Jonas went straight to Broadway without learning to tap dance."
- Name the document "TheStory" and save it in the TriciaSillyStory folder.
- Close the document.

The Question

- Open a new Word document and type, "Who knows if ducks can dream, but if they do, why not dream about an exciting career on Broadway?"
- Name the document "TheDream" and save it in the TriciaSillyStory folder.

The Possibilities

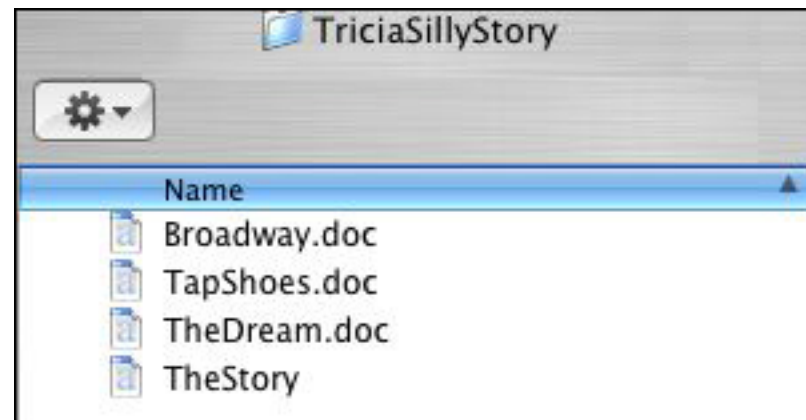
- Open a new document and type, "Jonas asked his friend Otis the Alligator if he could borrow Otis's tap shoes, but the shoes did not fit his webbed feet. So Jonas decided to go back to the pond and tap dance bare-webbed on the lily pads while Matilda the crane taught him basic tap dance steps. When he had learned how to dance, Jonas danced for all the pond creatures and was content. The End."
- Name the document "TapShoes" and save it in the TriciaSillyStory folder.
- Open a new document and type the words, "Jonas went straight to Broadway."

Because not many ducks worked in the theater business, a famous producer immediately hired Jonas to star in his new play "The Duck Who Couldn't Tap and Winged It." The play was an instant hit. Jonas was a very happy duck. The End."

- Name the document "Broadway" and save it in the TriciaSillyStory folder.

TRICIASILLYSTORY FOLDER

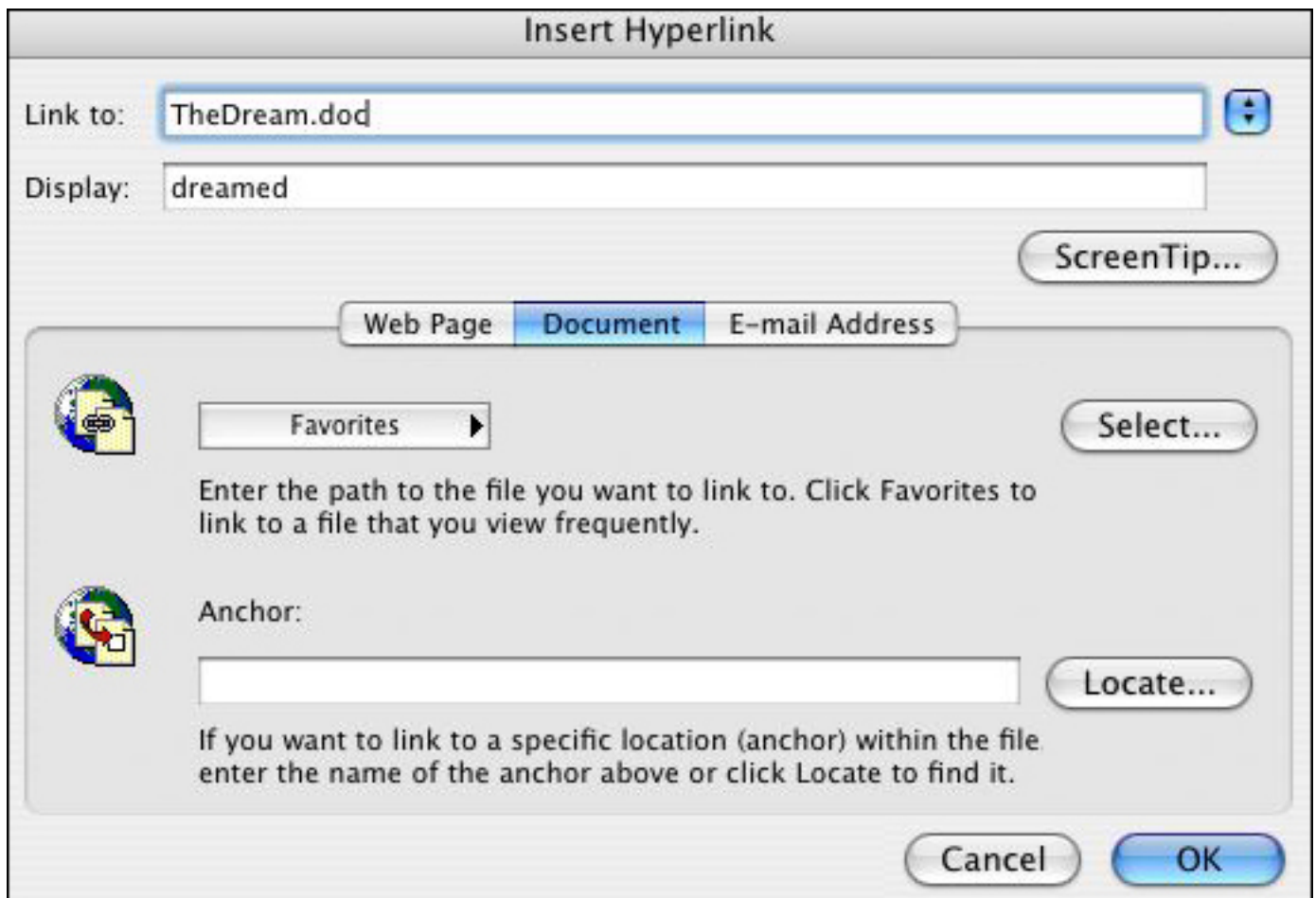
This is what should now be inside your SillyStory folder:



PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER WITH HYPERLINKS

Let's link these documents together:

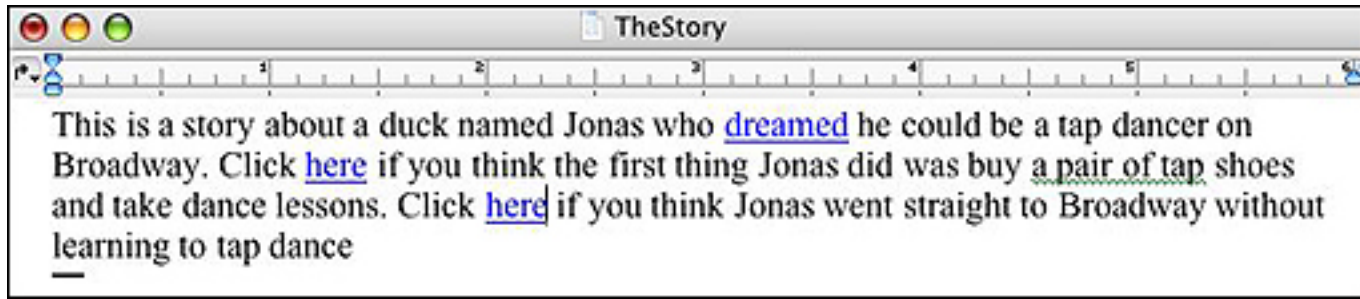
- Open the "TheStory" document.
- Highlight the word "dreamed."
- Click Insert > Hyperlink in the menu bar, and Browse to find the file named "TheDream."
- Highlight "TheDream" on the list, or type "TheDream" into the box. On Mac versions of Word, you might need to click Document and then Select to find "The Dream."
- Click OK.



Notice that the word [dreamed](#) is now in blue, indicating that it is a hyperlink.

- Highlight the word "here" in the sentence, "Click here if you think he first found a pair of tap shoes..."
- Click Insert > Hyperlink and Browse to find the file named "TapShoes," highlight "TapShoes" on the list, or type "TapShoes" into the box.
- Click OK.
- Highlight the word here in the sentence, "Click here if you think Jonas went straight to Broadway...."
- Click Insert > Hyperlink and Browse to find the file named "Broadway," highlight "Broadway" on the list, or type "Broadway" into the box.
- Click OK.
- Save your changes.

THE STORY



Click each hyperlink to make sure it works. If you click "here" in the sentence about tap shoes, the document "Tap Shoes" should open and you should see the sentence beginning, "Jonas asked his friend Otis the Alligator..."

You and your students have created hyperfiction!

TIPS AND TRICKS

To create hyperfiction that's fun and easy to use,

- Make sure readers have an easy way to start again or to explore another possibility by including at the bottom of each page a hyperlink that takes the reader back to the first page.
- Have students who are creating hyperfiction write out each possible turn of events -- perhaps sketch them out in a flow chart -- to make sure each plot twist is completely fleshed out and has a plausible ending.
- Encourage students to think outside the box, and consider linking to photos, video and audio files, and more. All those files can be inserted into a Word document.

Don't forget, hyperfiction isn't just for language arts teachers. Any file that can be inserted into a Word document, PowerPoint presentation, or Web page can be hyperlinked to a piece of fiction or non fiction, so art teachers, history teachers, science teachers, and others can take advantage of the strategies in this techtorial.

ASSESSMENT

Depending on the skill and grade levels of your students, hyperfiction evaluation should be flexible, especially at first. Assessment should focus on

- **Content:** Is the story interesting? substantive? on the assigned topic (if

applicable)?

- **Hyperlinks:** Does the reader have several choices on each page? Do the hyperlinks work?
- **Logic:** Do the choices make sense? Is there a link to return the reader to the main page?
- **Creativity:** Does the author approach the topic in a way that is engaging, unique, and interesting?

Because of the unusual nature of hyperfiction, rubrics can be the best way to assess them. Try [Rubistar](#) for a rubric that's easy to use and modify.

TELL ME MORE!

Where can I find more information?

For more information on hyperlinks, see the Education World techtorials [Hyperlinks Put Learning Into "Hyperdrive"](#) and [Using Hyperlinks to Create Student Portfolios](#). For more information on hypertext and hyperfiction, go to [Least Tern's Reading Class \(And Writing Class\)](#) section on hypertext.