

Introduction to inklewriter: Narrative and Storyboarding

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LCWRI 5250: Electric Frontiers: Digital Creative Writing
Dr. Sam Kemp
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Workshop Objectives

In today's workshop, we will learn:

- The key functions of inklewriter as they relate to this class
- Inklewriter-specific vocabulary to aid independent work
- How inklewriter can be used for storytelling and storyboarding

Link to module materials: <https://bit.ly/4eeXiAn>



Inklewriter Example

DITI | Inklewriter Example *by Anonymous*

Text

ADITI MEMBER VISITS YOUR CLASS TO TEACH
you about Inklewriter. What do you do?

I pay close attention, excited to learn a new tool.

*I use the bit.ly link to pull up the slides and
follow along.*

*I open Inklewriter so that I can be hands-on as I
learn.*

DITI | Inklewriter Example *by Anonymous*

ADITI MEMBER VISITS YOUR CLASS TO TEACH
you about Inklewriter. What do you do?

I pay close attention, excited to learn a new tool.

You are riveted by the presentation. Inklewriter gives
you new and exciting ideas about storytelling and the
infinite possibilities available with such an amazing
tool.

End

[\(Go back to Write mode to continue.\)](#)



What is inklewriter?

Inklewriter is a free and open source tool for writing interactive stories.

Through a combination of sections, paragraphs (the individual portions of text), options (the portions of text that will bring readers to different parts of the story) and links (the connections between portions of texts), inklewriter allows users to create interactive narratives that are not restricted to the linear form.

Inklewriter is particularly useful for “choose-your-own-adventure” storytelling and storyboarding as a means of project-planning.



Inklewriter Vocabulary

- **Paragraphs:** the text that you write, or the individual portions of a story
- **Options:** the portions of text that the reader can choose, which will bring them to the next part of the story
- **Section:** a grouping of paragraphs
- **Rewinding:** going back to an earlier portion of the story
- **Branching:** when the story offers readers multiple options, and so the story can follow more than one path
- **Loose Ends:** when you have written an option that is not linked to another paragraph



Getting Started with inklewriter



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*Feel free to ask questions at any point
during the presentation!*

Opening inklewriter

You can use inklewriter without signing in. Your story will be saved locally in your browser and be available every time you come back. **However**, you'll only be able to work on one story at a time, and if you move from one computer to another, your stories won't come with you.

If you work locally (on your own browser) without signing up, you also can't share your stories with others.



Data Privacy

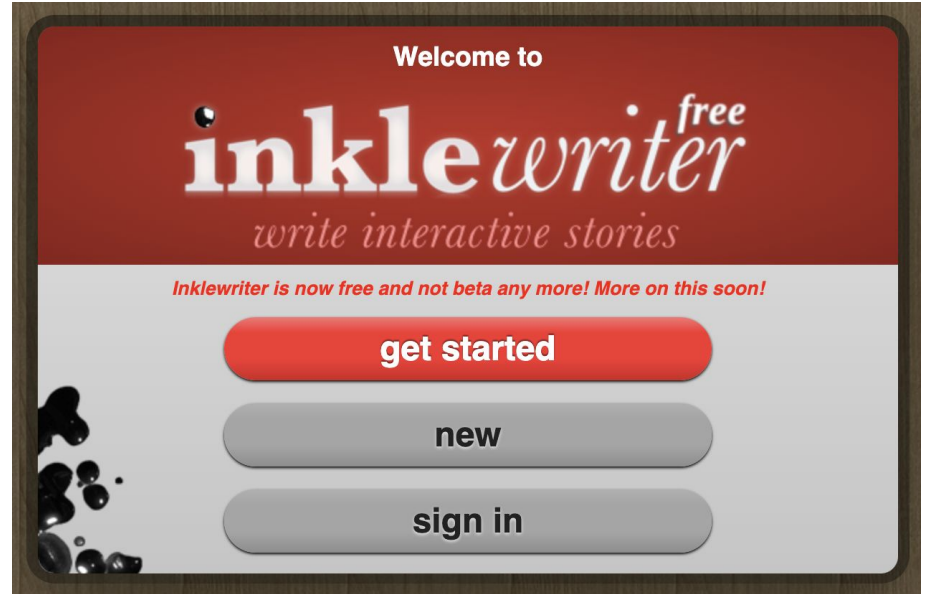
- It's important to pay attention to data privacy when using digital resources
- At its simplest, **data privacy** is a person's ability to control what of their personal information is shared and with whom.
- To help you make informed decisions about interacting with digital tools in ways that honor your boundaries with your data and/or personal information, The DITI has prepared a handout on

[Data Privacy](#)



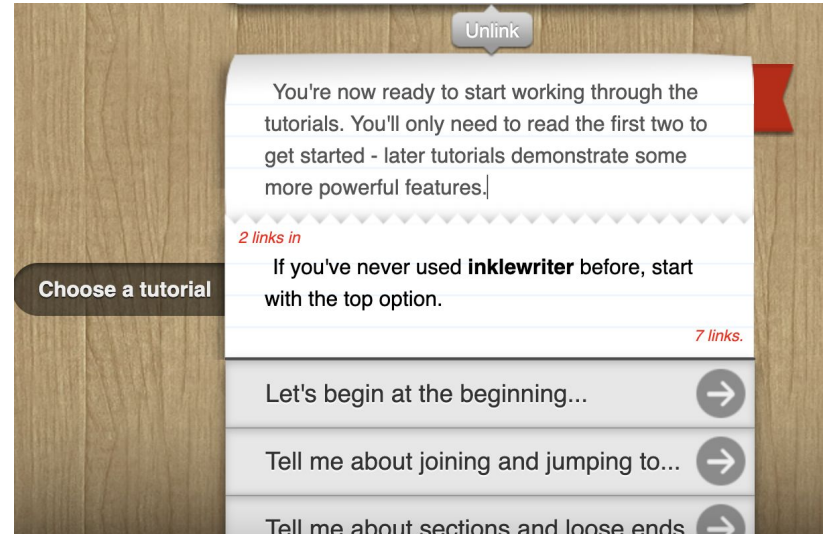
Signing up for inklewriter

Inklewriter gives you the option to write anonymously by choosing the “new” option, or to sign up and start writing so that you can save your stories.



Inklewriter tutorials

Inklewriter also offers [tutorials](#) on their website that take you through the basics of how to use it and the variety of features you can add to your story (just click “**get started**” on the opening page instead of “new” or “sign in”).



Structuring your story in inklewriter



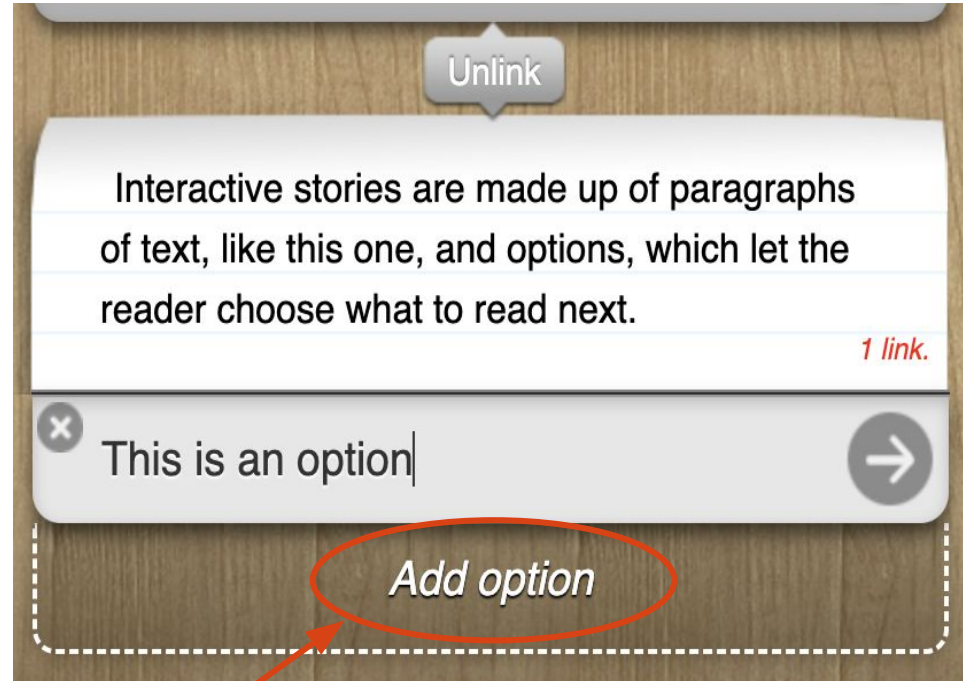
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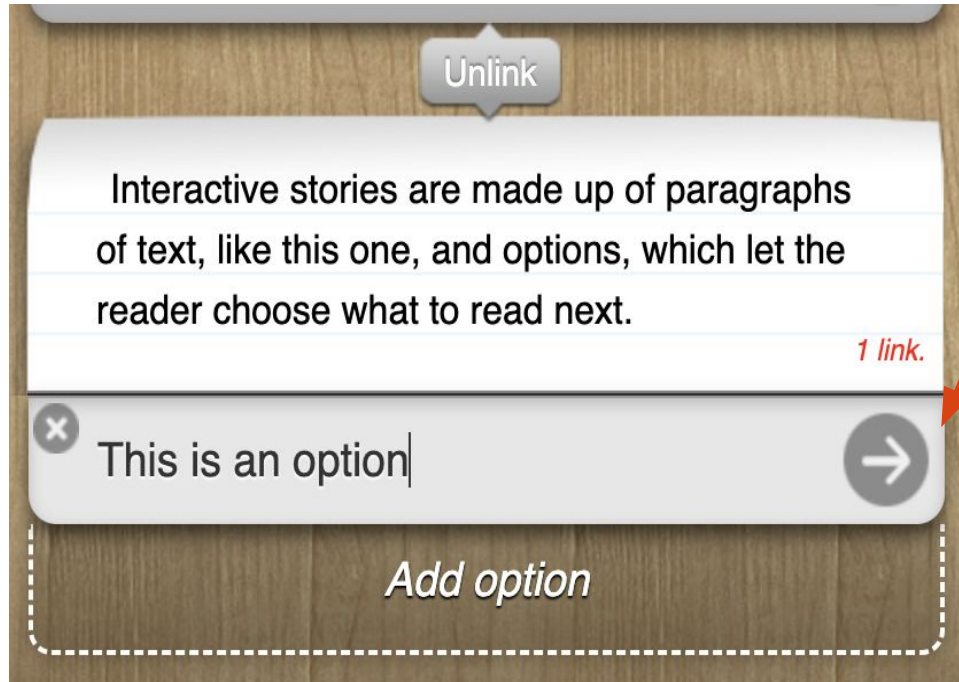
Inklewriter basics

You will write your text onto the scraps of paper in the middle of the **inklewriter** workbench.

When you want to add choices, just click the Add Option button, and type in the name of the choice.



Inklewriter basics (cont.)



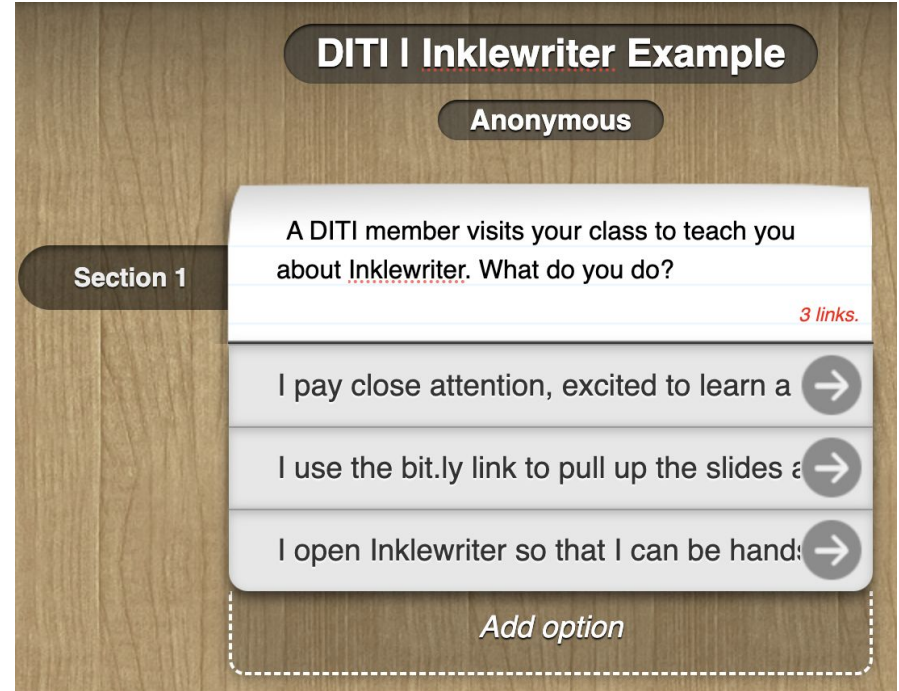
Each choice has an arrow you can click to follow that path. As you are writing, you will type the options below the passage, and then click on the grey arrow to link those options to their next passages.

The reader will also click on these arrows as they navigate the story.



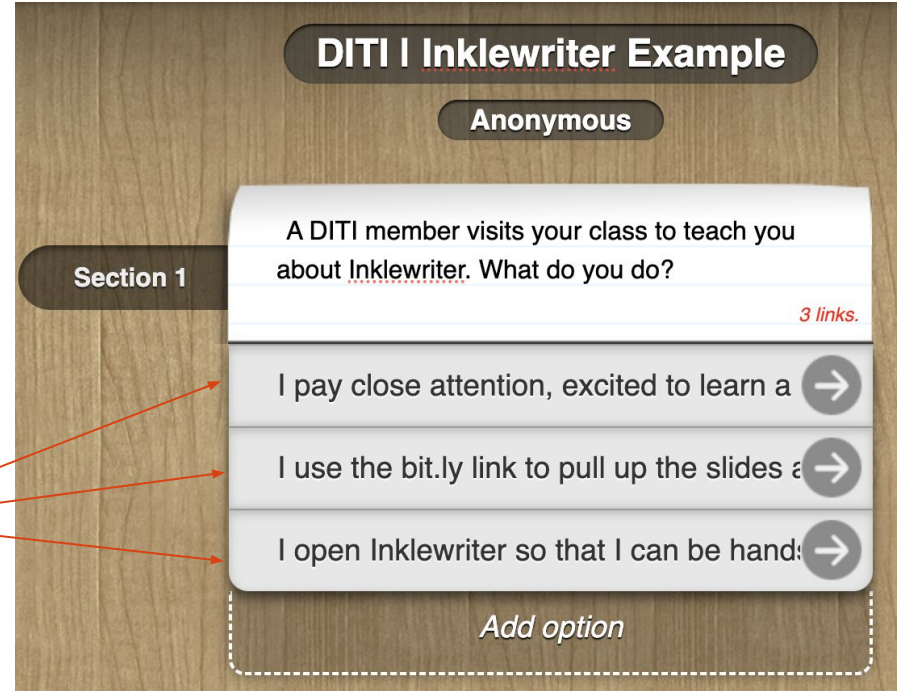
Story options

After each paragraph, there are options to decide where the reader will go next. Sometimes a paragraph will only have one option, but sometimes, there will be several options. Choosing a different option will cause something different to happen in the story.



Story options (cont.)

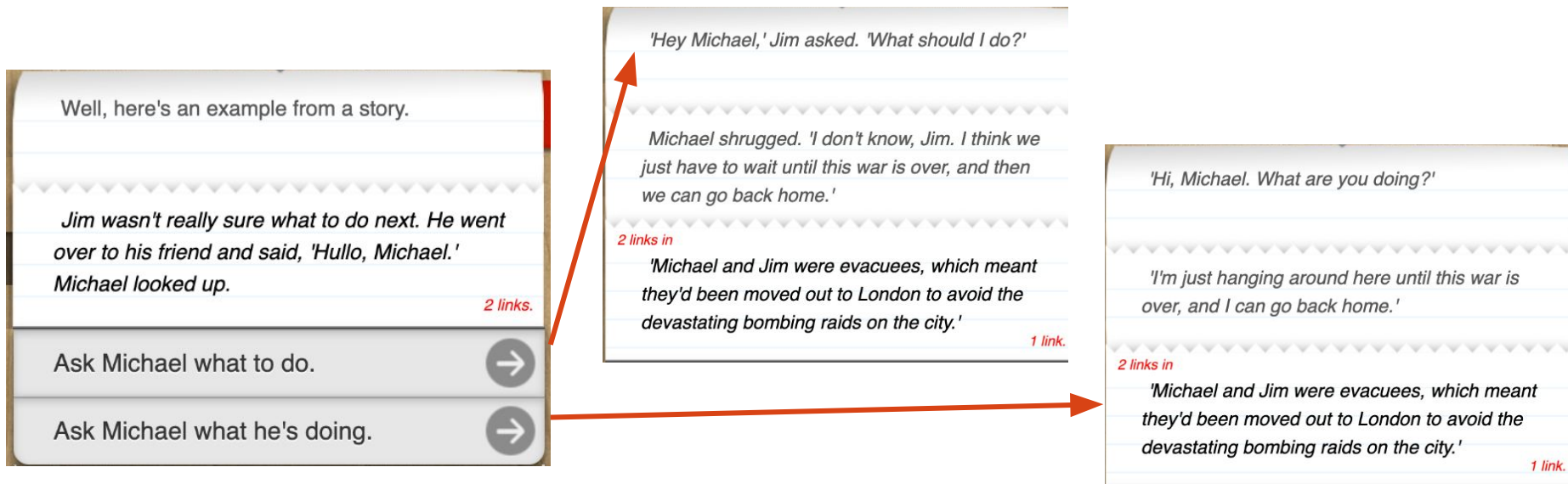
These, for example, are the three options for this paragraph. Each one will bring the reader into a different branch of the story, and depending on how you design it, could either cause the story to split off into entirely different directions, or rejoin later (more on that in later slides).



Branching

(This example is taken from the inklewriter tutorial)

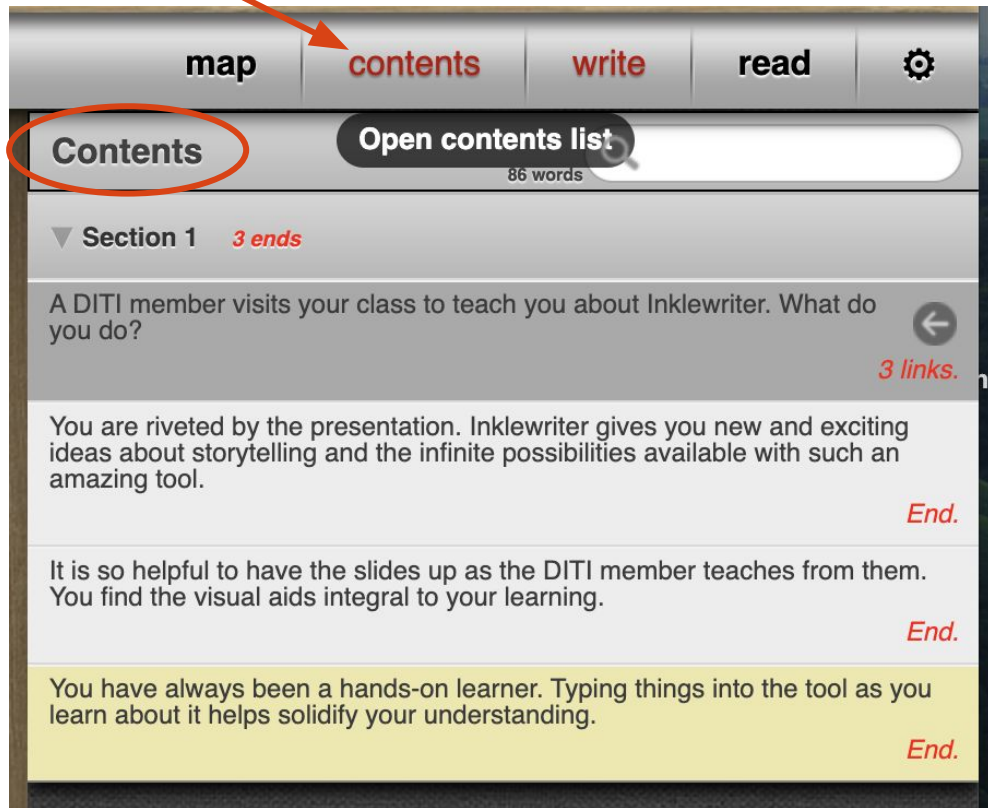
A story branches when you have more than one option for the reader to choose. In the examples below, the reader is taken down a different “path” of the story depending on whether they choose “ask Michael what to do” or “ask Michael what he’s doing”



Contents Page

Next, let's explore the **Contents**. The **contents** is where every bit of text you write is stored away, ready for when you might need it. The **contents** helps you find your way around the story, join up its branches, and keep organised.

By default, the contents pane is hidden, but you can display it by clicking the **contents** button in top right of the menu bar.



Sections

Sections are a way of grouping paragraphs together. Sections are added automatically, but you can add your own by clicking the tab on the left when it appears.

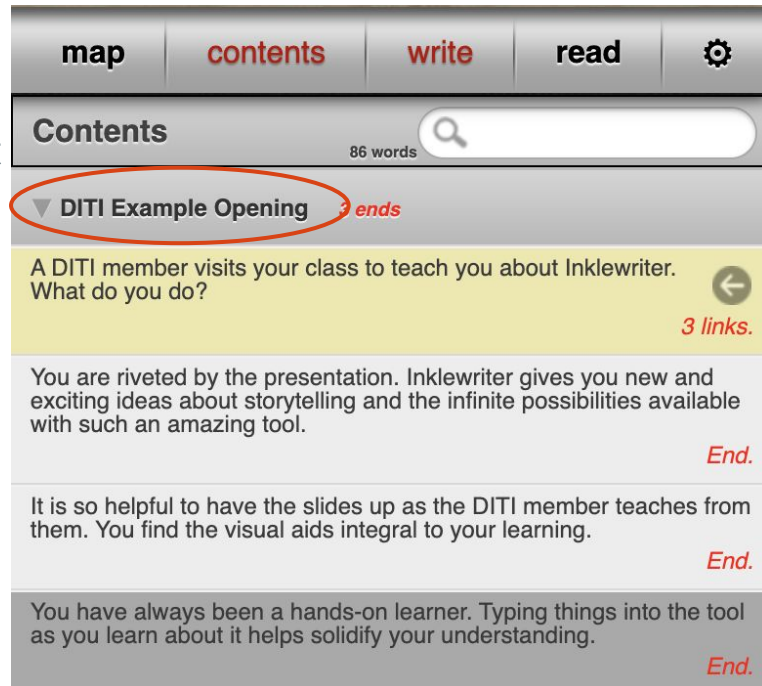
If inklewriter starts a new section somewhere you don't like, you can just delete it. (If you point your mouse cursor at a section, there's a little cross for doing that.)



Sections (cont.)

You might notice that when new sections appear they have very general names like "Section 1" or "Section 53." You can change these names: just select the text, and type what you want them to be called. Remember, these names won't be visible to your readers; they're just to help you keep your story organised.

You'll probably notice that the **Contents** shows the sections you're working on but tidies other ones away. If you click the little grey triangle next to the name of a section, it'll show or hide those paragraphs.



Loose Ends

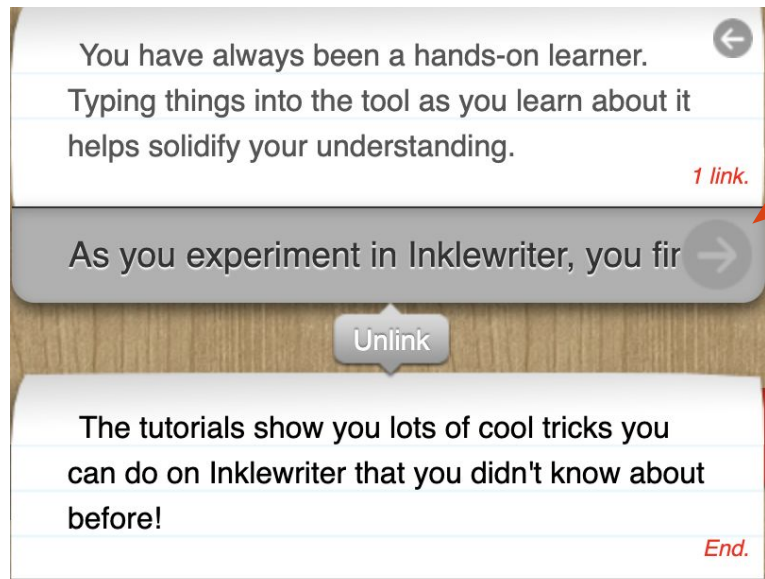
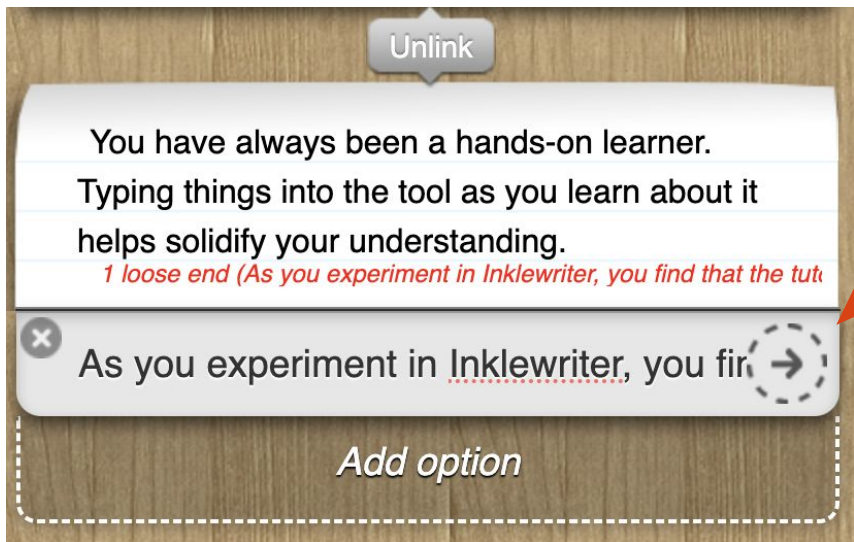
When writing interactive stories, it's easy to forget which parts you've written, and which you haven't. A loose end occurs when you write an option in the story, but don't write the paragraph it links to, so that when readers click on that option, it doesn't go anywhere.

Inklewriter alerts you if you have a loose end both in the writer's page and in the contents tab.



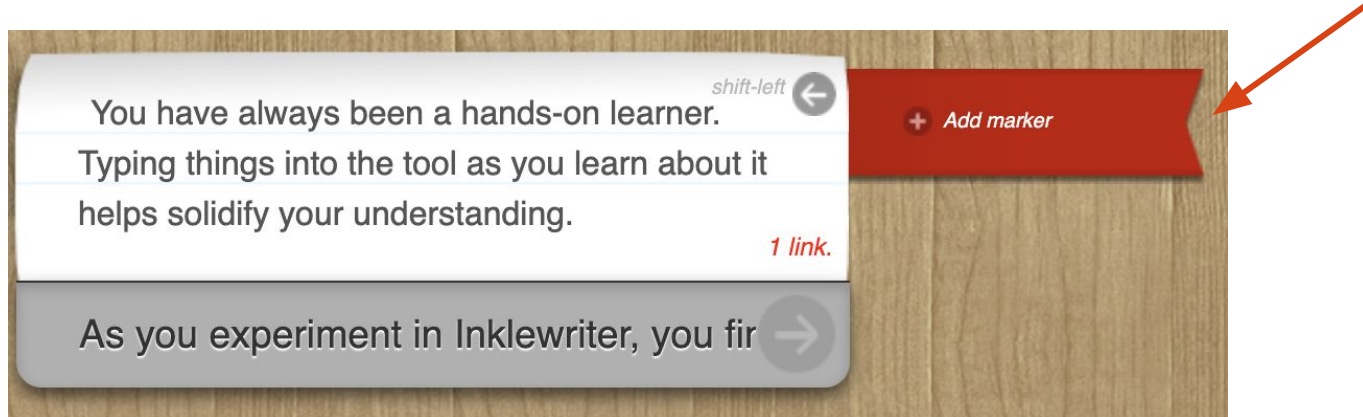
Loose Ends (cont.)

You can also tell if you have a loose end if the arrow beside an option has a dotted line instead of a solid line.



Markers

The tab on the right of the paper is a **marker**. Markers are used to keep track of which branches the reader has read, so you can change what happens later in the story based on what happened earlier.



Rewinding

Each paragraph is connected to the previous one by the option you choose. If you look back at previous paragraphs, it will tell you how many “links” there are (that is, the different options you’ve written that cause the story to branch). To move back between the different paths the story can take, you can “rewind.”

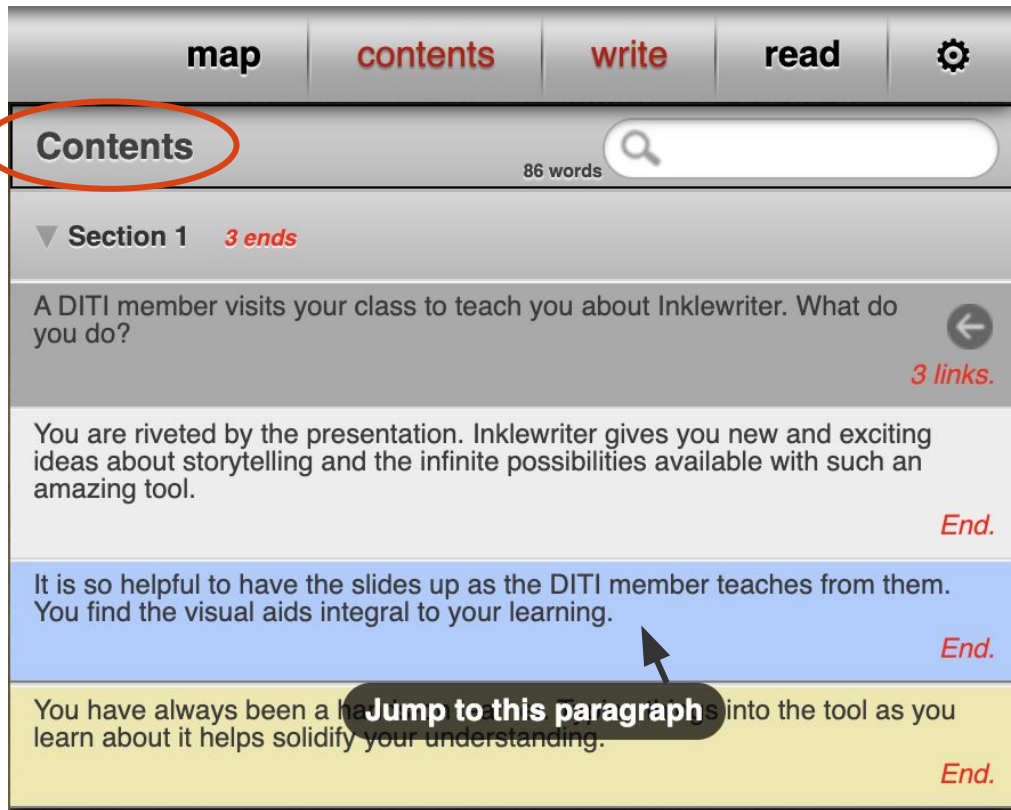
You can rewind by scrolling up to the previous block of text and clicking the grey arrow symbol in the top right corner. This will rewind the story to that point so you can make a different choice.



Jumping

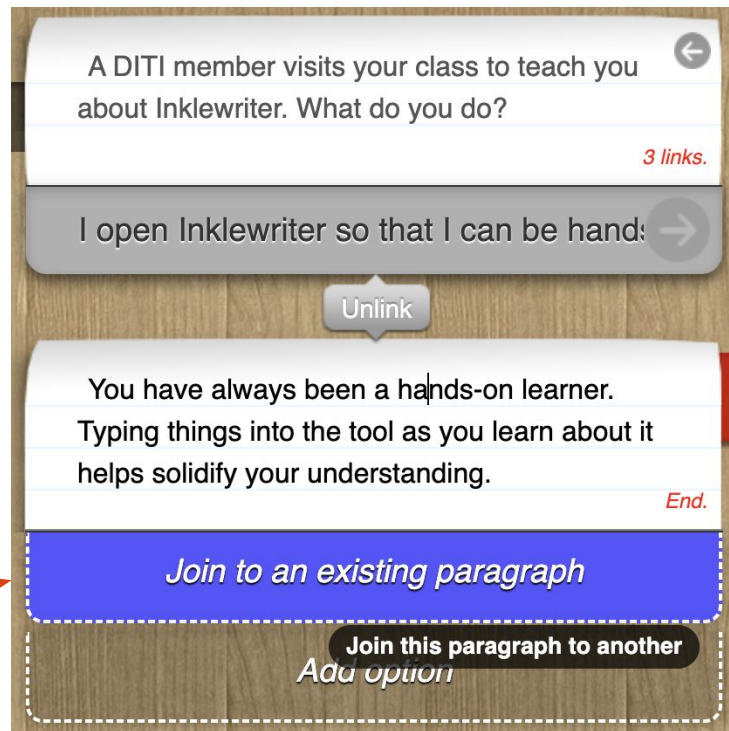
Inklewriter has lots of other features to help you write your stories. But the most powerful is the "jump to" feature. You can use the **jump** feature to flick rapidly between different story-paths. This can be really useful for editing all the different paths your story can take.

If you click on any paragraph in the **Contents**, the editor will take you there!



How do I join different paths back together again?

Once your story has branched, you'll often want to bring the different branches back together again. This is done using the “join” button below a section of text. Clicking this button brings up the content panel, for you to select which paragraph to join to.



Design Options



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during the presentation!*

Adding images



First, make sure the cursor is in the correct paragraph. Then click the image widget in the bottom left



Adding images (cont.)

A dialogue box will appear.

You can't upload images to inklewriter directly; you have to use images which are already on the internet.



Adding images (cont.)

You can find an image and then copy the link of that image, and paste it in. If inklewriter can use the image, a little thumbnail of it will appear.

Please remember, a lot of images on the internet are copyrighted.

Take a look at [this blog post](#) about inklewriter's *Sherlock Holmes example story*.



Finding public domain images

1. Get a URL of your image. Use Wikimedia Commons to search images by content, and filter by license type and image size. Make sure to use the embed file code, and don't forget to cite the source!
2. Use the HTML `` tag to insert the image.
3. Check the “Preview” to see the image. Smaller image sizes may appear as a thumbnail, so stick to larger image sizes and preview your end result!



Finding public domain images (cont.)

If you are adding an image via its URL, make sure that you select the link with **the image file itself**, not just a page with the image on it.

For example, to add an image from Wikimedia Commons, follow these steps:

1. Go to "More Details" and choose "Use this file on the web," or just choose "Use this file on the web" if you see that option.
2. Copy the "File URL."



Image sharing and permissions

- It is important to verify that you are allowed to use images before you put them in your inklewriter story.
- Search for media that is public domain or shared with permissions that allow re-use.
 - DITI recommends [Wikimedia Commons](#) and DPLA ([Digital Public Library of America](#)).
- Ensure proper credit/attribution is given for all media

For more information on copyright and reuse, please see:

<https://bit.ly/fair-use-handout>

Adding Hyperlinks

You can add hyperlinks into your story by typing the name of the link in square brackets, like this:

```
[http://www.inklestudios.com]
```

If you want the link to appear as text (like *this one* is), then add a vertical bar, and the text you want, like this:

```
[http://www.inklestudios.com|inkle's website]
```



Reading and sharing your story

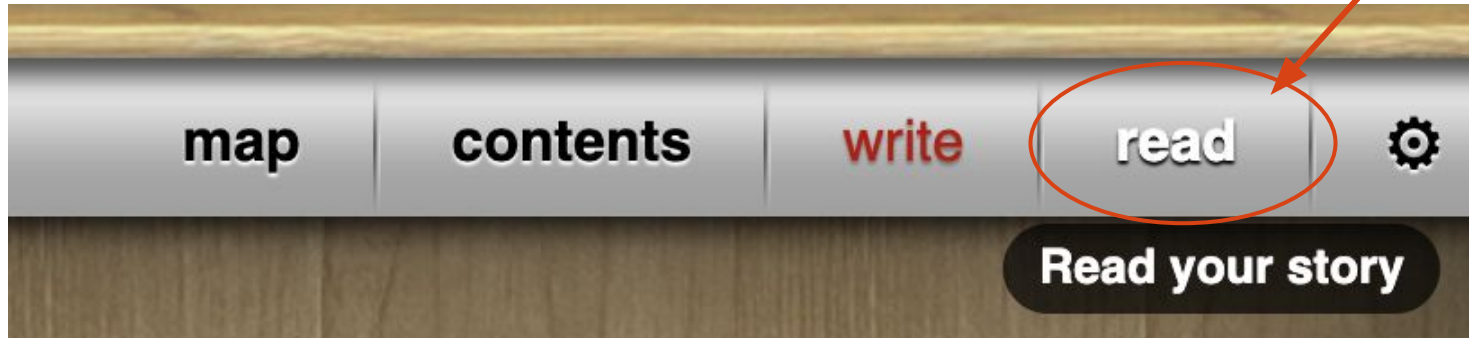


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during the presentation!*

How do I read my story?

Read your story by clicking the “read” button in the toolbar. The story will automatically start from wherever you working in the story, but you can use the rewind buttons to roll back to whatever point you like.



Sharing stories

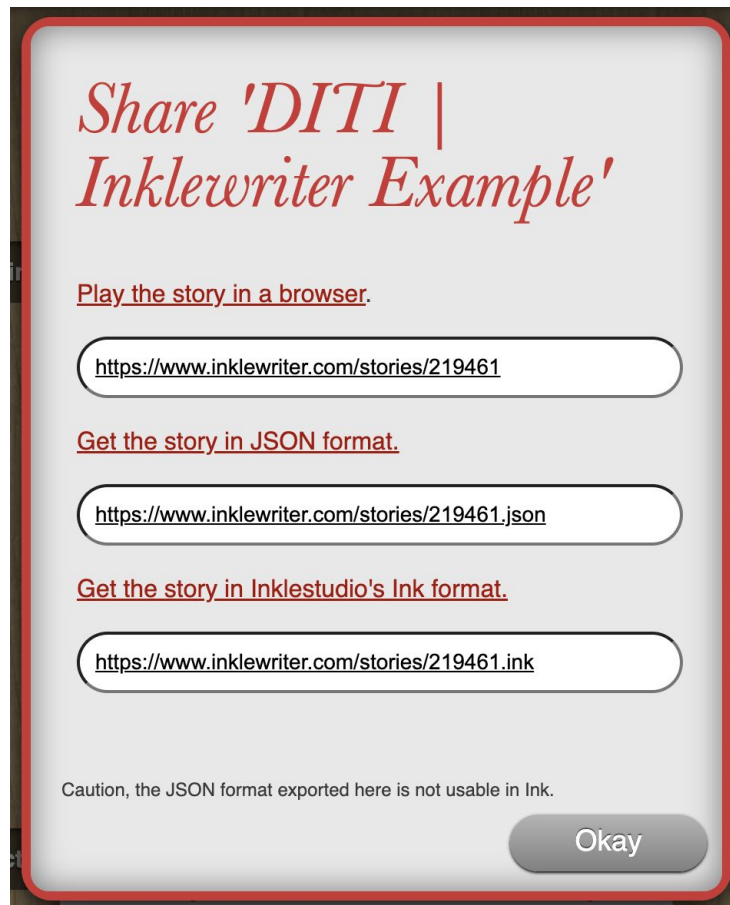


You can share your inklewriter story by selecting “share” on the toolbar that is on top of your page.



Sharing stories (cont.)

Then, a pop up screen like this one will give you the options of sharing your story via a link that will play your story in a browser, a link to share your story in JSON format, and a link to share your story in inklewriter's ink format



For further exploration

- [Inklewriter “Getting Started” page](#)
- [Inklewriter tutorials](#) (click on “get started”)
- [Handout: Copyright and fair use](#)
- [Handout: DITI data privacy handout](#)
- [Handout: HTML basics](#)



Thank you!

- Taught by Claire Lavarreda and Sara Morrell
- Developed by Emily Sullivan
- For more information on the DITI, please see:
<https://bit.ly/diti-about>
- Schedule an appointment with us! <https://bit.ly/diti-meeting>
- If you have any questions, contact us at: nulab.info@gmail.com
- We'd love your feedback! Please fill out a short survey here:
<https://bit.ly/diti-feedback>

