

ArcGIS StoryMaps tutorial

Spring 2026

2026-01-08

Introduction

This is an introductory guide to use ArcGIS StoryMaps to create and share interactive and multimedia stories.

A video tutorial is also available. Click [here](#) if you prefer to use the video guides.

You will learn to login to ArcGIS StoryMaps using your Temple University account, the basics of the StoryMaps workspace, to create your first StoryMap with a cover, title and subtitles, to add multimedia and interactive elements to your story and, to publish and share the story.

What is ArcGIS StoryMaps?



ArcGIS StoryMaps

[ArcGIS StoryMaps](#) is a web-based storytelling platform created by Esri that combines interactive maps with narrative text, images, videos, and other multimedia content. It's designed to help people create compelling, map-based stories that communicate information in an engaging way.

StoryMaps lets you build narratives that readers scroll through, with maps that can zoom, pan, and reveal different layers of information as the story unfolds.

It's particularly useful when location is central to understanding your story - whether you're documenting historical events across different places, showing environmental changes over time, or explaining how geographic factors influence a situation. The tool is accessible to non-technical users while still offering customization options for those who want more control over the design.

Getting Started

This section will show you how to get started using ArcGIS StoryMaps through your Temple University Account and the main workspace.

Open a web browser

Open Chrome, Firefox, Safari, or your preferred browser.

! Important

ArcGIS StoryMaps works best on the latest versions of major, WebGL-enabled desktop browsers, including Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox, Apple Safari, and Microsoft Edge.

Go to <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/>

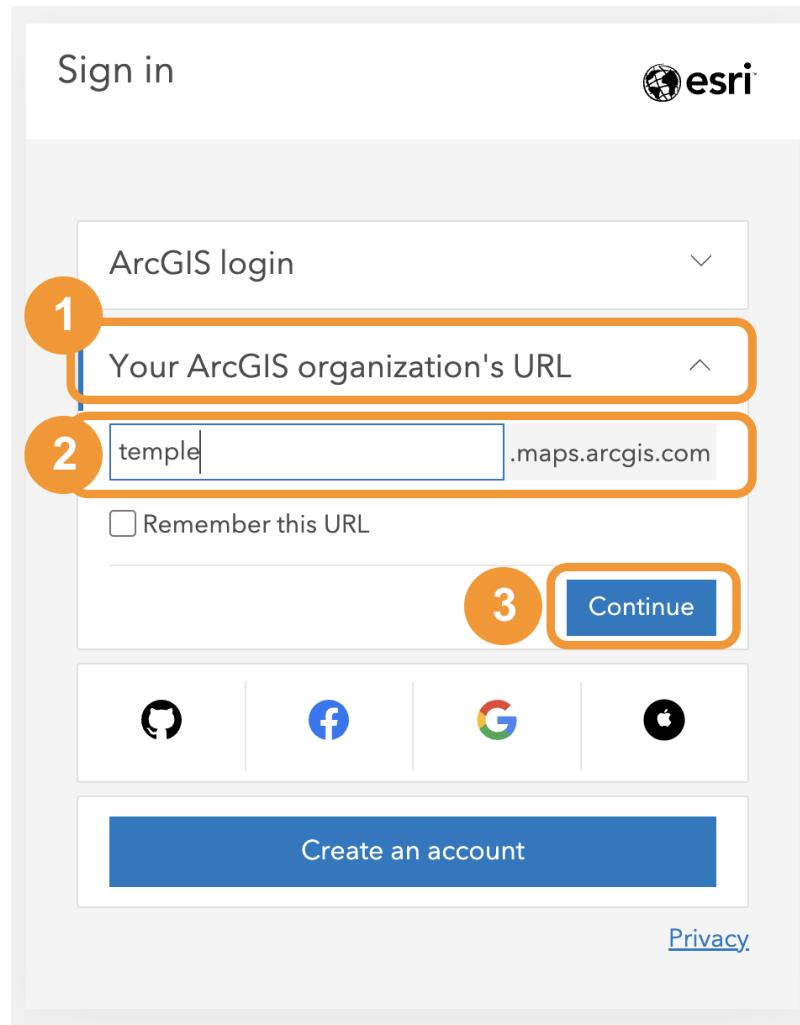
Type <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/> on the navigation bar or search **Storymaps arcgis**

Sign in to ArcGIS StoryMaps

- Click the **Sign In** button on the main page
- Select **Your ArcGIS organization's URL** (not the personal login option)

Enter your organization URL

- Type **temple** in the organization field
- The full URL should display as: **temple.maps.arcgis.com**
- Click **Continue**

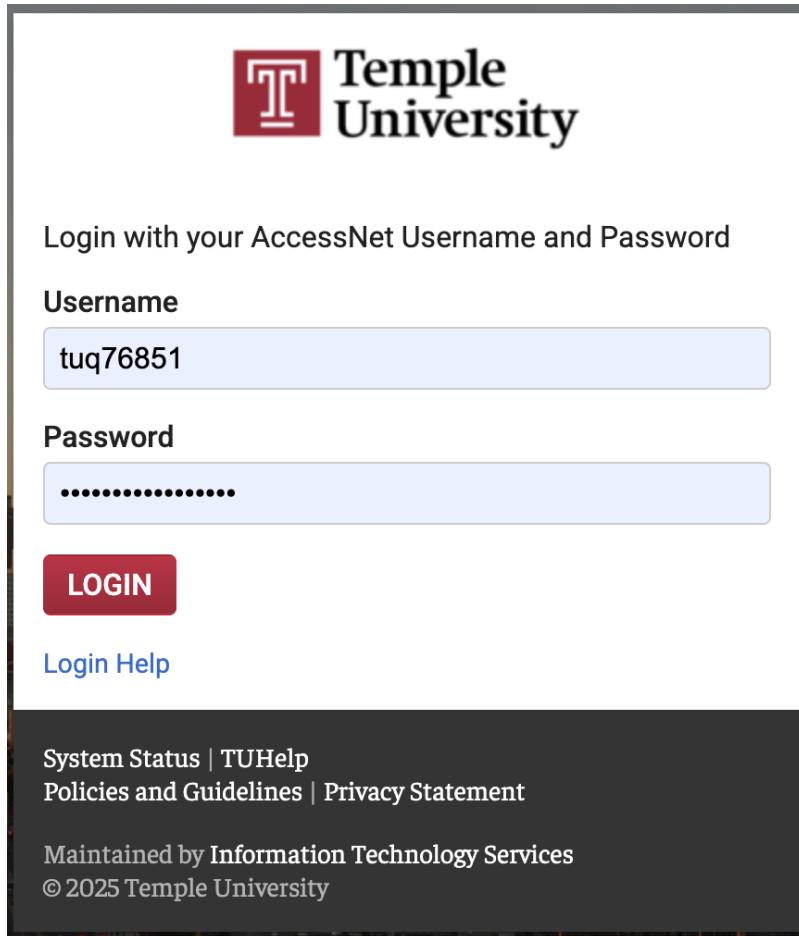


⚠ Warning

You can always sign in using a free personal account. However, using the organizational license will give you access to more features and products from Esri. Get more info [here](#)

Log in with your Temple credentials

- Enter your TUaccess username and password
- Use the same credentials you use for other Temple systems



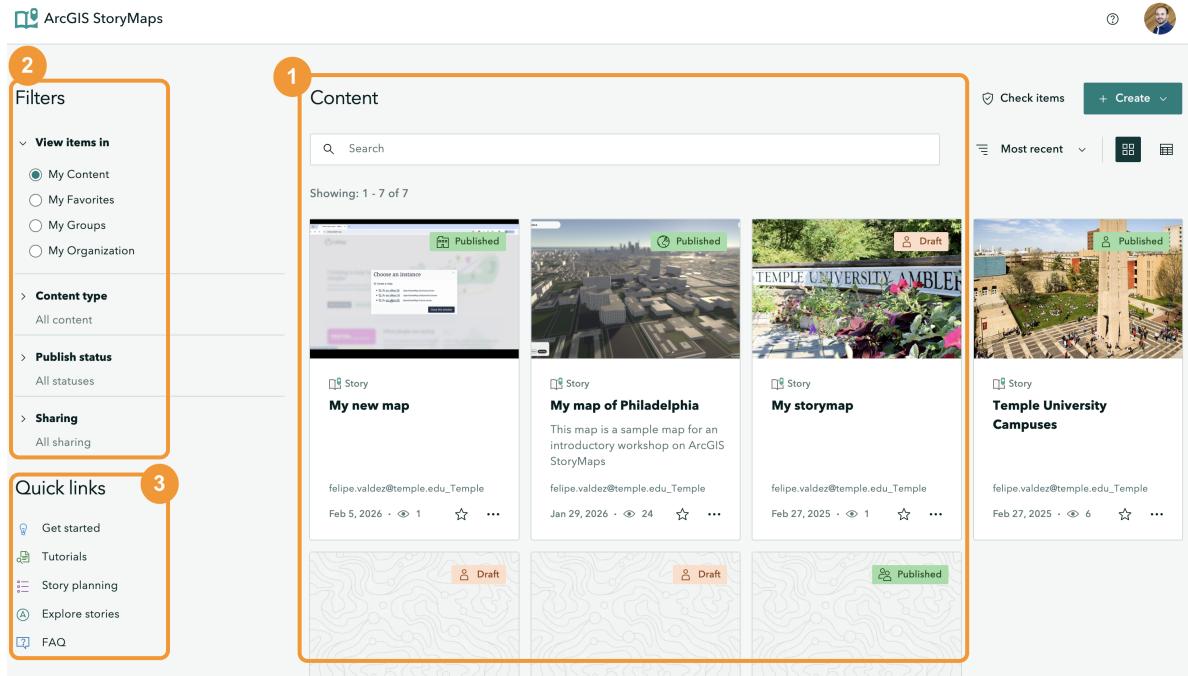
Understanding Your Workspace

Once logged in, you'll see your ArcGIS StoryMaps workspace with the following sections:

1. On the center, you will see the **Content**, a gallery of the storymaps you have created.
2. On the left, you will see many options to **Filter** the storymaps you are seeing in the gallery:
 - **My Stories** - View story maps you've created
 - **My Favorites** - Access story maps you've favorited

- **My Groups** - See groups you belong to within ArcGIS
- **My Organization** - Browse all story maps created by Temple users (great for inspiration!)

3. On the bottom left you can find **Quick Links** - Access tutorials, tips, and story planning guides



Creating Your First StoryMap

Start a New Story

Create a new story

- Click the **Create** button in the top right corner
- Select **Story** from the dropdown menu
- The Story Builder will launch

The screenshot shows the ArcGIS StoryMaps interface. On the left, there are filters for 'View items in' (My Content selected), 'Content type' (All content), 'Publish status' (All statuses), and 'Sharing' (All sharing). Below these are 'Quick links' for Get started, Tutorials, Story planning, Explore stories, and FAQ. The main area is titled 'Content' and shows a search bar. It displays 7 items, with the first four shown in detail:

- My new map** (Story, Published): A map of Philadelphia. Created by felipe.valdez@temple.edu_Temple on Feb 5, 2026. 1 view.
- My map of Philadelphia** (Story, Published): A map of Philadelphia. Created by felipe.valdez@temple.edu_Temple on Jan 29, 2026. 24 views.
- My storymap** (Story, Draft): A map of Temple University Ambler. Created by felipe.valdez@temple.edu_Temple on Feb 27, 2025. 1 view.
- Temple University Campuses** (Story, Published): A map of Temple University campuses. Created by felipe.valdez@temple.edu_Temple on Feb 27, 2025. 6 views.

On the right, there is a sidebar with a 'Create' button (1) and a 'Story' option (2) highlighted with orange circles. Other options in the sidebar include Check items, Briefing, Frame (Beta), Collection, Theme, and Template.

Caution

Understanding the Interface

Before you start editing, note the following elements in the top menu bar:



- Draft status** - Your story is private until you publish it. No one else can see it, even other Temple users.
- Auto-save** - Changes are saved automatically
- Undo/Redo buttons** - Located in the top menu

Add Basic Information (title, subtitle, cover)

Add a title and subtitle

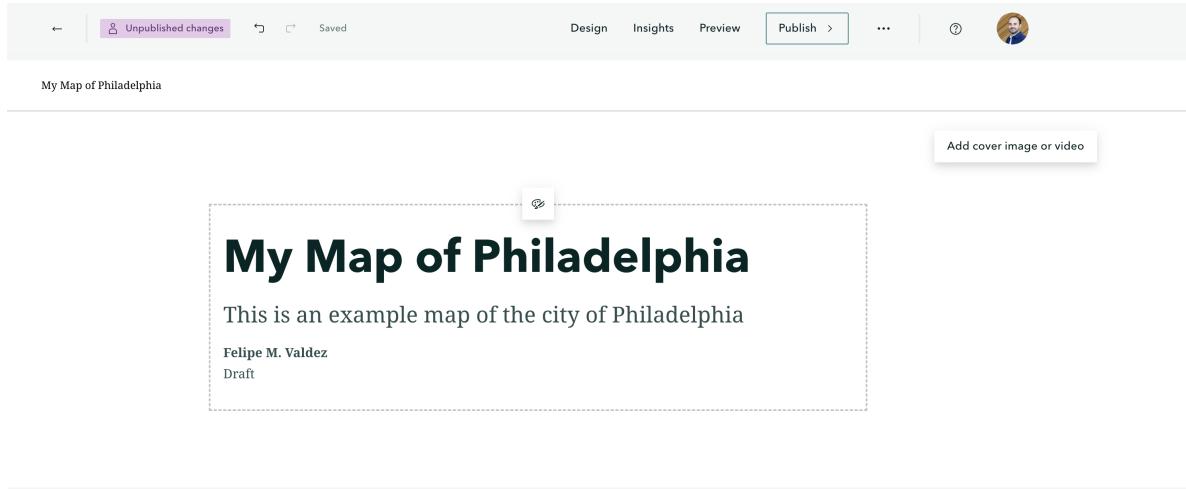
1. Click on the “Story title” placeholder

Enter your title (example: “My Map - Philadelphia”)

2. Click on the subtitle area

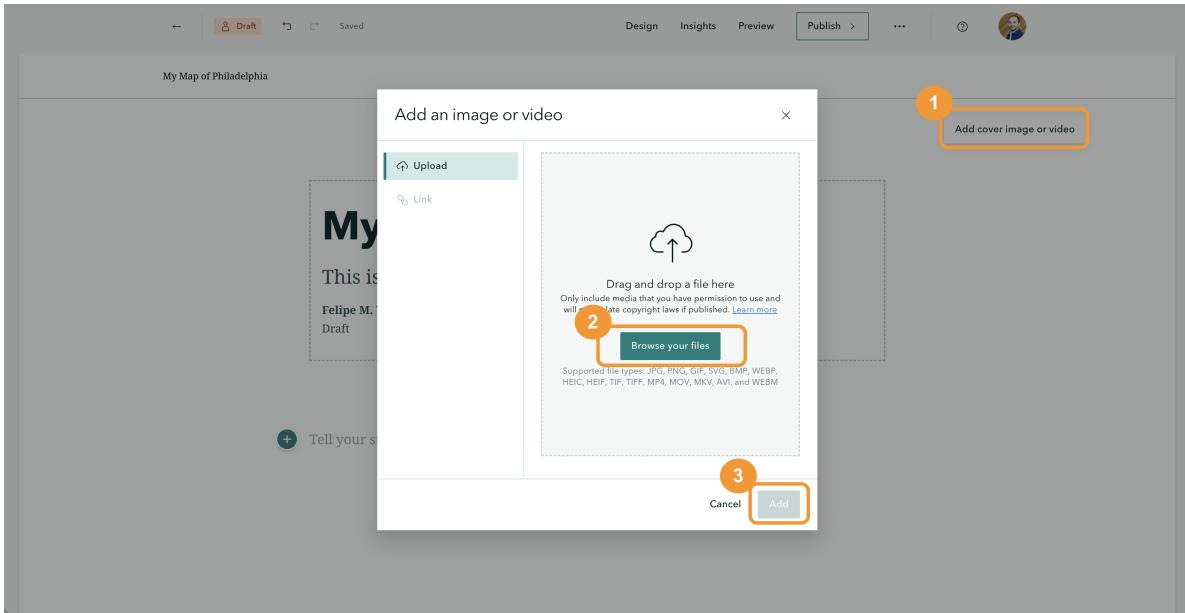
Add a short introduction (example: “This sample map is for an introductory workshop on ArcGIS StoryMaps”)

3. The byline will show your name by default (you can change this if multiple people are working on the story)



Add a cover image or video

1. Click **Add cover image or video** (the prominent button at the top)
2. Click **Browse** to select a file from your computer
3. Select the image you want to use
4. Click **Add**



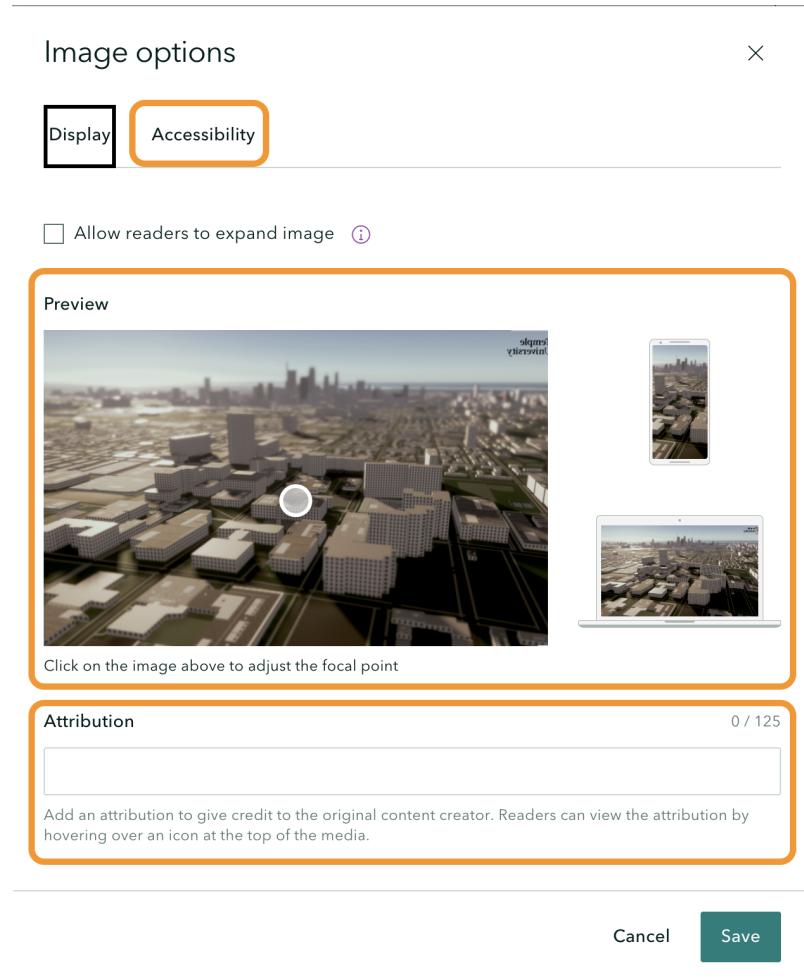
Configure the cover image



Once uploaded, click on the gear icon over the cover image to access its options:

- **Display options** - Choose how the image appears on different devices (desktop vs. mobile)
- **Alternative text** - Add descriptive text for accessibility
- **Attribution** - Add a credit line for the image source

An information icon will appear in the top left corner of your image showing the attribution.



Adjust the title panel

1. Click **Change Panel**  appearance on the title/description block
2. Choose the panel position:
 - Horizontal
 - Centered
 - Other layout options

Select the option that works best for your content

Add Content

Add a heading

1. Click in the Tell your story area below the cover

Type your heading (example: “The Most Important Sites”)

2. Click on the text to reveal formatting options

Select a text style from the dropdown option, or change the size and type as you want.

My Map of Philadelphia

My Map of Philadelphia

This is an example map of the city of Philadelphia

Felipe M. Valdez
Draft

1

+ Tell your story...

2

Paragraph **A** **B** **I** ... Refine

Add body text

1. Click below your heading
2. Type your paragraph text (example: “This section highlights the most important sites to see in Philadelphia”)

Format as needed using the text editor (similar to Microsoft Word)

The screenshot shows a story editor interface. At the top, there are navigation buttons for 'Draft' (highlighted in orange), 'Design', 'Insights', 'Preview', 'Publish', and a 'More' button. Below the header, the title 'My Map of Philadelphia' is displayed in large bold letters. A subtitle 'This is an example map of the city of Philadelphia' follows. Below the subtitle, the author's name 'Felipe M. Valdez' and status 'Draft' are shown. The main content area features a section titled 'The Most Important Sites' with a descriptive text box: 'This section highlights the most important sites to see in Philadelphia'. A green plus button is located on the right side of the content area.

Additional Content Options



You can add various elements to your story by clicking the plus button :

- **Buttons** - Link to other pages or resources
- **Code blocks** - Embed custom code
- **Multimedia** - Images, image galleries, videos, audio
- **Embeds** - Content from other websites
- **ArcGIS content** - Maps and other features from your ArcGIS account

Save Your Work

1. Check the top menu bar to confirm your changes have been saved (auto-save is enabled)
2. Your story remains in Draft status until you publish it
3. To return to your content library, click the back arrow (←) in the top left

Your new story will appear in your content list with:

- Title
- Short description
- Draft status indicator
- Creation date

i Note

Remember Your story is not visible to anyone else until you click Publish. You can continue editing and saving as a draft as long as you need.

Adding a Map to Your Story

Create an Express Map

1. Open your story for editing
 - From your content library, click on your story (e.g., “My Map - Philadelphia”)
2. Add a map block

- 
- Click the plus sign  below any existing content block
 - Select Map from the Data Visualization section

+

Basic

-  Text
-  Button
-  Separator
-  Code

Data Visualization

-  **Map**
-  Chart
-  Infographic
-  Table

Media

-  Image
-  360 image

Sites

st important sites to see in Philadelphia



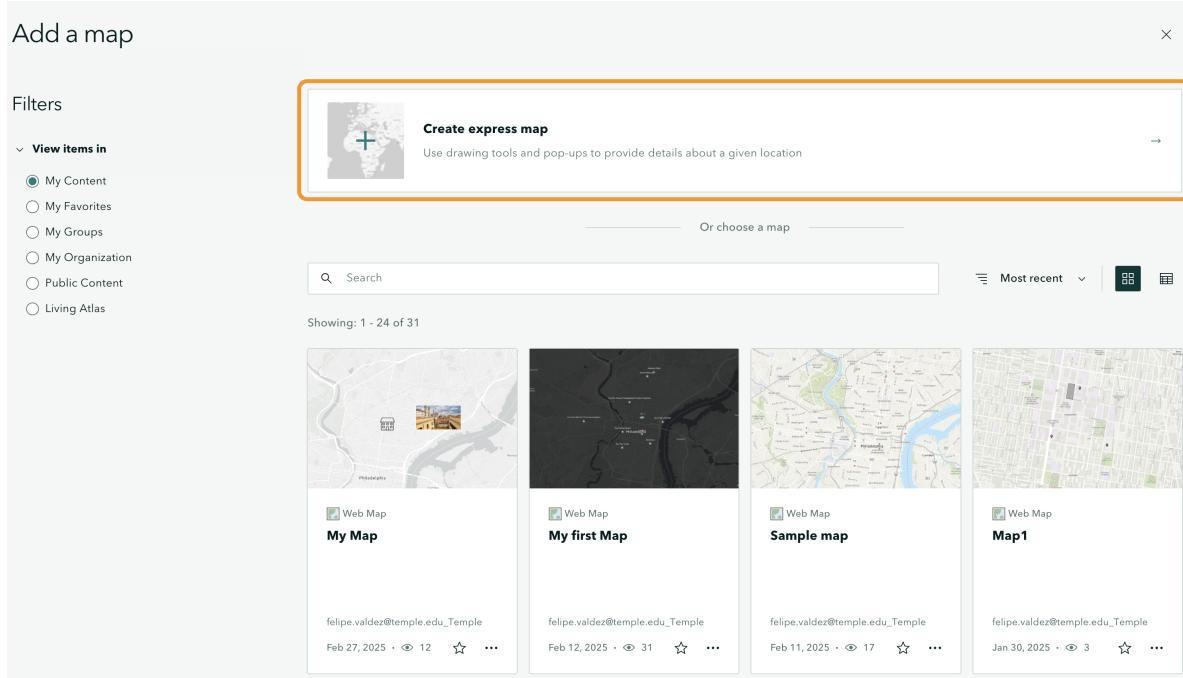
Map

Provide geographic context with a web map, web scene, or an express map

12

3. Choose Create Express Map

- If you haven't created any maps yet, you won't see a list of existing maps
- Click Create Express Map (first option)
- A map of the world will appear (you may see a guided tour on first use)



The screenshot shows the 'Add a map' interface. On the left, there are filters: 'View items in' (My Content is selected), 'My Favorites', 'My Groups', 'My Organization', 'Public Content', and 'Living Atlas'. In the center, there's a button labeled 'Create express map' with the sub-instruction 'Use drawing tools and pop-ups to provide details about a given location'. Below this is a search bar and a sorting dropdown set to 'Most recent'. The main area displays four map thumbnails with the following details:

- My Map**: Philadelphia map, created by felipe.valdez@temple.edu_Temple on Feb 27, 2025, with 12 views.
- My first Map**: Map of a river system, created by felipe.valdez@temple.edu_Temple on Feb 12, 2025, with 31 views.
- Sample map**: Sample map, created by felipe.valdez@temple.edu_Temple on Feb 11, 2025, with 17 views.
- Map1**: Map of a city grid, created by felipe.valdez@temple.edu_Temple on Jan 30, 2025, with 3 views.



Tip

Navigation Tips

Use your mouse wheel to zoom in/out

Use the zoom buttons (+/-) on the map

Use the Search by location bar (top right) for easier navigation

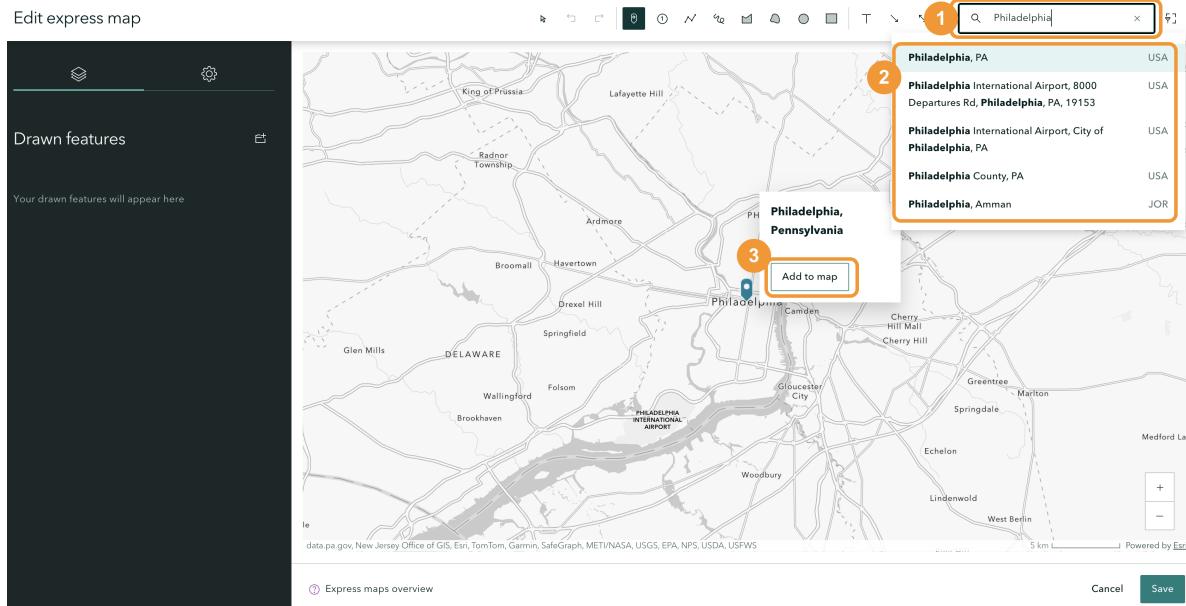
Add Locations to Your Map

Search for a location

1. Click on the Search by location bar (top right corner) and type the place name or address

- For places: "Philadelphia, PA"
- For addresses: Include street number, street name, and city
- Adding the city name or zip code helps find the correct location

2. Select the correct result from the dropdown list
 - The map will automatically zoom to that location
 - A blue pin will appear at the center
3. Click Add to map in the popup

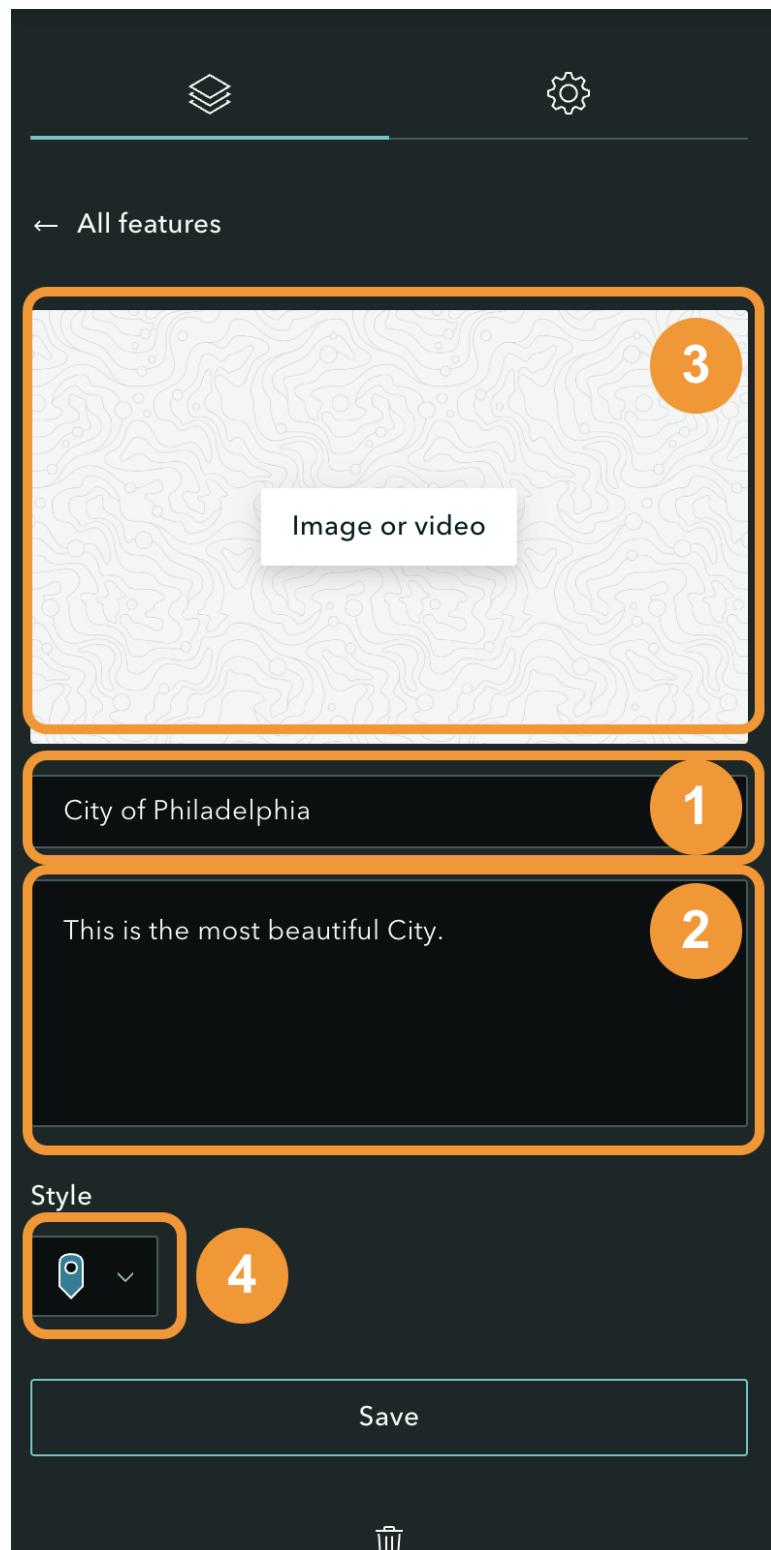


Configure the location point

Once added, the left panel will show the point's attributes. Here are some of the things you can configure:

Add or edit basic information:

1. Title - Change from the default search result to something simpler (e.g., "City of Philadelphia")
2. Description - Add details about the location
3. Image or video - Click to add visual content (see below)
4. Change the pin style



Change the pin style:

1. Click the style button at the bottom of the left panel

Choose from:

- Custom image instead of an icon
- Different icon sizes (small, medium, large)
- Different colors

2. Click Save

Change style

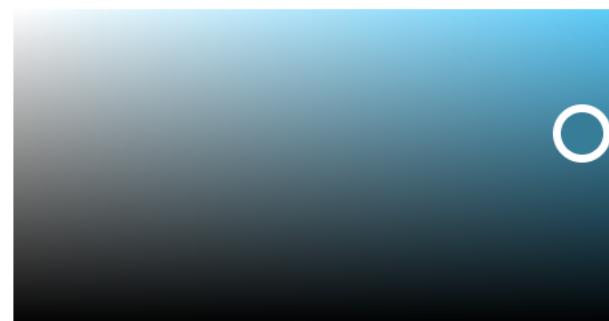
Symbol



Size



Color

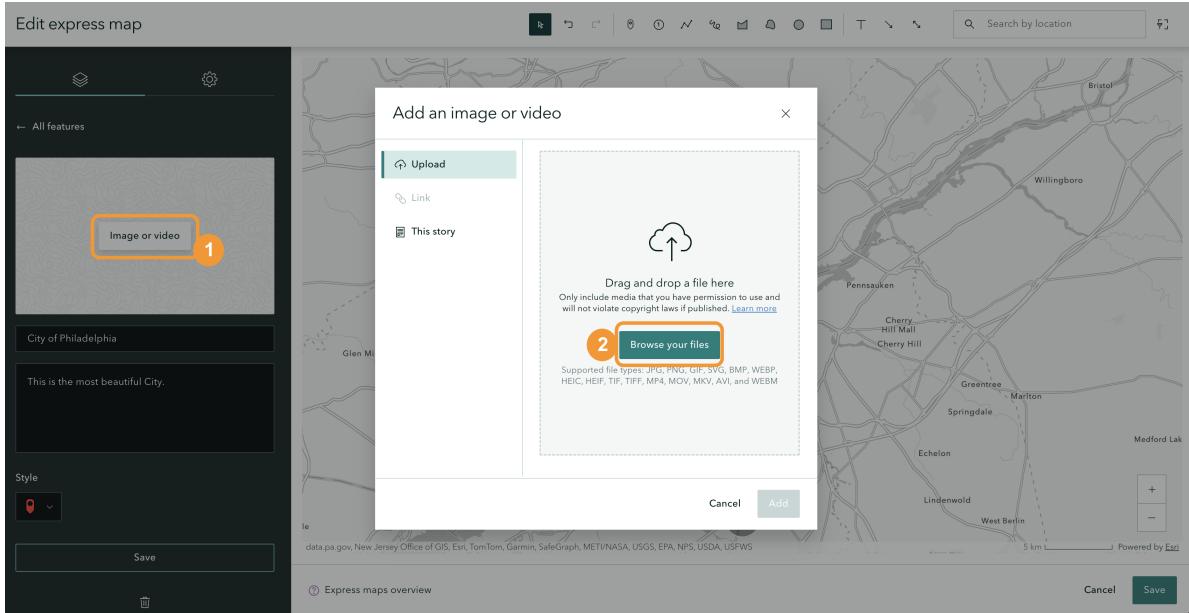


#087F9B



Add an image to a location:

1. Click Add image or video in the left panel
2. Click Browse your files
3. Select an image from your computer

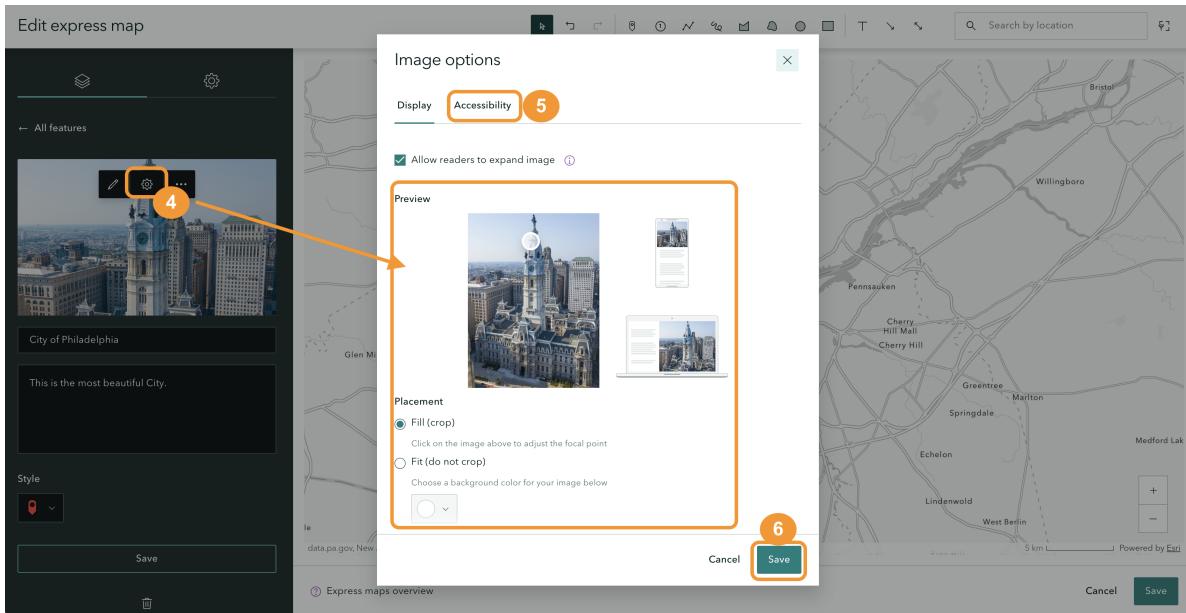


4. Configure image display:

- Preview - See how it appears on different devices
- Placement options: Fill crop - Uses the entire space (may crop edges); Fit (do not crop) - Shows entire image (may have borders)
- Position - Adjust focal point (top, center, bottom)
- Background color - Set color for any empty space

5. Add Attribution information

6. Click Save



Add Multiple Locations

Repeat the [search](#) and add process for each location you want to include:

1. Search for the next location (e.g., “Philadelphia Museum of Art”)
2. Click [Add to map](#)
3. Add an image, edit the title, and add a description
4. Customize the pin color and size
5. Click [Save](#)

Note

Viewing Your Points

After saving a point, the map may only show that last point. Zoom out to see all your points together. The map remains interactive - you can always zoom in/out to explore.

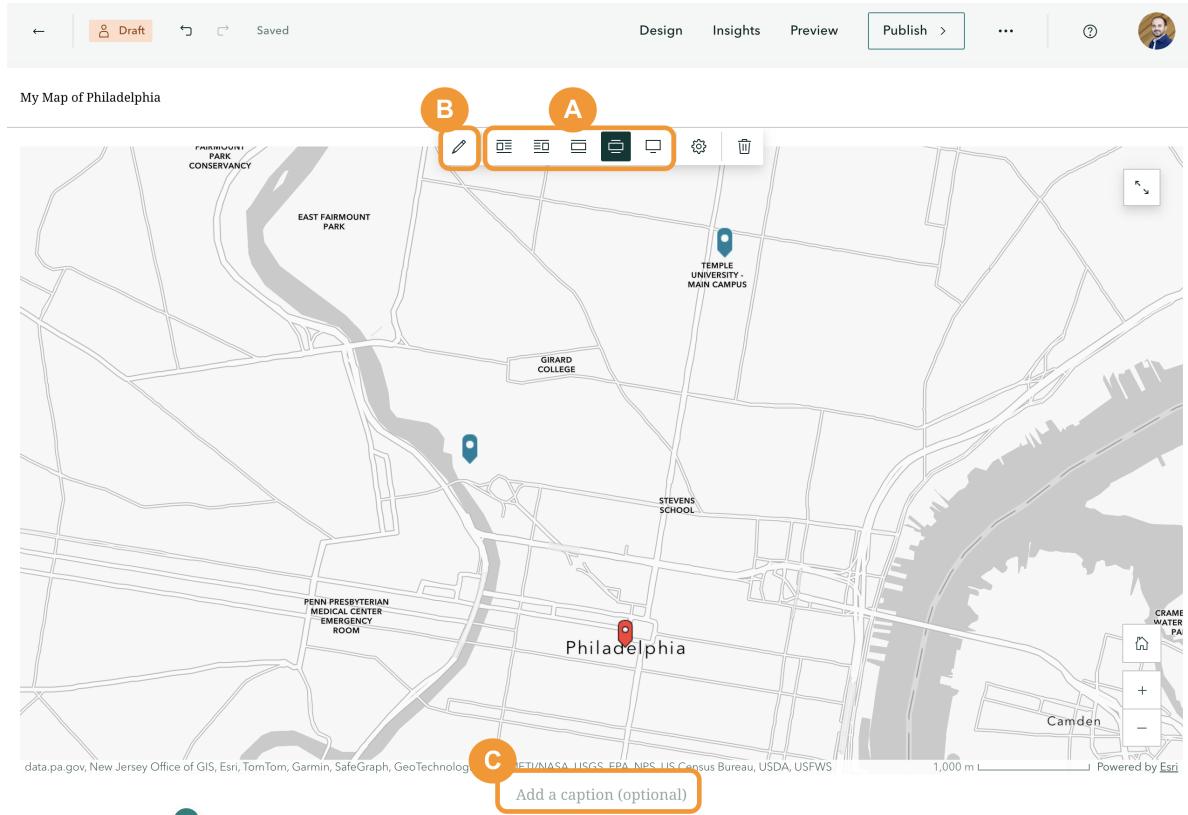
Configure Map Display

A. Choose map size and position

Hover your mouse over the map to reveal display options at the top:

- **Float left** - Small map on the left side with text on the right
- **Float right** - Small map on the right side with text on the left

- **Small** - Centered, compact view
- **Medium** - Centered, moderate size
- **Large** - Full-width display



B. Set the default zoom level

1. Hover over the map and click the Edit (pencil) icon
2. Zoom and pan to show the view you want users to see first
3. Click Save

The map will remember this zoom level regardless of the map size you choose.

C. Add a caption (optional)

Below the map, you can add a caption to:

- Provide attribution
- Explain what the map shows
- Add context for viewers

Preview Your Story

1. Click Preview in the top menu bar



2. View how your story looks on different devices:

- Desktop
- Tablet (portrait and landscape)
- Phone (portrait and landscape)

3. Click the X to exit preview mode



My Map of Philadelphia

This is an example map of the city of Philadelphia

Felipe M. Valdez
Draft

The Most Important Sites

This section highlights the most important sites to see in Philadelphia

Interactive Features

Once published, your map will be interactive for viewers:

- Hovering over pins shows the title
- Clicking on pins reveals:
 - Full title

- Image (if added)
- Description
- Attribution
- Users can zoom and pan to explore

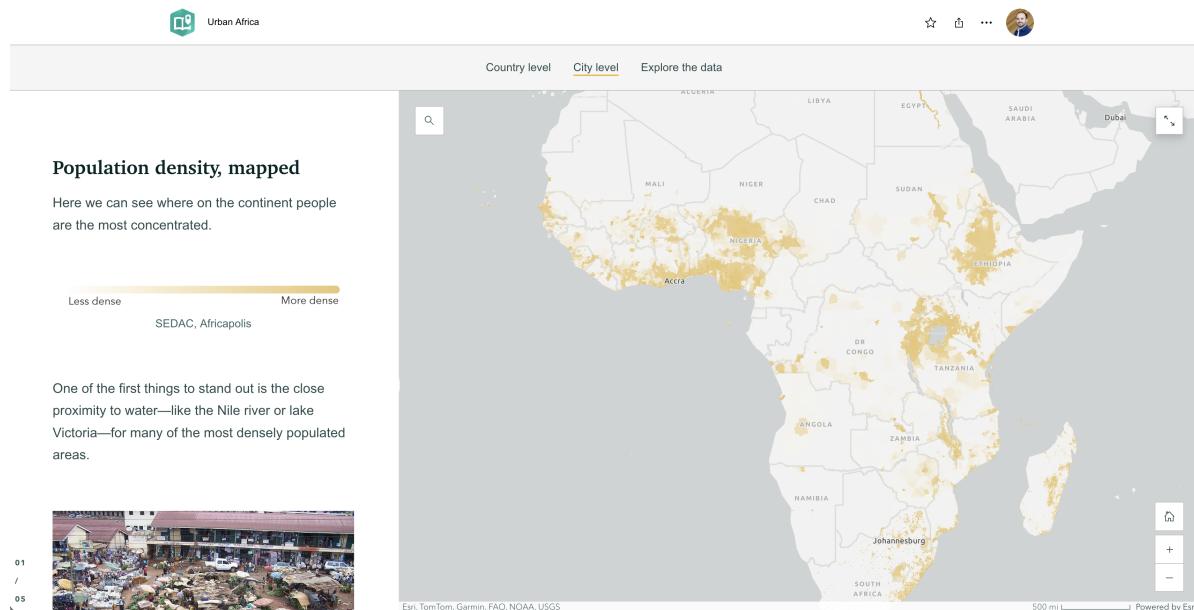
💡 Tip

If you have a description longer than a few words, viewers will see a “Read more” link when hovering over the pin. Clicking it displays the full description.

Adding a Sidecar (Immersive Experience)

What is a Sidecar?

A Sidecar creates an immersive, scrolling experience that combines maps or media with narrative content. As users scroll through your story, the map updates to show different locations while text and images appear alongside.



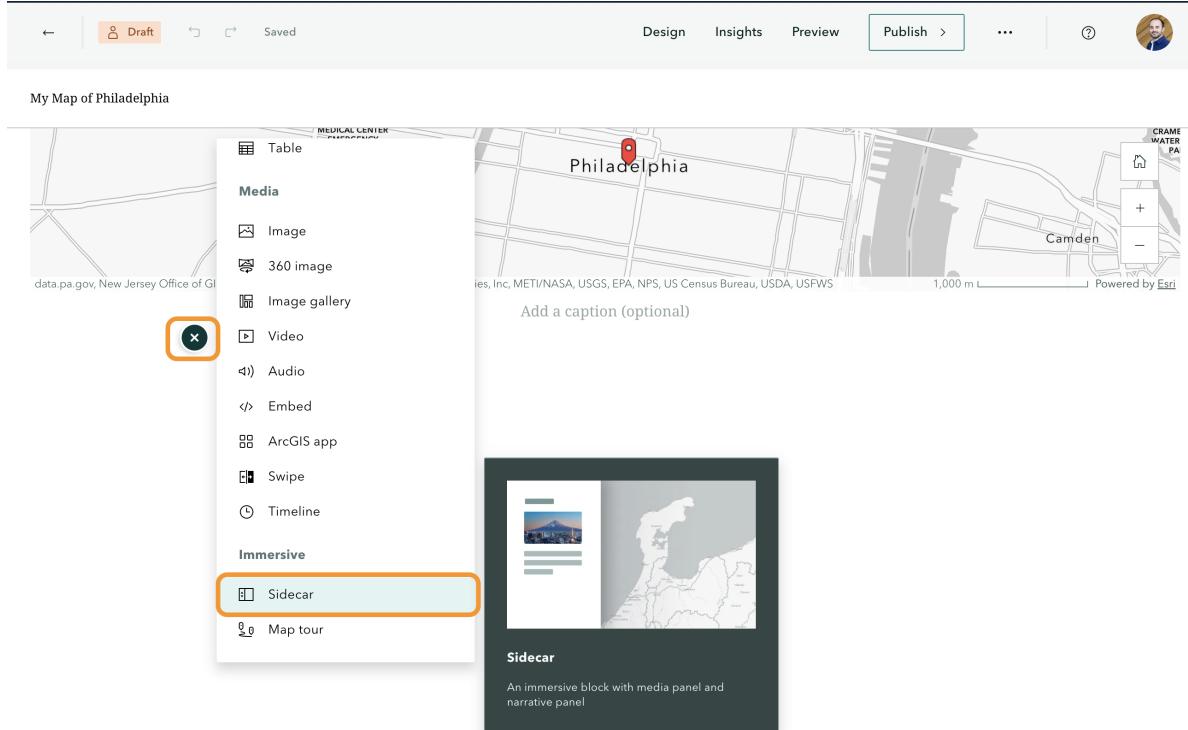
ℹ Sidecar Examples

See some sidecar examples in [this collection](#) from ESRI.

Choose a Sidecar Layout

1. Add a Sidecar block

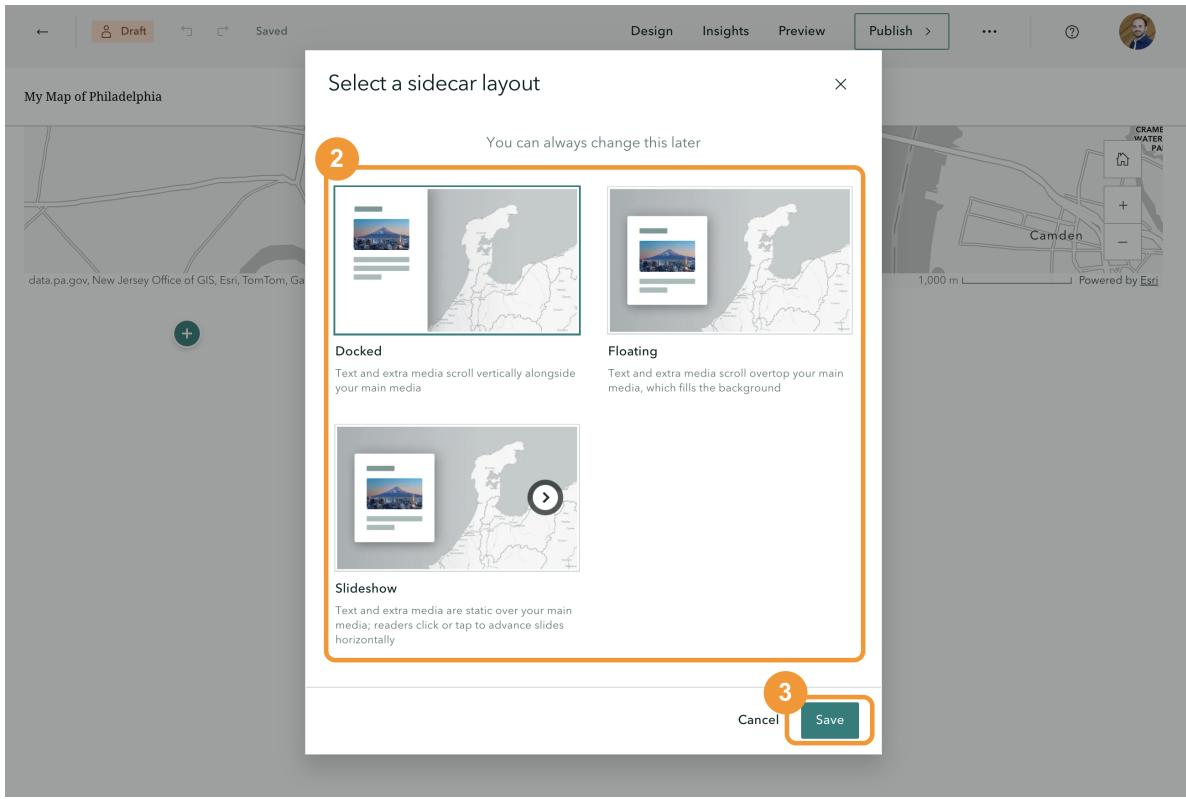
- Click the + (plus sign) to add a new content block
- Scroll down to the Immersive section
- Click Sidecar



2. Select a layout style

- Docked - Content panel fixed on one side, map on the other
- Floating - Map fills the screen with floating text/image panels
- Slideshow - Traditional slide-by-slide presentation style

3. Click Save to create the Sidecar



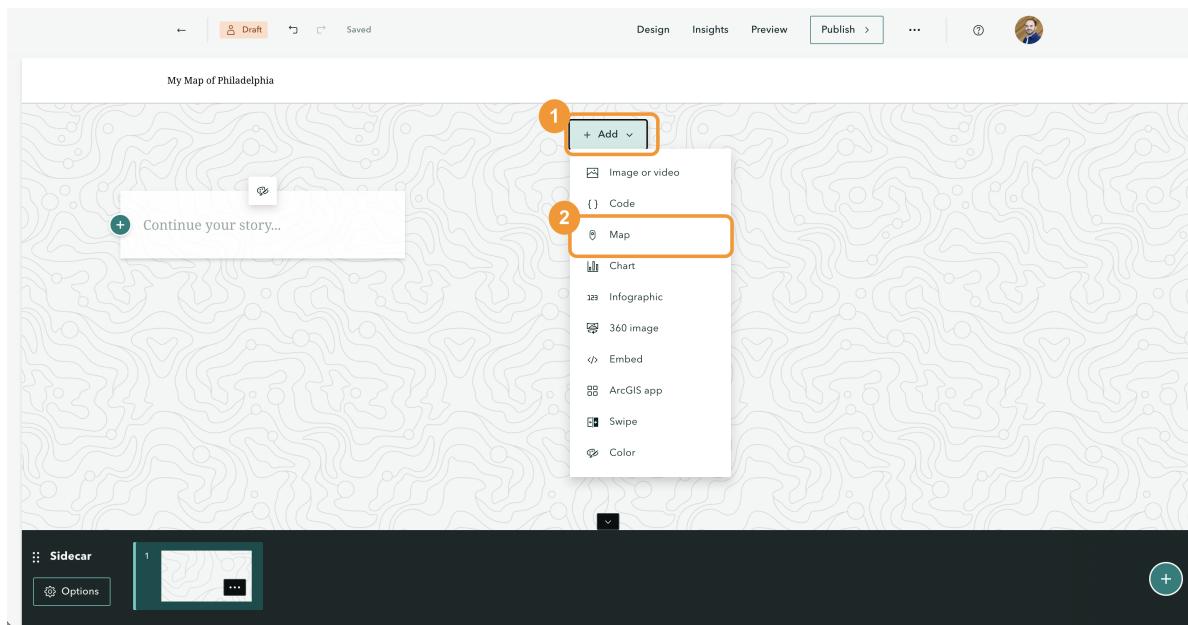
Layout Flexibility

You can change the layout at any time. Start with one and switch if you want a different visual effect.

Create Your First Slide

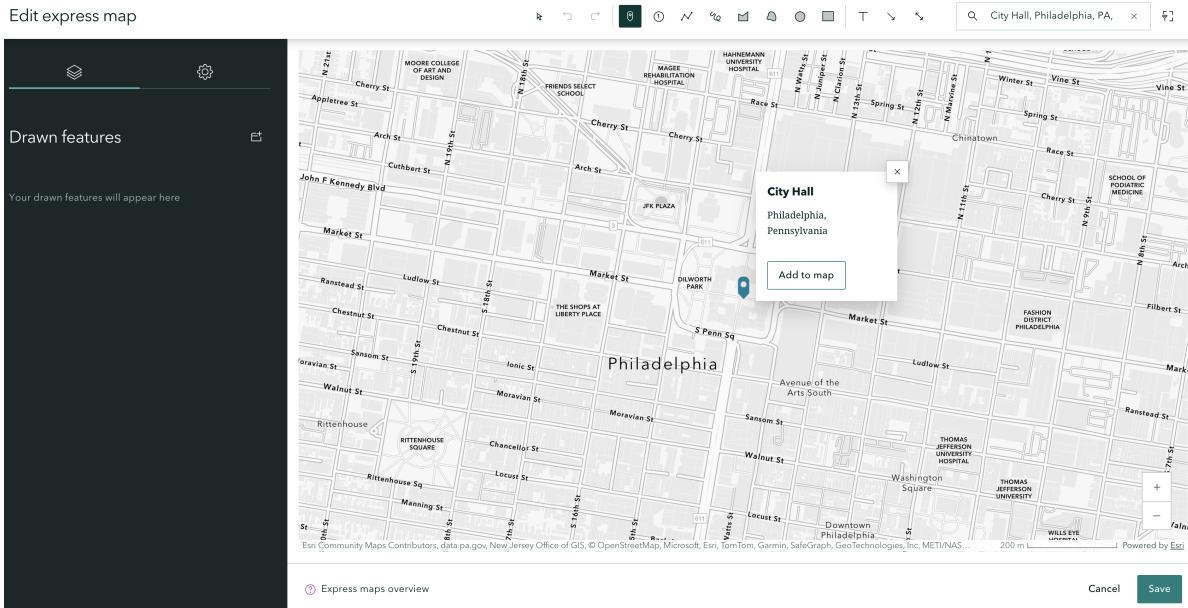
Add a map

1. Click Add in the large panel on the right
2. Select Map from the media options



The following process is the same as Section

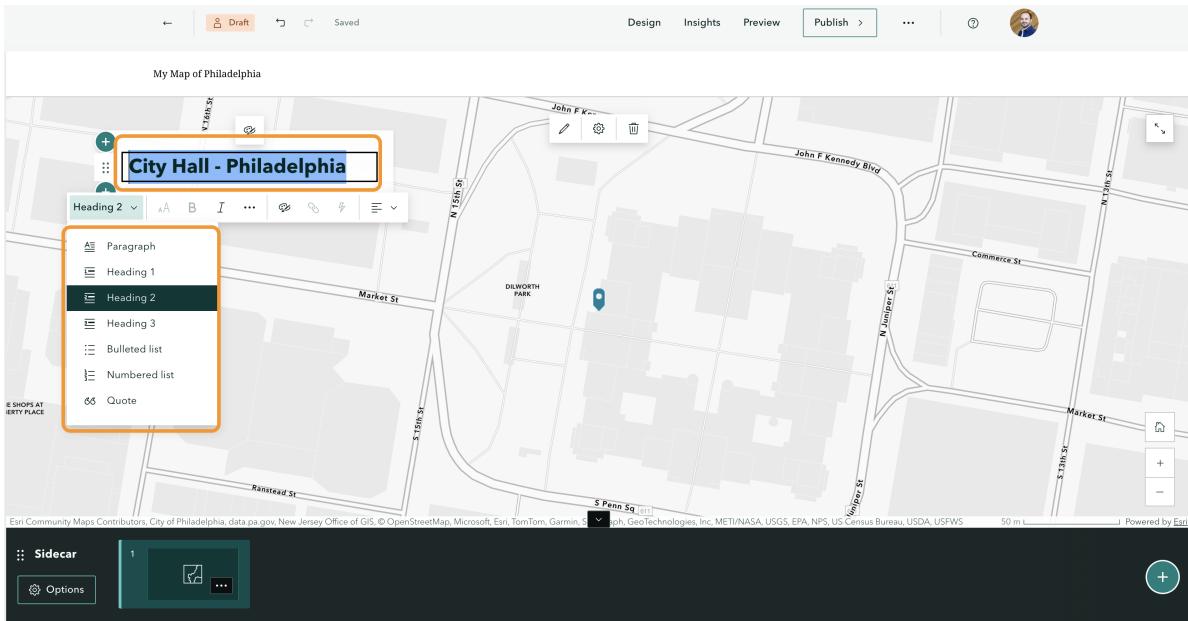
3. Choose Express Map
4. Search for your location (e.g., “Philadelphia Museum of Art”)
5. Select the correct result from the dropdown
6. Click **Add to map** if you want a pin at that location
7. Click **Save** twice (once for the point, once for the map)



Add content to the left panel

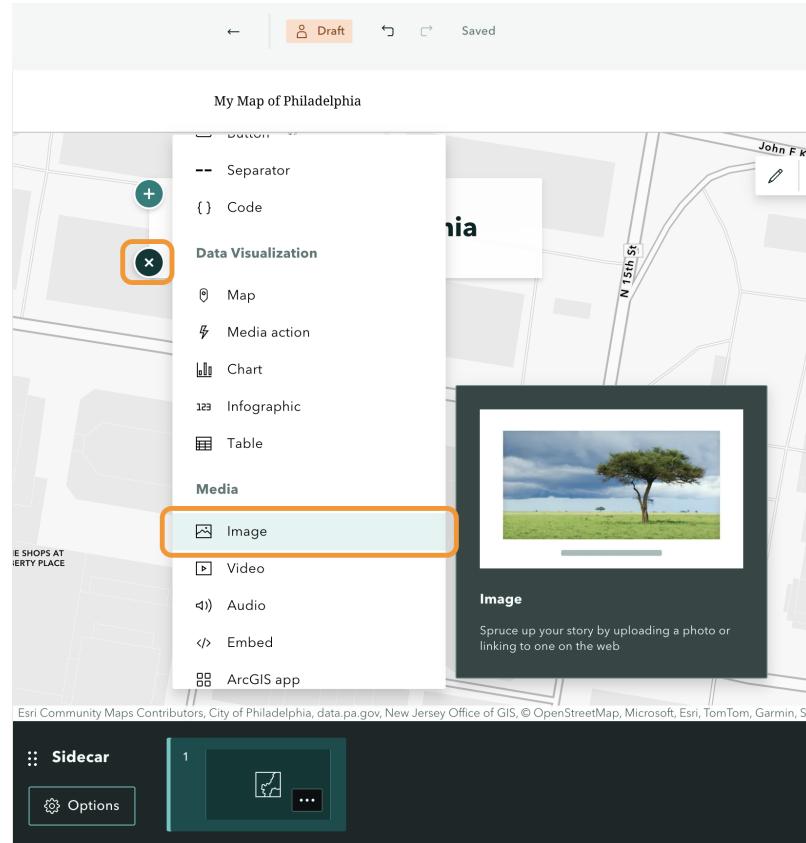
1. Add a title

- Type your location name (e.g., “Philadelphia Museum of Art”)
- Select the text and choose Heading 2 for consistent formatting

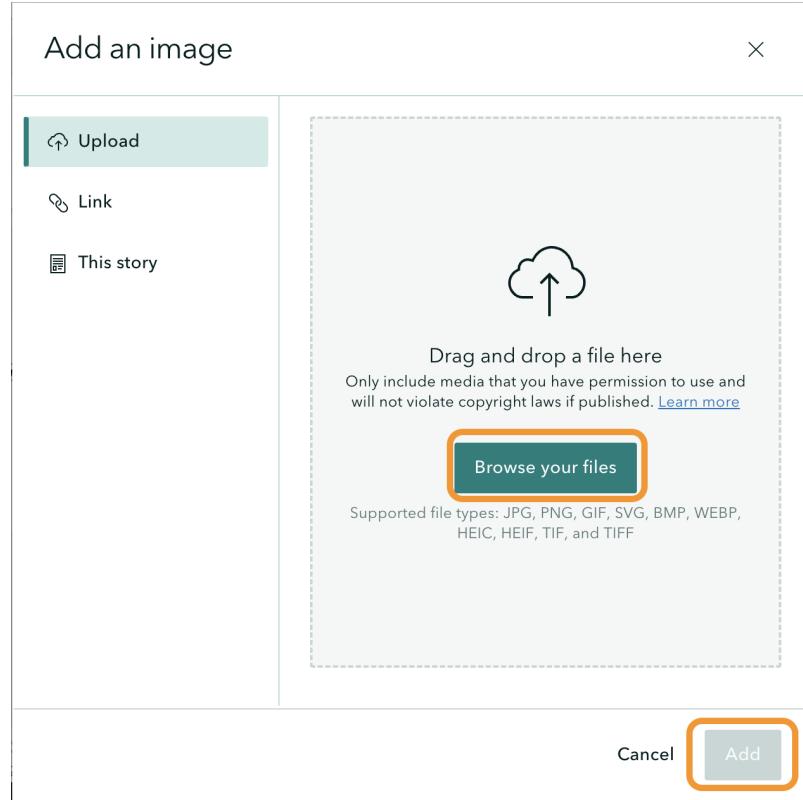


2. Add an image

- Click the + button in the left panel
- Select Image



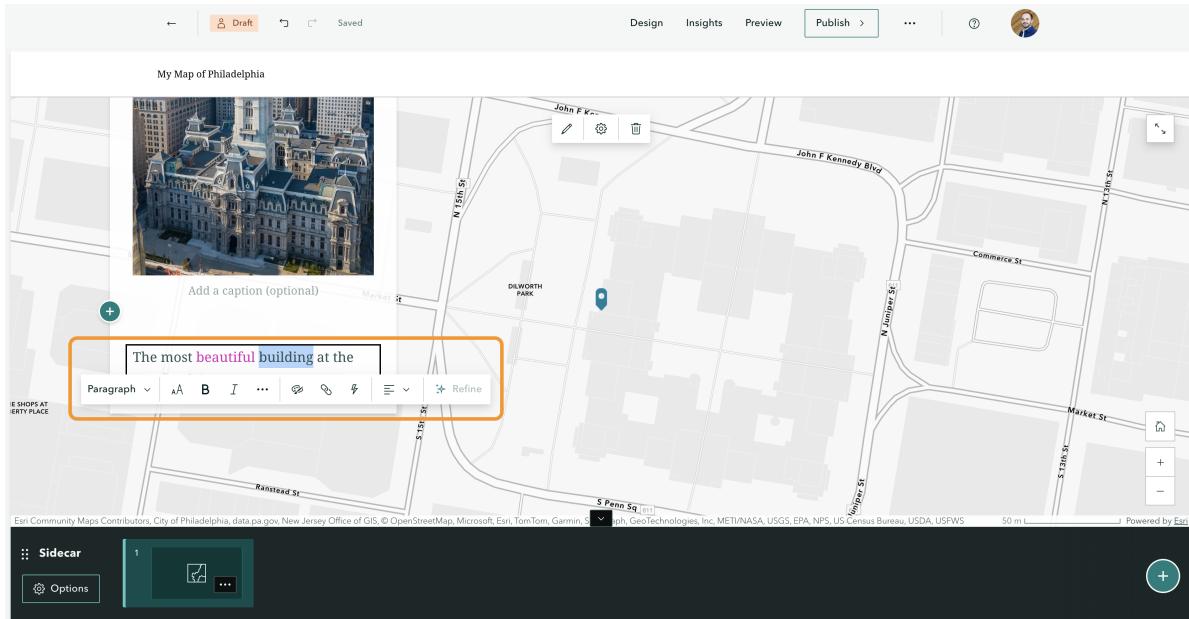
- Click Browse and select your image file
- Add a Caption (e.g., “Source: Wikimedia Commons”)
- Click Add



3. Add descriptive text

The screenshot shows a map of Philadelphia with a context menu open over a building. The menu is divided into sections: Basic, Data Visualization, Media, and Options. The 'Text' option under the Basic section is highlighted with an orange border. The map itself shows major streets like John F. Kennedy Blvd, Commerce St, N. Juniper St, Market St, and S. 12th St. The bottom left corner features a sidebar with 'Sidecar' and 'Options' buttons.

- Click the + button again
- Type your description
- Format and style the text as needed (links, bold, colors, etc.)



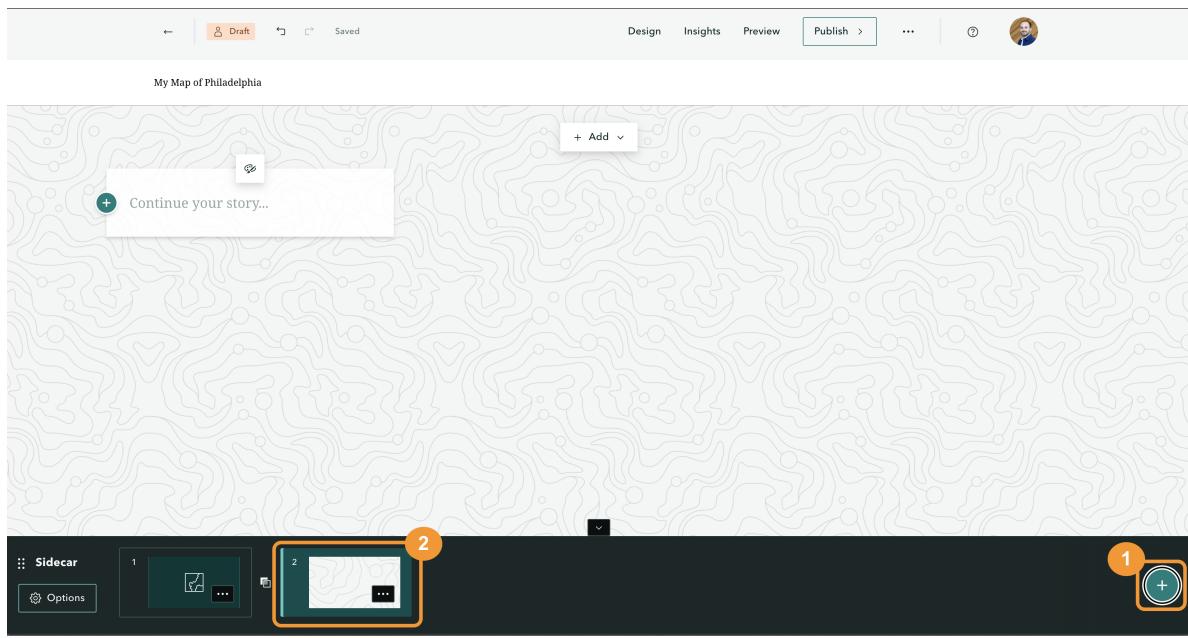
Tip

To format the text, simply *select* the words you want to change to see the formatting options.

Add More Slides

Create a new slide

1. Click the + New slide button at the bottom of the screen
2. You'll see a blank slide (numbered sequentially: 1, 2, 3...)



Add content to the new slide

Repeat the same process for each location:

1. Add a map (search for the new location)
2. Add a title (use Heading 2 or any other type you want)
3. Add an image or video
4. Add descriptive text

Adding Content

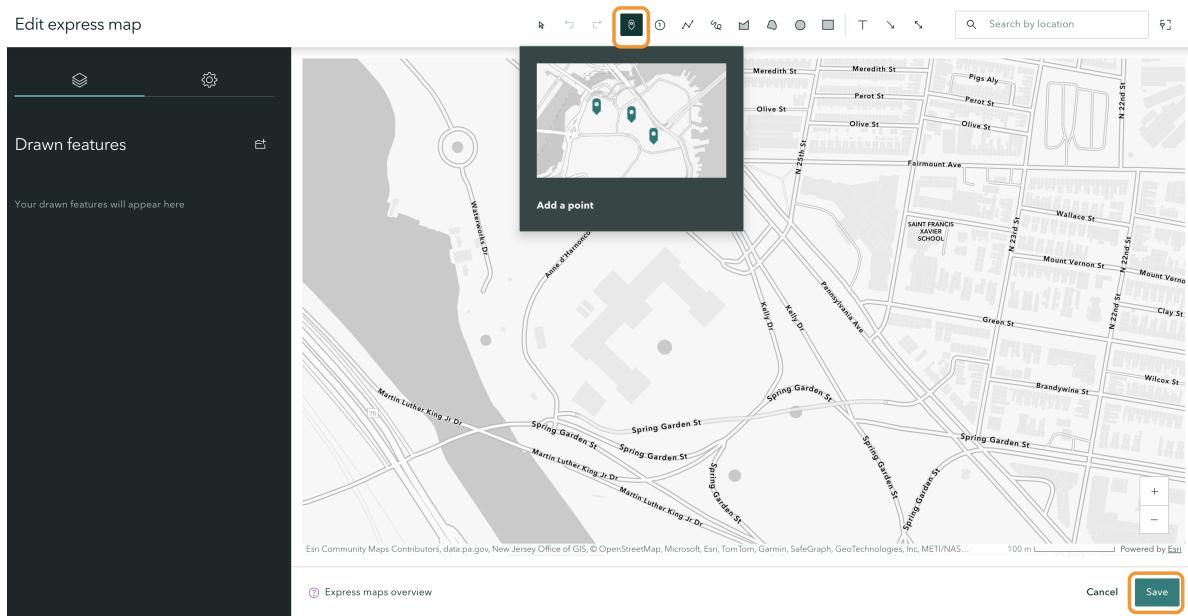
The order you add elements doesn't matter. You can add the title first, then the image, then the map - whichever order works best for you. You can add any content to your story.

Manually add a map point (if search doesn't work)

If the search doesn't find the exact location you want:

1. Zoom to the approximate area on the map
2. Click the Point tool in the top menu bar
3. Your cursor will change to a crosshair
4. Click on the map where you want to place the point
5. Add a title and any other details

6. Click Save



Configure Slide Transitions

1. Click the transition icon between slides (at the bottom of the screen)
2. Choose a transition effect:
 - *Fade* - Smooth fade between slides
 - *Slow fade* - Slower, more gradual fade



3. Additional slide options (accessible via the three-dot menu):

- Duplicate slide
- Move slide
- Delete slide

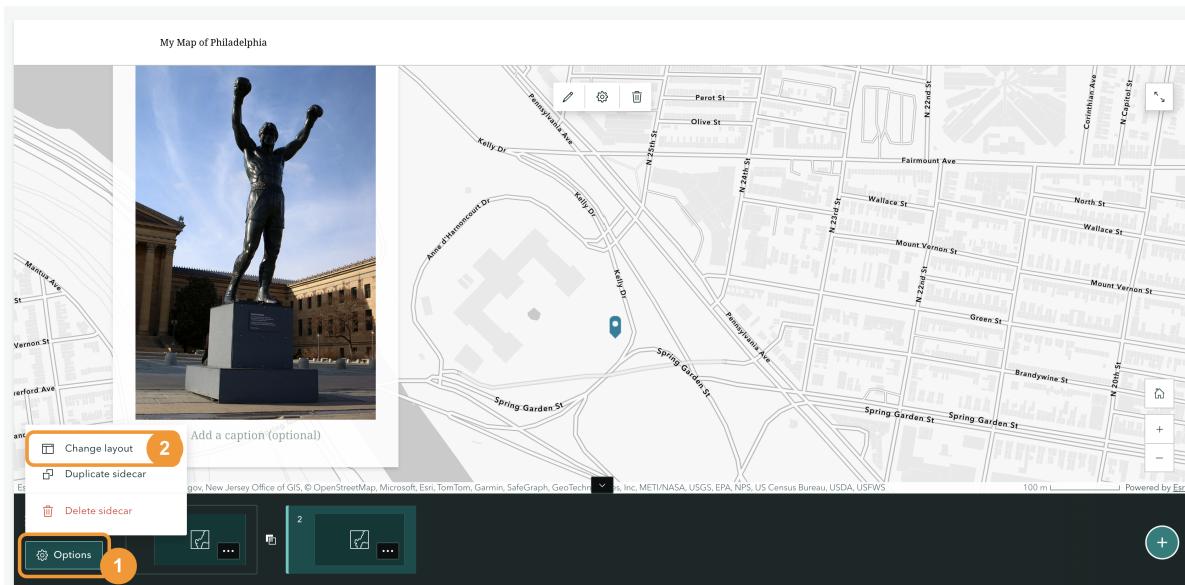
Preview Your Sidecar

1. Click **Preview** in the top menu
2. Scroll through your story to see how the Sidecar works:
 - The map updates as you scroll
 - Content appears in the side panel
 - Transitions occur smoothly between slides

Change the Sidecar Layout

You can switch layouts at any time:

1. Click **Options** below the slide navigation bar
2. Select **Change layout**
3. Choose a different layout:
 - **Docked** - Fixed panel alongside map
 - **Floating** - Full-screen map with floating content panels
 - **Slideshow** - Traditional slide presentation



4. Click **Save**

Choosing a Layout

Use **Floating** when the map is the most important visual element

Use **Docked** for a balanced mix of content and map

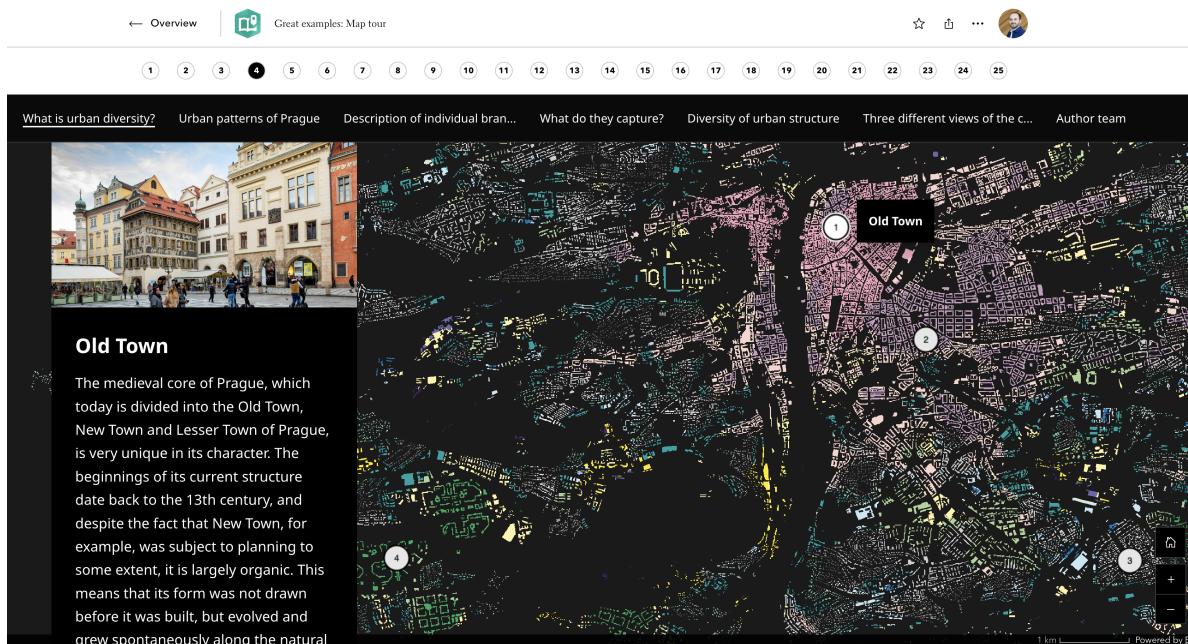
Use **Slideshow** for a more traditional presentation style

Consider your audience's devices when choosing a layout

Adding a Map Tour (Immersive Experience)

What is a Map Tour?

A Map Tour is similar to a Sidecar but designed specifically for showcasing multiple locations on a map. The key difference is that locations are numbered sequentially, and the interface is optimized for point-to-point navigation.



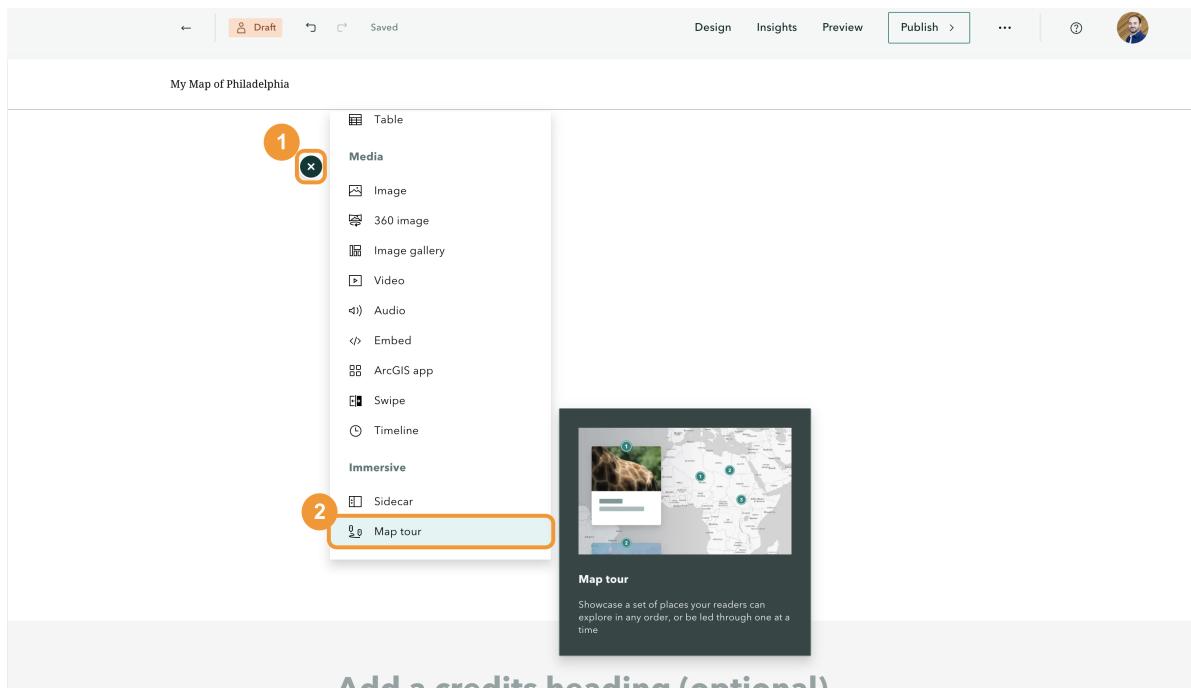
MapTour Examples

See some maptour examples in [this collection](#) from ESRI.

Create a Map Tour

1. Click the + (plus sign) to add a new content block

2. Scroll to the **Immersive** section and click **Map Tour**



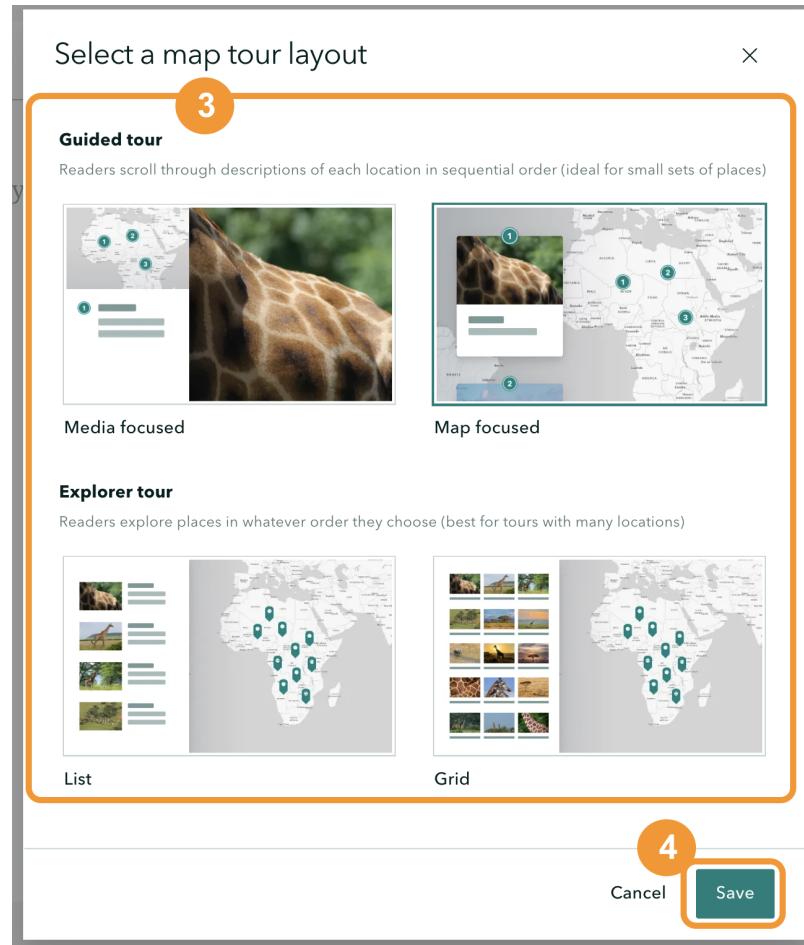
- **Choose your starting point**

- **Start from scratch** - Create a new tour (recommended for beginners)
- **Use existing layer or map** - Import from previous work
- **Upload media first** - Start with your images/videos

3. Select a layout:

- **Map focused** - Large map with floating content panels (similar to Sidecar)
- **Media focused** - Large images/videos with smaller map on top
- **Explorer Tours - Grid** - Image grid with map, click to explore
- **Explorer Tours - List** - Vertical list of images with map

4. Click **Save**



i Map Tour vs. Sidecar

- **Map Tour** uses numbered location markers (1, 2, 3...) instead of custom pins
- Content structure is pre-defined (image, title, description)
- Better for sequential point-to-point tours

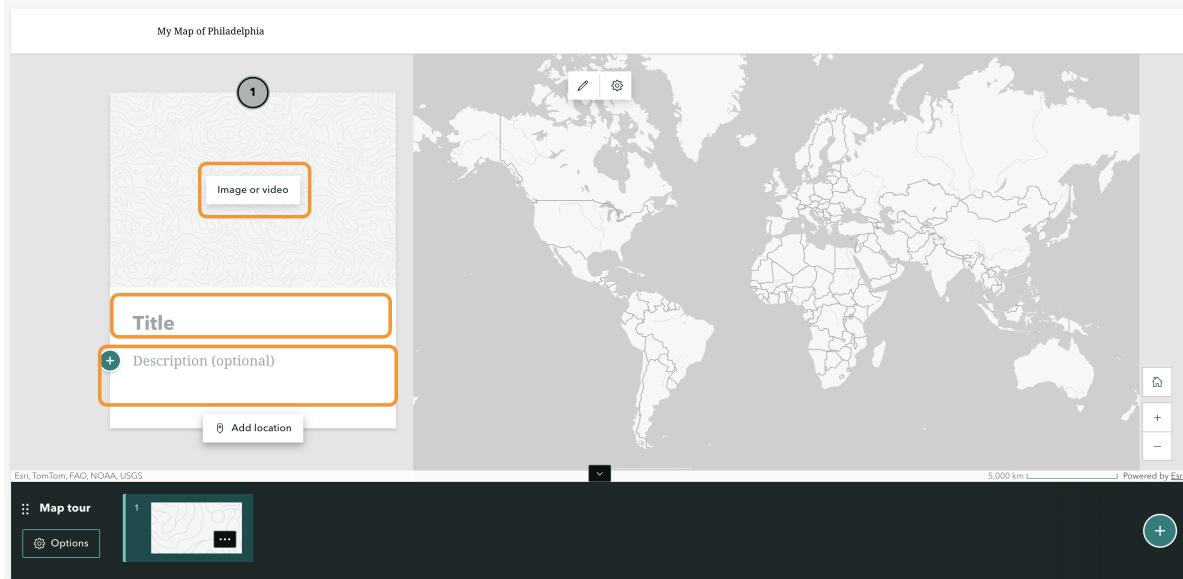
Add Your First Location

Add media and text

The left panel has dedicated spaces for:

1. **Image or video** - Click to browse and upload your file
 - Adjust the focal point (center on the important part of the image)

- Choose display options (fill, fit, etc.)
2. **Title** - Pre-formatted as a header
 - Type your location name
 3. **Description** - Add details about the location
 - Format text, add hyperlinks, style as needed



Add the map location

- Add location**
1. Click **Add location** located below the block, the map will zoom out to show the full view
 2. Choose one of two methods:

Method A: Search

- Use the **Search by location** bar
- Type the place name or address
- Select from the dropdown results
- The map zooms to that location
- Click **Add to map**

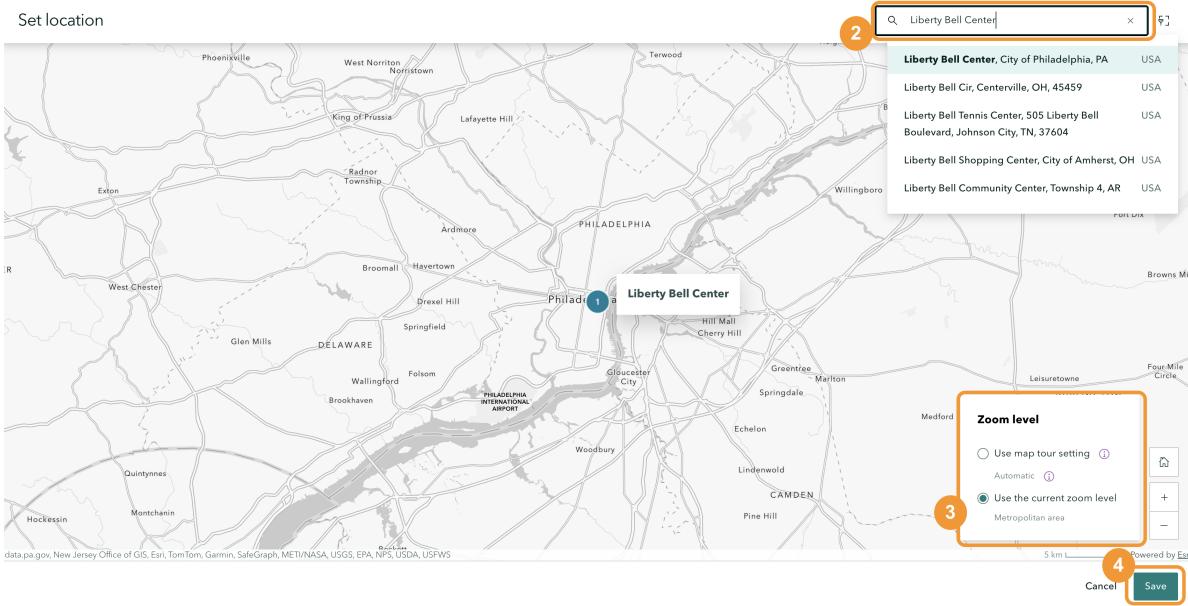
Method B: Manual placement

- Zoom in or out to the area

- Click on the map where you want to place the marker
- Click **Add to map**

3. Click **Use current zoom level**. Use the zoom level you prefer.

4. Click **Save**, your first location appears with a #1 marker



Add Additional Locations

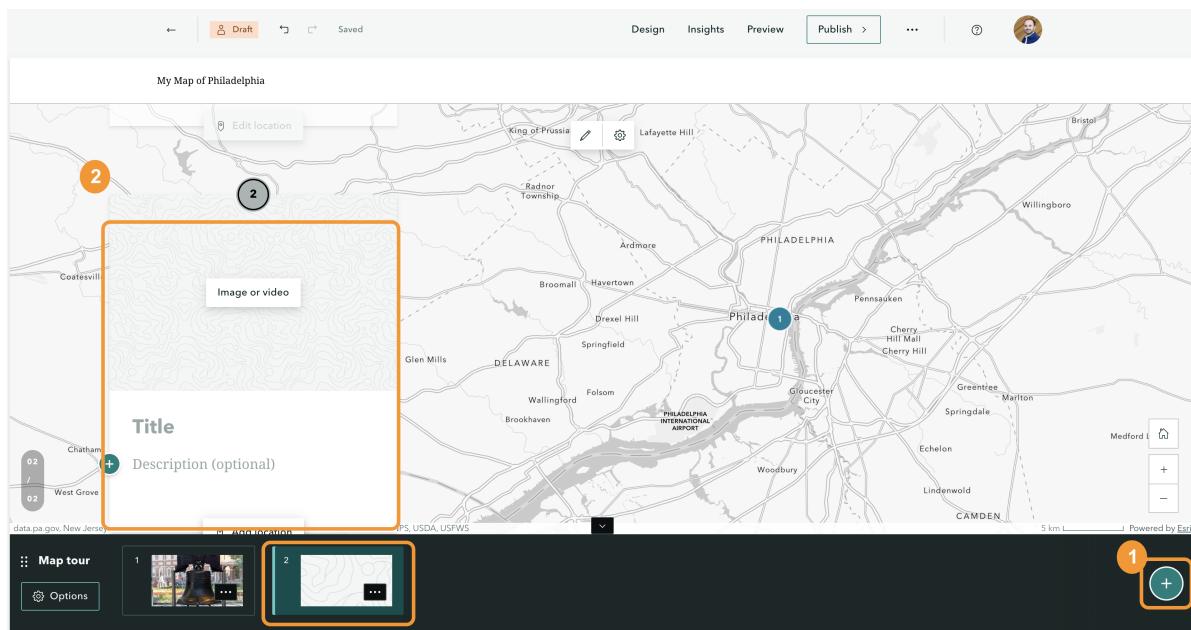
1. Create a new slide

- Click the + New slide button on the right side of the map

2. Add content (repeat for each location):

- Upload an **image or video**
- Add a **title**
- Add a **description**
- Click **Add location** and search for the place
- Adjust zoom level
- Click **Use current zoom level**

3. Each location receives a sequential number (1, 2, 3, 4...)



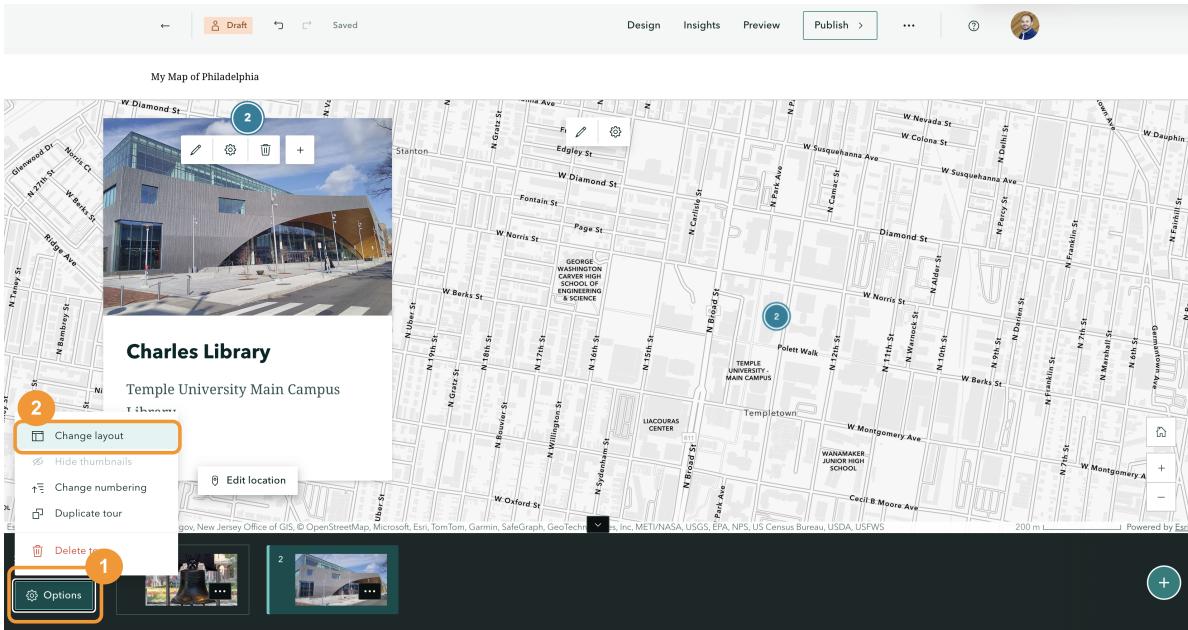
Managing Slides

If you add a slide while viewing an existing one, the new slide will be inserted after the current slide. You can reorder slides using the options menu (three dots).

Change the Layout

You can switch layouts at any time:

1. Click **Options** in the Map Tour settings
2. Select **Change layout**



3. Choose a different option:

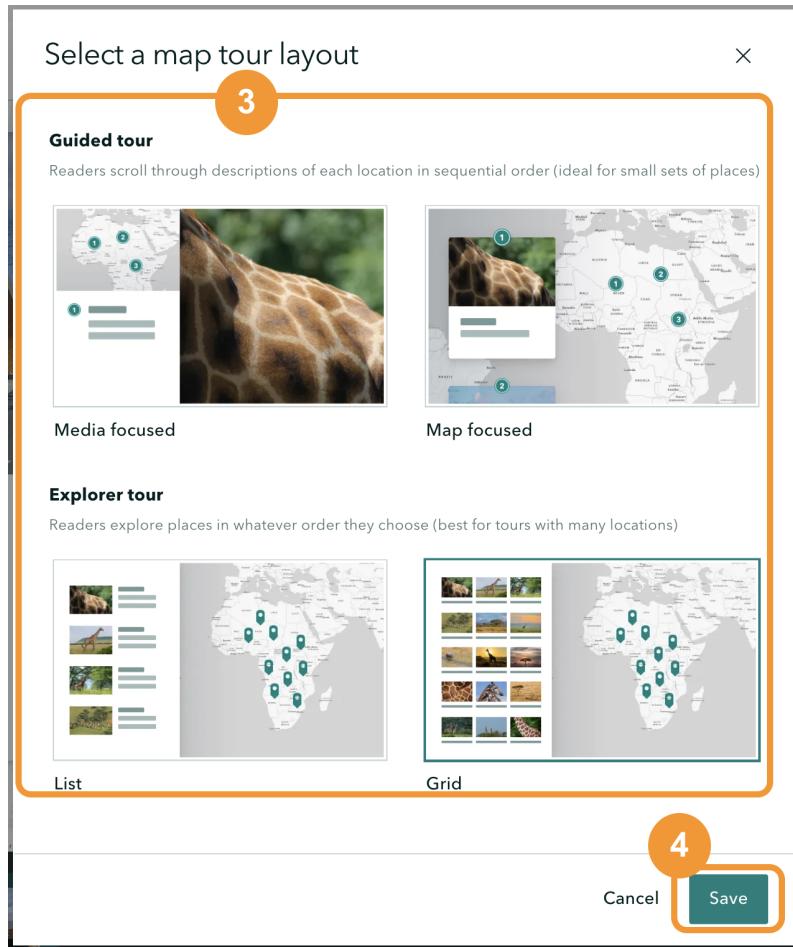
Map Focused - Full-screen map with content floating on top - Best for emphasizing geography and spatial relationships

Media Focused - Large image/video display with smaller map above - Best for strong visuals where the map provides context

Explorer Tours - Grid - All images displayed as a clickable grid - Map shows all locations at once - No sequential order - free exploration - Click any image to view details and zoom to location

Explorer Tours - List - Vertical list of images with text - Map on the side - Similar to grid but in list format

4. Click **Save**



Preview Your Map Tour

1. Click **Preview** in the top menu
2. Navigate through your tour:
 - Scroll or click through numbered locations
 - Watch the map update to each stop
 - Test the interactive features
3. In **Grid or List Explorer** layouts:
 - Click on any image to view that location
 - The map zooms to the selected point
 - Close the detail view to return to the overview

Choosing Between Layouts

- **Map Focused** - When geography and spatial context are most important
- **Media Focused** - When you have compelling images/videos that deserve prominence
- **Explorer Grid/List** - When you want users to explore freely without a set path, or when you have many locations to display

Key Differences: Sidecar vs. Map Tour

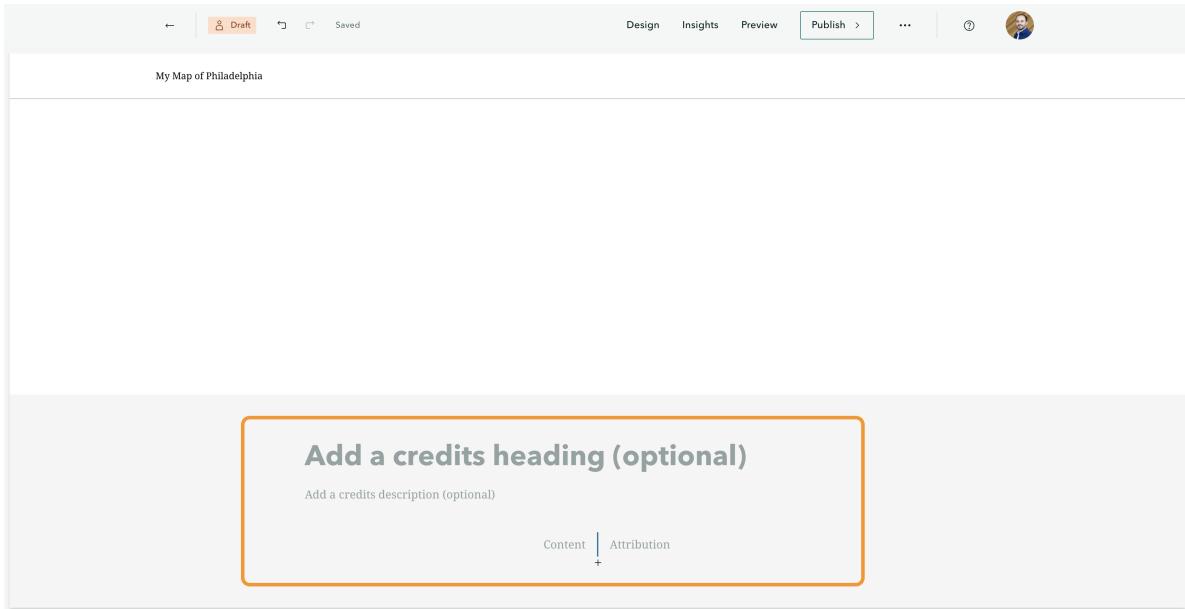
Feature	Sidecar	Map Tour
Markers	Custom icons/colors	Numbered circles (1, 2, 3...)
Content structure	Flexible, add any blocks	Pre-defined (image, title, description)
Best for	Flexible storytelling with maps	Sequential point-to-point tours
Navigation	Scroll-based only	Scroll or click-based (depending on layout)

Publish and Share Your StoryMap

Add Credits (Optional but Recommended)

Before publishing, you can add credits and attributions at the end of your story:

1. **Scroll to the bottom** of your StoryMap
2. You'll see a dedicated **Credits** section
3. **Add a title** (e.g., "Credits," "Acknowledgments")
4. **Add content blocks** for different types of credits:
 - Thank contributors or collaborators
 - Attribute images (e.g., "Images: Wikimedia Commons")
 - Credit data sources
 - Acknowledge funding or support



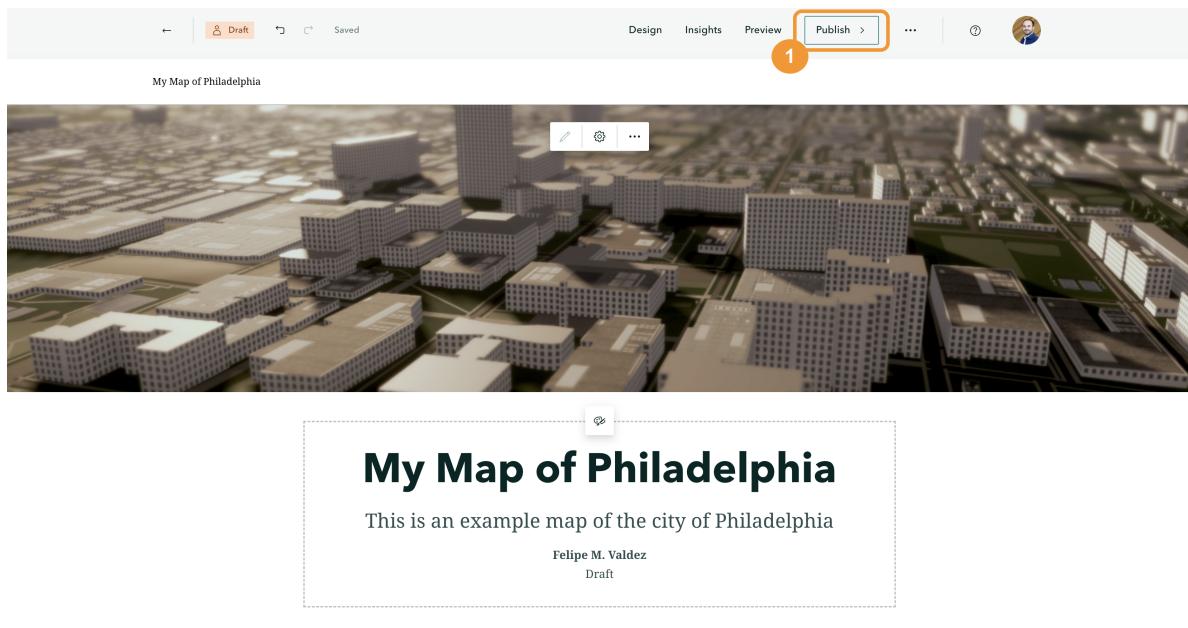
💡 Tip

Best Practice Always credit your sources, especially for images, data, and other media. This is both ethical and often legally required.

Publish Your StoryMap

1. Click Publish in the top menu bar

A dialog box will appear with sharing options



2. Choose a Sharing Level

Private (default) - Only you can view the story - Not searchable by others - Good for drafts and work in progress

Organization - Anyone in your organization can view it - Temple users can search for and find your story - Good for internal projects or campus-wide sharing

Public - Anyone can view the story - Searchable by all ArcGIS Online and StoryMaps users - Good for public outreach, portfolios, or general audiences

3. Additional Publishing Options

Before clicking Publish, consider:

- **Allow others to duplicate this story** - Check this if you want people to copy and adapt your work
- **Include in search** - Determines if your story appears in search results

4. Click Publish

5. Wait a few seconds while the story publishes (longer for media-heavy stories)

Publish options

The screenshot shows the 'Publish options' screen. On the left, under 'Story details', there is a preview image of a 3D map of Philadelphia, the title 'My Map of Philadelphia', and a description: 'This is an example map of the city of Philadelphia'. A green 'Edit' button is at the bottom. On the right, under 'Share', there is a section titled 'Set sharing level' with a dropdown menu set to 'Everyone (Public)'. Other options include 'Private' (unchecked), 'Organization' (unchecked), and another 'Everyone (Public)' option which is checked. Below this are two checkboxes: 'Allow duplication' (unchecked) and 'Show in web search results' (checked). At the top right are 'Back' and 'Publish' buttons, with 'Publish' highlighted and circled in orange.

Share Your Published Story

After publishing, you'll see a sharing screen with multiple options:

The screenshot shows the published story sharing screen. On the left, there is a preview image of the 3D map of Philadelphia, the title 'My Map of Philadelphia', a description: 'This is an example map of the city of Philadelphia', and the URL 'storymaps.arcgis.com'. On the right, there is a message: 'You've published your story. Let's share it!' with a checkmark icon. Below this are three sharing options: 'Copy link' (circled in orange), 'Facebook' (circled in orange), and 'Scan to open on your phone' (circled in orange). There is also a QR code. At the bottom are three buttons: 'View published story', 'Edit story', and 'Go to StoryMaps content'.

1. Copy and Share the Link

- **Copy the direct link** to share via email, messaging, or embed on websites
- Paste the link in a new browser window to preview the published version
 - You won't see editing tools
 - This is exactly how viewers will see your story

2. Use the QR Code

- A QR code is automatically generated
- Users can scan it with mobile devices to access your story
- **Download the QR code** as an image for:
 - Presentations
 - Posters
 - Print materials
 - Conference materials

3. Share on Social Media

Use the provided links to share directly on:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- LinkedIn
- Other platforms

Manage Published Stories

View Publication Status

In your content library, published stories show different icons:

- **Globe icon** - Story is public (visible to everyone)
- **Building icon** - Story is organization-only (Temple users)
- **Person icon** - Story is private (only you)
- **Draft** - Story has not been published yet

Sharing Level Comparison

Level	Who Can View	Searchable	Best For
Private	Only you	No	Drafts, personal work
Organization	All Temple users	Yes (within Temple)	Campus projects, coursework
Public	Anyone	Yes (globally)	Public outreach, portfolios, general audiences

i Note

Remember - Always review your credits and attributions before publishing - Test your story's appearance on different devices using the Preview feature - You can change sharing settings at any time after publishing - Consider your audience when choosing a sharing level

After Publishing

Once published, you can:

- Continue editing (changes save automatically)
- Update sharing settings at any time
- Unpublish if needed (returns to draft status)

Custom Design and Layout

Access Design Options

1. Click **Design** in the top menu bar
2. The Design panel opens with customization options

i Note

Publishing Updates After making design changes, you'll see "Unpublished changes" in orange at the top. Remember to click **Publish** again to update the live version.

3. Customize the Cover Layout

Choose from different cover styles to change how your title and cover image appear:

Available cover layouts:

- **Top** - Smaller image at top with title below
- **Minimal** - Compact version with less prominent image
- **Full** - Image covers the entire screen with title overlaid
- **Side-by-side** - Image and text share the screen

4. Apply a Theme

- In the Design panel, browse **Themes**
- Select from pre-made themes:

- **Summit** (default)
- Other theme options available

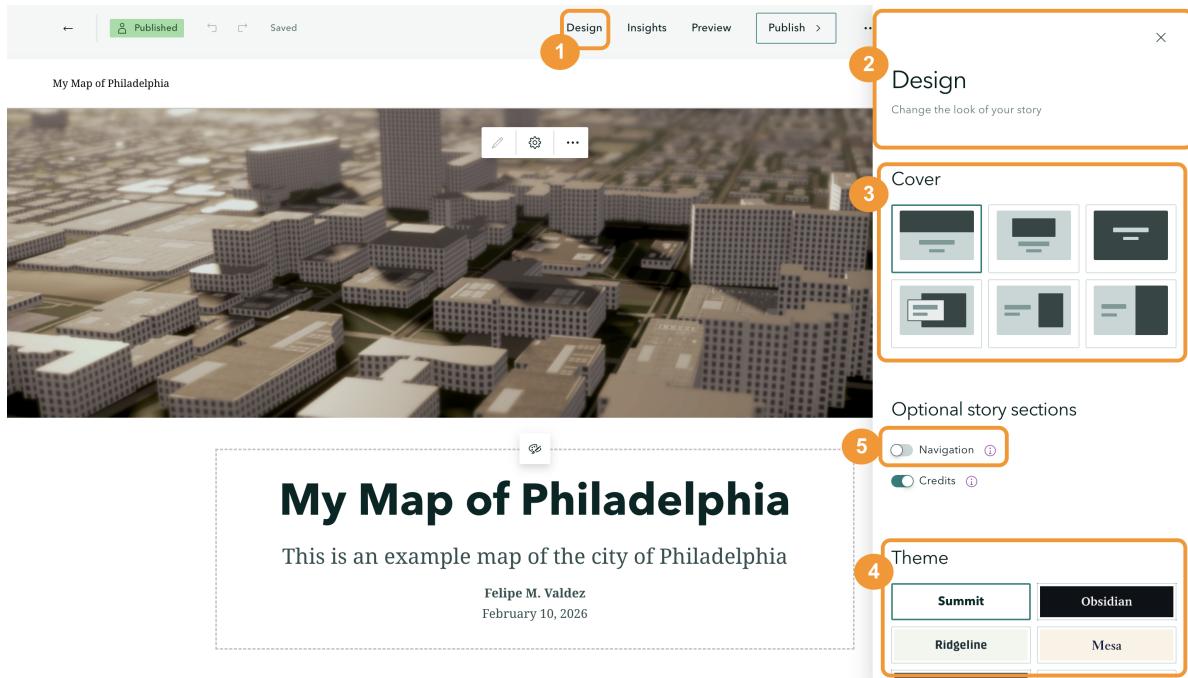
- Themes control:

- Font choices
- Text sizes
- Color schemes
- Overall visual style

5. Enable Navigation

The navigation feature adds a menu to help users jump between sections:

- In the Design panel, toggle **Navigation** on
- A navigation bar appears showing:
 - Main section headings (Heading 1 and Heading 2)
 - Credits section
 - Any custom section titles you've added



How navigation works:

- Navigation links appear at the top of your story
- Clicking a link jumps to that section
- The current section is underlined or highlighted
- Great for longer stories with multiple sections

Tip

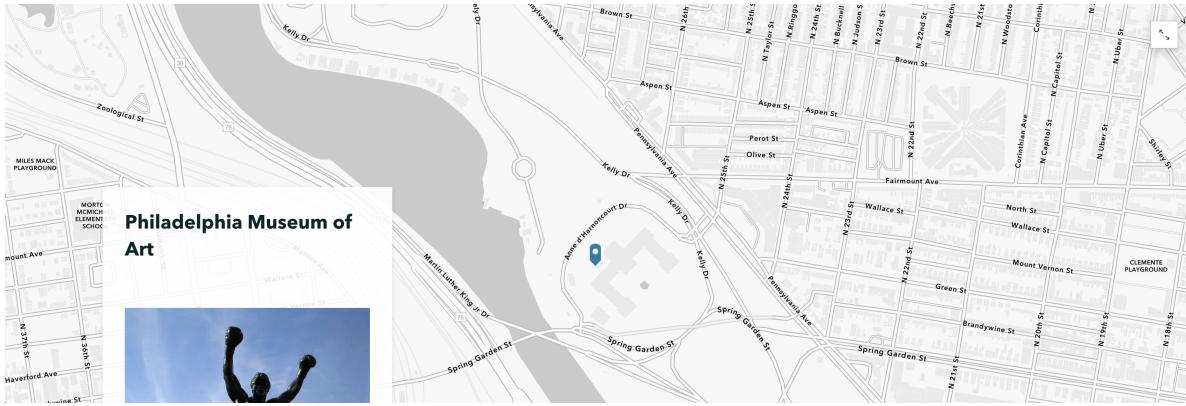
When to Use Navigation Enable navigation if your story:

- Has multiple distinct sections
- Is longer than 3-4 scrolls
- Benefits from allowing users to jump to specific topics
- Contains reference material users might want to revisit



[This is a Sidecar](#) [While this, is a Map Tour](#) [This is the last section](#) [Credits](#)

This is a Sidecar



Add sections to navigation

Any text formatted as **Heading 1** or **Heading 2** automatically appears in the navigation menu:

1. Add a text block where you want a new section
2. Type your section title (e.g., “The Last Section”)
3. Select the text
4. Choose **Heading 1** or **Heading 2** from the formatting options
5. The section appears in the navigation menu automatically

! Important

Always Use the Latest Version Make sure you’re sharing the published version with all your latest changes. If you see “Unpublished changes” at the top, click Publish before sharing.

Design Best Practices

- **Cover layout** - Choose based on your image and title length
 - Long titles work better with side-by-side or top layouts
 - Striking images work well with full-screen layouts

- **Text positioning** - Ensure text is readable against your cover image
 - Avoid placing text over busy parts of the image
 - Consider adding a semi-transparent overlay if text is hard to read
- **Navigation** - Enable for stories with:
 - 5+ sections
 - Complex content users might want to reference
 - Educational or instructional content
- **Themes** - Stick with one theme for consistency
 - Test different themes to see which fits your content
 - Consider your audience (formal vs. casual)
- **Mobile preview** - Always check mobile appearance
 - Most users may view on phones or tablets
 - Adjust layouts if mobile version doesn't look good

More Resources

From ESRI

- [Getting started with ArcGIS StoryMaps](#)
- [Discover the possibilities with ArcGIS StoryMaps!](#)
- [Examples from the ArcGIS StoryMaps community](#)

Others

- [Video Tutorial](#)
- [Open-source storymaps tutorial](#)
- [Library Guide on StoryMaps](#)