

STORYTIME MOBILE-FIRST PRODUCT SPECIFICATION

Document Purpose

This document translates the app concept into a build-ready product reference for StoryTime as a mobile-first experience (with the website aligned to the same behavior and features).

Product Vision

StoryTime is a short-story discovery, reading, and writing platform with:

- TikTok-style story discovery.
- Swipe-based curation into personal shelves.
- Fast reading UX with completion-focused design.
- Social and creator ecosystem features (follow, repost/retweet-style sharing, rankings, competitions).

Core Principles

- Mobile first: design for phone interaction before desktop.
- Frictionless discovery: stories are instantly browsable and filterable.
- Completion optimized: ranking and recommendations favor completion quality signals.
- Creator growth: new and smaller authors should still receive distribution.
- Reader ownership: users organize saved stories into custom shelves.

Primary User Roles

- Reader: discovers, reads, saves, rates, and follows authors.
- Author: writes, publishes, and tracks engagement.
- Hybrid user: both reads and writes.
- Platform curator/admin: manages featured lists, competitions, and editorial highlights.

Information Architecture (Top-Level Tabs)

1. Feed (default discovery experience)
2. Authors
3. Shelves
4. Write (center tab)
5. Profile

Additional content surfaces integrated into Feed and/or standalone pages:

- Personal Feed
- Storytime Algo
- Public Domain
- Suggestions
- Hot
- Featured

Feed Experience (Primary Screen)

Header

- Thin horizontal search bar across the top.
- Search supports text and filters.
- Mode filters:

- Following
- Feed
- Public Domain

Main Card Area (~80% of screen)

- Dominant â book-likeâ story card containing:
 - Cover image
 - Title
 - Metadata footer:
 - Length
 - Author
 - Genre
 - One-sentence synopsis
 - Views
 - Likes

List Mode (Website-Like Option on iPhone)

- Feed includes a toggle between:
 - Card mode (default swipe/book-style experience)
 - List mode (website-like browsing experience)
- List mode presents multiple stories in a vertical list with compact cards.
- Each list item includes:
 - Cover thumbnail
 - Title
 - Author
 - Genre
 - Length
 - One-sentence synopsis
 - Views and likes
- List mode supports quick open into the reader and quick save to Shelves.
- Mode preference should persist per user across sessions/devices when possible.

Gestures on Story Card

- Swipe right:
 - Save story to Shelves (read later).
 - User can choose/create shelf name (playlist-style organization).
- Swipe left:
 - Dismiss story.
 - Story should not appear again to that user.
- Swipe up:
 - Snooze story.
 - Story may reappear later, but not the same day.
- Tap/press cover:
 - Open story reader at page one.

Reader Experience

- Opens from selected story card.
- Shows reading progress bar indicating completion percentage.

- Reading modes:
 - Page-turn mode (book-like horizontal page swipes).
 - Scroll mode (continuous vertical reading).
- Completion event should be captured when user reaches end of story.

Shelves

- Save-for-later system using user-created named shelves.
- Analogous to playlists for books/stories.
- Users can:
 - Create shelf
 - Rename shelf
 - Add/remove stories
 - Browse stories by shelf

Authors Tab

- Ranks authors by viewers:
 - Monthly
 - Yearly
- Supports genre-based categorization.
- Highlights newly released stories from authors.

Feed Types and Ranking Surfaces

1) Personal Feed

- Content from followed users/authors.
- Includes repost/retweet-style shared stories.
- Includes occasional personalized story suggestions.

2) StoryTime Algo

- Main algorithmic feed.
- Ranks by completion rate and personalization signals.
- Personalization considers preferred genres and preferred lengths.
- Every uploaded story is eligible.
- Includes a "new story push" mechanism so fresh uploads can get discovery.

3) Public Domain

- Dedicated page containing public domain stories.
- Also integrated into broader discovery surfaces.

4) Suggestions

- Hand-picked recommendations by the app.
- Window: stories from the past 3 months.
- Refresh cadence: monthly.
- Stories fall off after 3 months.
- Sorted by length.

5) Hot

- Top 10 stories by:

- Length
- Genre
- Time window (month and year)
- Rating inputs:
 - Completion rate
 - Like/dislike ratio
 - Viewer volume

6) Featured

- Company/editorial hand-picked stories.
- Includes competitions and curated campaigns.

Write Tab

- Central creation surface for drafting stories.
- Supports author workflow from draft to publish.
- Should be easy to access from the main navigation.

Profile Tab

- User identity and activity hub:
 - User's published stories
 - Followers
 - Following
 - Retweets/repots
 - Shelves

Key Data Model (Conceptual)

- User
- AuthorProfile
- Story
- StoryPage or StoryContent
- StoryMetrics (views, likes, dislikes, completion rate)
- Shelf
- ShelfItem
- Follow
- Repost/Retweet
- Genre
- FeedImpression
- SwipeAction (right/left/up)
- RecommendationCandidate
- RankingSnapshot (monthly/yearly/genre/length)

Core Events to Track

- Story impression
- Story open
- Story completion
- Reader mode selected (page vs scroll)
- Swipe right (save), left (dismiss), up (snooze)
- Like/dislike

- Follow/unfollow
- Repost action
- Shelf create/rename/delete
- Story publish

Moderation and Safety Considerations

- Story reporting flow.
- Basic content policy enforcement.
- Public domain validation for rights-safe labeling.
- Rate limiting and abuse protection for engagement actions.

Mobile UX Notes

- Keep story card and gesture hit areas thumb-friendly.
- Use immediate gesture feedback (visual direction cues).
- Ensure reader mode toggle is persistent and easy to reach.
- Keep navigation lightweight and consistent across tabs.

Website Alignment Strategy

- Maintain one product behavior model across web and mobile.
- Implement responsive layouts, but preserve the same core interactions:
 - Swipe-equivalent interactions on web (mouse/keyboard controls and buttons).
 - Identical feed types and ranking logic.
 - Shared account, shelves, profile, and author systems.
- Treat mobile as the reference UX; desktop adapts without changing feature semantics.

Website Tab Routes (Current Build Target)

- '/feed' : Primary feed with card/list mode, search, mode filters, and quick access to all discovery surfaces.
- '/personal-feed' : Followed/engagement-weighted surface with occasional personalized suggestions.
- '/algo' : Storytime algorithm surface ranked by completion-heavy score and personalized filters.
- '/public-domain' : Dedicated public domain stories page.
- '/suggestions' : Last-3-month curated recommendations sorted by length.
- '/hot' : Top 10 stories with month/year, genre, and length filters.
- '/featured' : Editorial/company hand-picked stories and campaigns.
- '/authors' : Author rankings by month/year with genre filters and new release highlights.
- '/shelves' : Reader-managed save-for-later shelves (playlist-style organization).
- '/write' : Story drafting and publishing flow.
- '/profile/[id]' : User profile with stories plus social/account sections (followers, following, reposts, shelves).

Suggested Build Phasing

1. Phase 1: Mobile Feed + Gestures + Reader + Shelves (core loop)
2. Phase 2: Authors tab + Personal Feed + Profile core
3. Phase 3: StoryTime Algo + Hot + Suggestions + Public Domain integration
4. Phase 4: Write tab polishing + Featured campaigns + competitions + advanced ranking transparency

Acceptance Criteria Snapshot

- User can discover stories from feed and open them in reader.
- User can swipe right to save, left to dismiss, up to snooze.
- User can switch between card mode and list mode on iPhone.
- User can organize saved stories into named shelves.
- Reader supports both page-turn and scroll modes.
- Core tabs exist and are navigable.
- Ranking surfaces (Personal, Algo, Hot, Suggestions, Featured, Public Domain) are clearly separated and functional.
- Author and profile views reflect social and publishing activity.

Open Questions (To Finalize Before Full Build)

- What exact minimum and maximum story length qualifies as a short story ?
- Should dismissed stories be recoverable in settings/history?
- How should reposts affect original author ranking credit?
- What anti-gaming rules govern completion rate quality?
- Should public domain stories be visibly tagged in all feeds?
- What are the exact tie-breakers in Hot rankings?

Implementation Note

This document is a product specification baseline derived from the provided concept and can be used as a reference while implementing both the mobile app and website parity.