

What is PBS American Portrait?

PBS AMERICAN PORTRAIT is a national storytelling initiative that seeks to define what it means to be an American today. To answer this question, PBS and its partners are gathering photo, video and text submissions from an array of Americans. The initiative also includes stories from PBS Digital Studios that will stream as a companion miniseries, a documentary series inspired by user submissions, live event experiences, and educational materials for classrooms across the country.

PBS AMERICAN PORTRAIT aims to capture the state and spirit of our nation in a way that only PBS is positioned to do. With our unique access to all Americans, we're inviting audiences to be heard and to share their stories, through their own words and images.

How does it work?

PBS AMERICAN PORTRAIT is a national storytelling initiative that will live across multiple platforms. People across the nation are invited to submit their unique stories by responding to a series of thought-provoking prompts. For each prompt, a user can respond by submitting a video, a photograph, a drawing/illustration or text. Here are the prompts currently being used by the initiative:

- I was raised to believe...
- The tradition I carry on is...
- What keeps me up at night is...
- When I step outside my door...
- Most days I feel...
- I took a risk when...
- The people I relate to are...
- What gets me out of bed in the morning is...
- You don't know what it's like to...
- My American story started when...
- My Saturday night looks like...
- My parent(s) wanted me to...
- A day's work is...

How do I add a story?

Once you have Registered, there are a few places on the site where you can add your story

From the Homepage:

1. You'll see an 'Add Your Story' button on the top right of the homepage.
2. When you click on the button to add your story, you'll see a list of prompts.
3. Choose the prompt you'd like to use.
4. Tap Next and follow the steps to upload the media of your choice.

From a prompt band (Choose this option to respond to a particular prompt):

1. Select the prompt you want to answer (A prompt is a suggested story line such as: I was raised to believe... or The tradition I carry on....)
2. At the end of the prompt sentence you'll notice a plus sign (+) in the upper right corner.
3. Tap the (+) and select the type of media you want to use for your submission.

From the Account page:

1. Tap on the Account icon in the upper right on the homepage. If you are logged in it will be green.
2. Navigate to the Account tab and you will see a button to Add Your Story.

What kind of story can I share?

We encourage you to be creative and share your unique story that specifically responds to the prompt you've selected. You can also submit multiple stories in response to different prompts!

How do I share my story?

You're welcome to share your story, and to encourage others to participate in the project by submitting theirs too! We'll provide links to post to Twitter & Facebook, to send via email, and to copy/paste into a browser. If you'd like to share your post on Instagram, please upload it directly through the Instagram app (unfortunately Instagram does not allow uploads from other websites). Please use the hashtag #AmericanPortraitPBS to help tie all of these stories together.

How many stories can I submit?

As many prompts as you'd like!