**English 11**

**Response #1 –TED Talk - Andrew Stanton – The Clues to a Great Story**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KxDwieKpawg>

**Questions to consider:**

1. How is storytelling like joke telling, according to Stanton? Explain. If you consider yourself a good joke-teller, do you now recognize this in your process?
2. According to Stanton, storytelling is about connecting with others, and giving meaning to who we are and our lives. What specific stories or kinds of stories do you find yourself connecting with most? Why do you think that is?
3. Some of Stanton’s “Story Commandments\*” include that a story should…
   1. …make people care (emotionally, intellectually, aesthetically, etc.).
   2. …start at the ending when planning it so you know where you want to go.
   3. …make a promise at the beginning about where the story will take the reader / audience.
   4. …provide opportunities for the reader / audience to figure things out for themselves. We are born problem solvers. We are compelled to deduce, deduct.. It’s this well-organized ABSENCE of information that draws audience in. Give them “2+2” not 4.
   5. …provide select elements in an order that will be engaging to the audience.
   6. …seem inevitable but not predictable.
   7. ..have characters that have a “spine” or "inner motor". This is a dominant unconscious goal that they are striving for, an itch that they can't scratch. Nemo’s father’s goal was to prevent harm.
   8. …have some fundamental change.
   9. …have anticipation – this makes people want to know what happens next.
   10. …make people want to know how it will conclude in the end.
   11. …construct honest conflicts with truth that create doubt in what the outcome might be.
   12. …have themes – the grand design, the message that guides the story along its path.
   13. …evoke wonder

Reflect on stories you enjoy (could be in books, TV or movies). Which of the above “Commandments” do you consider to be the most important TO YOU in the stories you enjoy? Identify them and explain why they are important to you.

1. Do you write your own stories? What kinds of stories are you compelled to write, and why?

*\*Stanton’s “commandments” are more focused on movie-making than books or short stories, however, they overlap with short story elements. As we move through our unit on Short Stories, we can see if our stories match these criteria, and when you go to write your own, you’ll want to keep these in mind!*