



Storytelling- Images of sitting around the campfire in the summer, the fireplace in your home in the wintertime, the dinner table with your family or saying good night to your children are conjured up in my head. Listening to fairy tales, passing a personal family story on from one generation to the next, creating a conspirative bond while telling and listening to ghost stories, personalizing a fact or concept by weaving a human element that creates a connection to the listener are just a few ways we are familiar with storytelling since we have been children. As educators we know that students thrive, if we take content and weave in a story that involves them or give them a glimpse in our own lives. All of these storytelling instances have one thing in common. They all are being told to a limited audience, they are all being told by a limited group of people.

New tools allow us to expand the concept of storytelling in many ways.

- Suddenly it is possible to give your voice an audience of millions by simply uploading your story to social networking sites.
- Suddenly a moment in time can be captured with sound and video and passed on, even long after the storyteller is gone.
- Suddenly adding many voices together can create a story. The story lies in the diversity of perspectives, points of view, and collective knowledge
- Suddenly a story has the possibility to literally move on. The story takes on its own life, allowing all contributors and listeners to shape the story.

One of these new tools that have emerged and has distinguished itself among the educational community is VoiceThread. On their website, www.voicethread.com, you can read

A VoiceThread is an online media album that can hold essentially any type of media (images, documents and videos) and allows people to make comments in 5 different ways - using voice (with a microphone or telephone), text, audio file, or video (with a webcam) - and share them with anyone they wish. They can even be exported to an Archival Movie for offline use on a DVD or video-enabled MP3 player. A VoiceThread allows group conversations to be collected and shared in one place, from anywhere in the world.

VoiceThread has been almost intuitive to work with for teachers and students. It takes a few practice runs for the kids to get comfortable in recording their voices by practicing the tone and volume and



1. Signing up for an Educator VoiceThread Account

Go to VoiceThread.com



Sign in with your email and password or Register for an account.



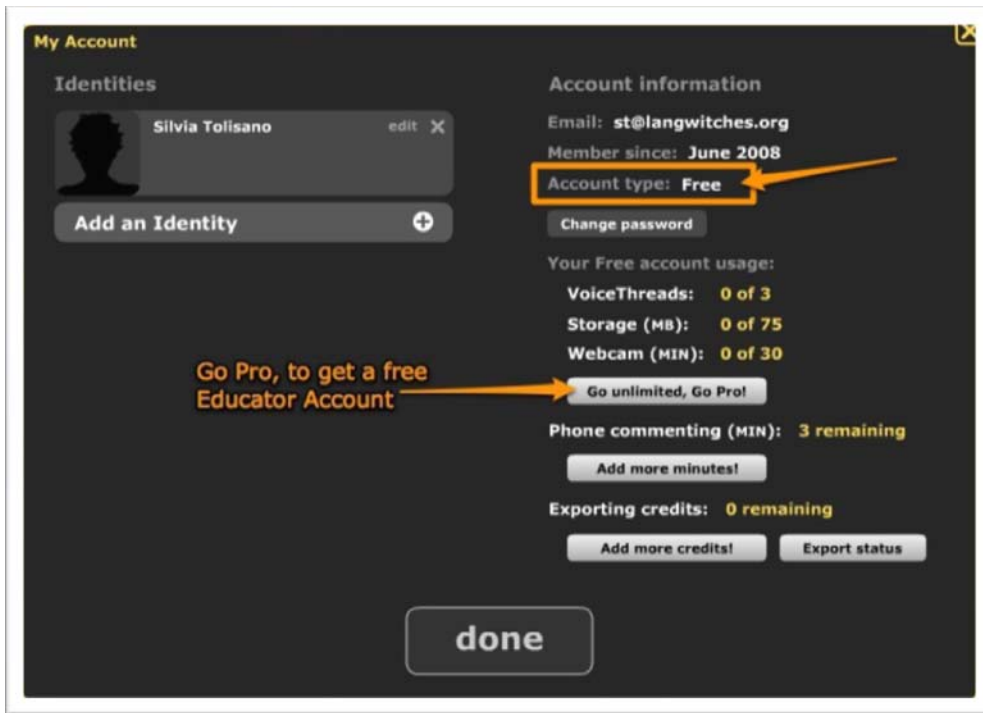
To register, enter your information in the provided fields and click “register”.



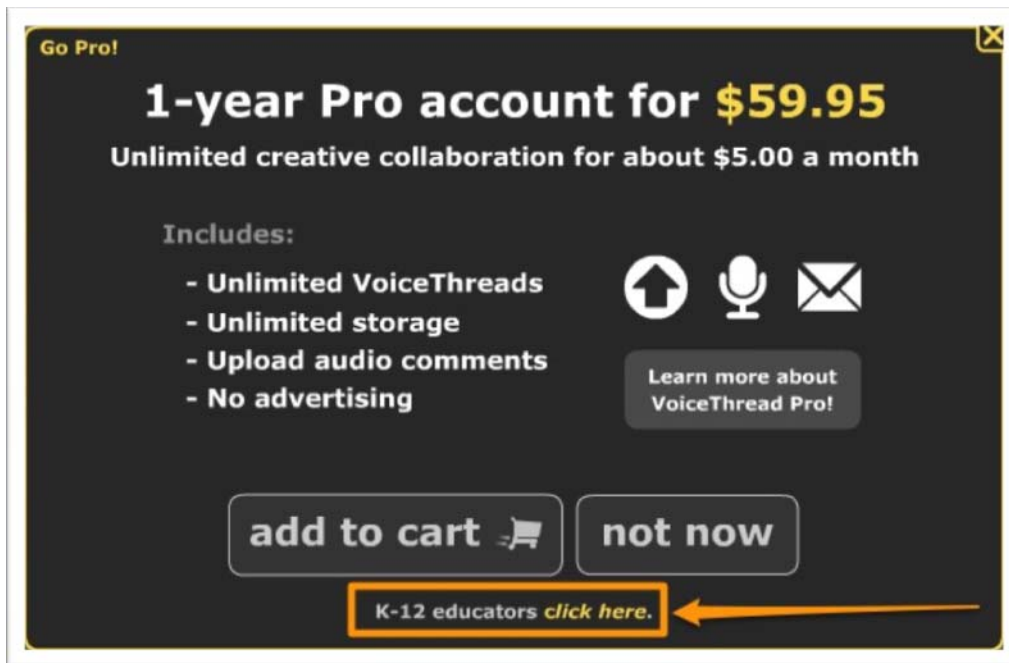
The screenshot shows a registration form titled "Register for VoiceThread" with a close button in the top right corner. The form contains five input fields, each with a green checkmark to its right, indicating successful validation: "name: Silvia Tolisano", "email: st@langwitches.org", "retype email: st@langwitches.org", "password: *****", and "retype password: *****". Below the fields is a large "register" button, which is highlighted with a yellow box and an orange arrow pointing to it from the right. At the bottom of the form, there is a line of text: "Registering indicates you accept our *Terms of Use*." followed by "Already have an account? *Sign in*."

Pull down the menu, by clicking on the triangle next to the shadow avatar. Then go to “My Account”.





You will automatically receive a “Free” account. The free version entitles you to create up to three voicethreads. There is no limit on how many comments can be left on these voicethreads.



As a K-12 educator you can upgrade for free to a Pro Version, that allows you to create as many voicethreads as you wish. In both versions it will cost you \$2.99 per VoiceThread to export as an archival movie.

Click on “K-12 educators” and fill out the provided fields.

VoiceThread for K-12

name: ✓

subject areas: ✓

grade: ✓

school name: ✓

school website: ✓

school address: ✓

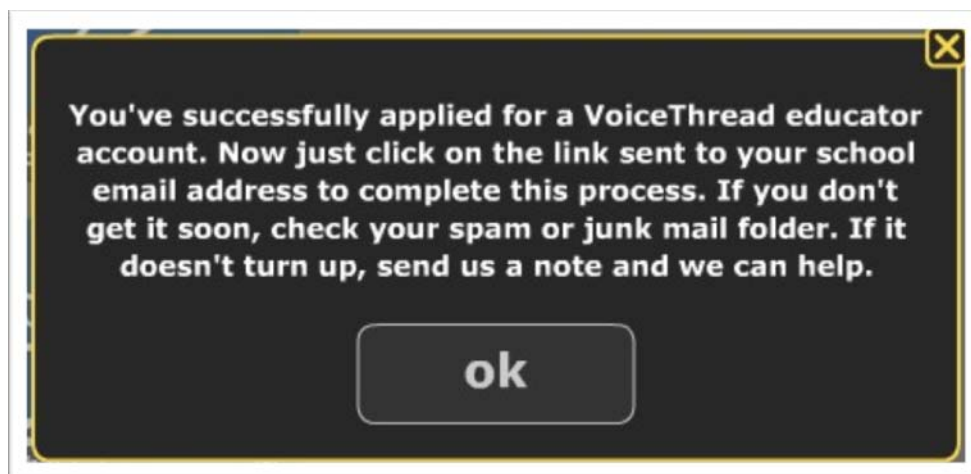
school country: ✓

school zip: ✓

school email: ✓

retype school email: ✓

Make sure that you enter and have access to your school e-mail address, since you will need to verify that e-mail address in order to complete your application.



Go to your e-mail program and open the e-mail sent by VoiceThread.com and verify your account by clicking on the link provided in the e-mail.



From: VoiceThread <info@voicethread.com>
Subject: VoiceThread Educator Account
Date: June 18, 2008 3:09:10 PM EDT
To: Silvia Tolisano <stolisano@sjeds.com>

We appreciate you taking the time to apply for a K-12 educator account at VoiceThread.

By clicking the link below, you are confirming that you are a K-12 educator. If you are not a K-12 educator or have not submitted an application, please delete this email. If we find evidence of abuse, we reserve the right to remove your account and all associated content. Please click the following link to complete your application:

<http://voicethread.com/confirm/teacher/yqDUx1MJBN/>

There is another version of VoiceThread located at Ed.VoiceThread.com. On their website they state:



Ed.VoiceThread.com is a secure collaborative network designed for the K-12 academic environment. Using one simple tool, educators and students can collaborate around almost any type of media via voice, text, webcam and drawing commentary, all within a secure environment. Access to the network is restricted to K-12 educators, students and administrators, ensuring safe and secure classroom collaboration.

An Ed.voicethread.com account is different than the Pro Account for Educators at voicethread.com. The difference being that the teacher can create classes and add students. It allows students to have their own account with which they are able to comment and create their own voicethreads, work independently and in a portfolio in a secure environment. While in an Educator Pro account on voicethread.com, teachers can add different identities that serve each one of their students.

There is a one time \$10 verification fee to join the Ed.VoiceThread network as a single educator or \$60 per year to sign your entire classroom up for an account. The fee for an entire school to join the network is \$300 + \$1 per user per year.

VoiceThread for K-12

You're almost ready to start using Ed.VoiceThread.com. Now just do one of the following to become a verified educational user:

Single educator account with unlimited access to the Ed.VoiceThread network.	or	Get your entire classroom unlimited access to the Ed.VoiceThread network.
\$10 one time verification fee		\$10/month or \$60/year
add to cart		select

To add your entire school, [click here](#).

Add your school to Ed.VoiceThread


1-year School License

- Add any amount of user accounts
- Create a school portfolio at custom URL
- All content on secure Ed.VoiceThread network

Learn more!

\$300 + \$1/user/year

Enter # of accounts you need: **X**

add to cart  **cancel**

For demonstration purposes in this How-to-Guide, I will use the Free Educator Pro account to create identities for each student and create a voicethread, where students can add comments and others around the world are invited to collaborate.



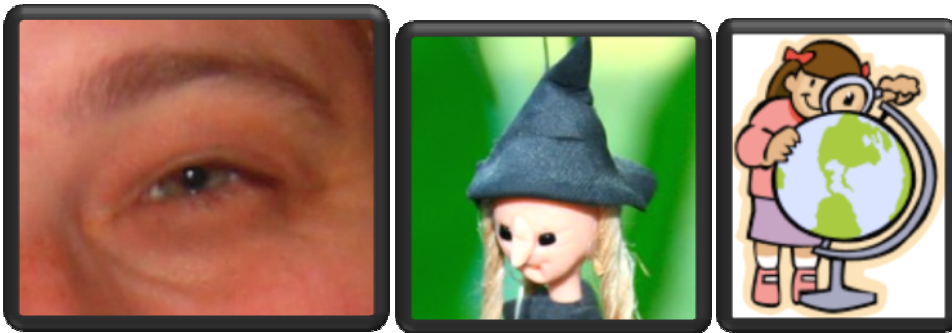
2. Adding an Identity and Avatar for each of your Student.

Once you have confirmed your own account, you can get started by editing your identity and adding an avatar that will represent your comments. You will also be able to create an identity for each one of your students under your main account.

To add and edit identities, go to "My Account" and click "Add an Identity".

An Avatar is a visual 'handle' or display appearance you use to represent yourself online.

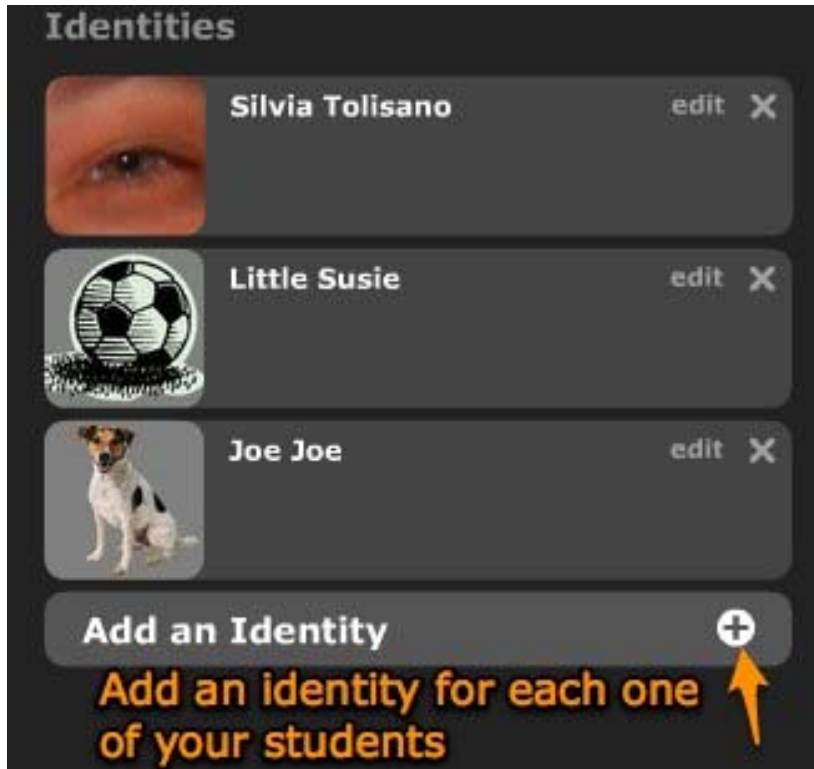
Examples of Avatars:



Upload an avatar for yourself, and then start adding different identities for your students. An avatar could be a clipart from the Microsoft clipart gallery, a drawing in KidPix or a scanned in illustration of students' art. Avatars should not be identifiable images such as full body or face photos. It is a great idea to have your students create an avatar at the beginning of the school year, in order for them to use it throughout on different projects.



Keep repeating the process of adding identities and avatars, until all your students have been added. In order to protect students' real life identities, you should use first names only.

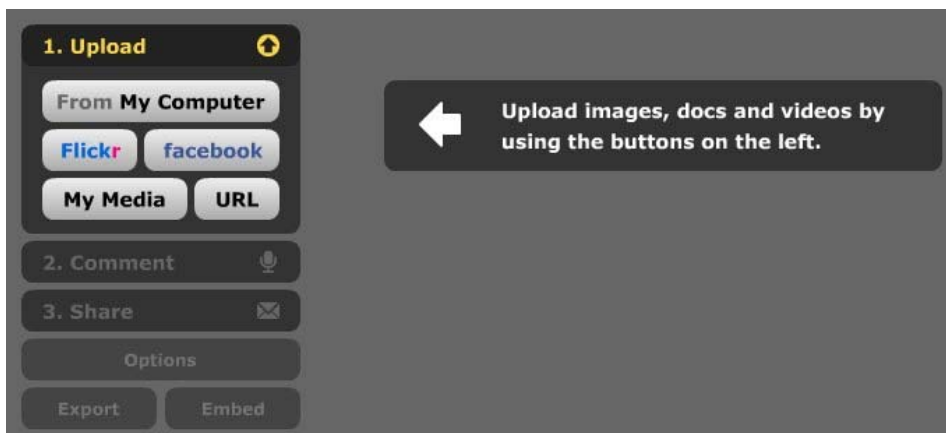


3. Creating and Adding media to your VoiceThread.

Click on the "Create" tab to start your VoiceThread.



Your first step is to upload the images, documents or videos that you want to include in your project. You can upload the files by browsing your computer, entering a specific URL or import them directly from Flickr or Facebook.



Once the images, documents or videos are uploaded, you can add titles or links (URL) to each slide.

1. Upload

From My Computer

Flickr facebook

My Media URL

2. Comment

3. Share

Options

Export Embed

replace

(add a title and link)

select an image, then add a title and/or a link or delete the image

Add a title and description Delete Thread

Click here to add title and description of your VoiceThread

Describe your VoiceThread

title: Mates of Argentina ✓

description:

tags:

Allows you to group VoiceThreads for searching.

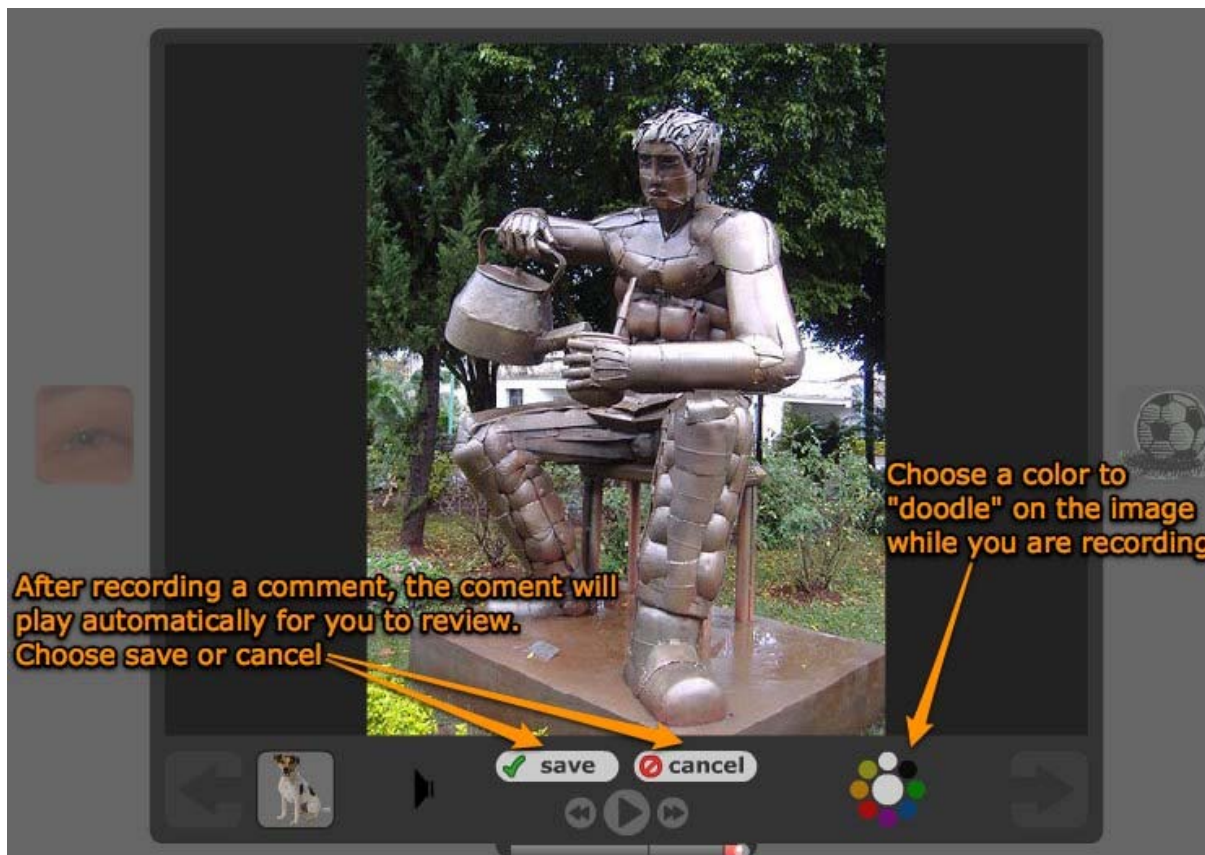
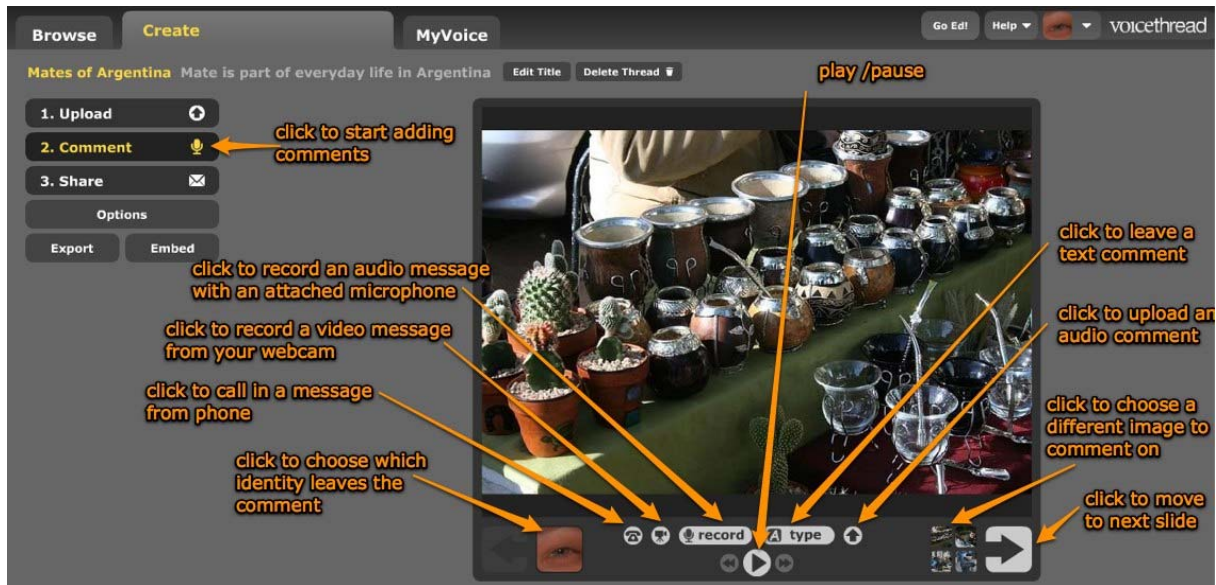
save



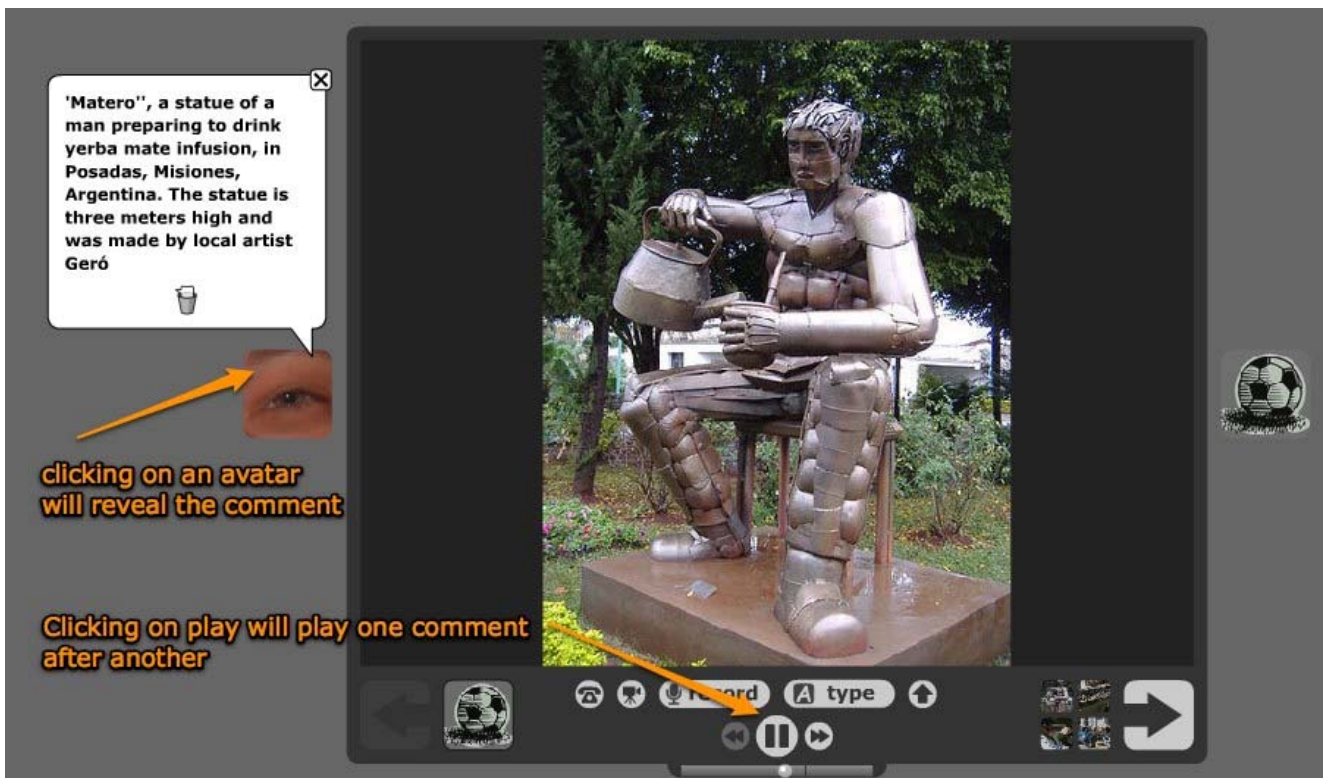
4. Adding Comments to your VoiceThread

You are able to choose “on” which image you want to leave an audio or written comment or message by clicking on that image. You then can choose the record button to directly record with an attached microphone, upload a previously recorded sound file or type a comment by pressing the “type” button. VoiceThread also allows the option to use a telephone to leave a comment or use a webcam to leave a video message.

Make sure you have the correct identity of each student selected before they are recording or typing the message, otherwise the comment will appear under the wrong avatar image.

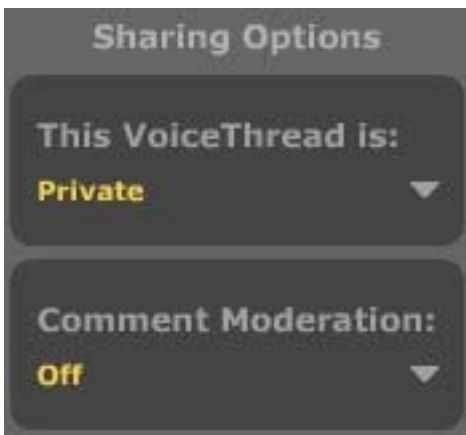
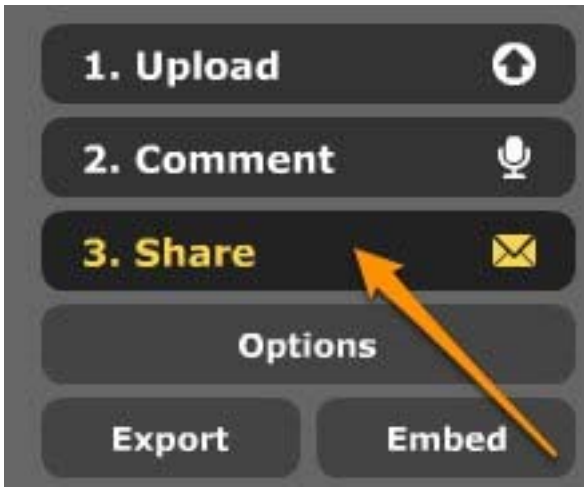


In order to select the correct avatar, simply click on the avatar square and switch to the student's identity that will be leaving a comment.

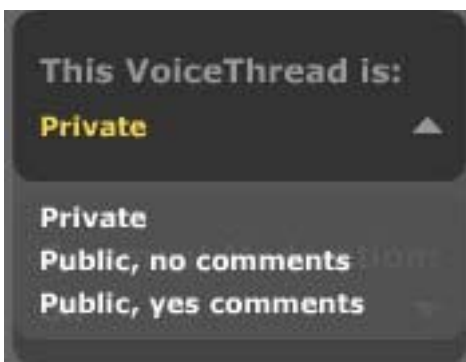


5. Sharing and Options

Clicking on Share, allows you to set various options for your VoiceThread.



You can set your VoiceThread to private, where no one is allowed to see, edit or comment on your VoiceThread besides you. You are able to invite selected people, who then will be able to see and comment on your VoiceThread. Choose between Comment Moderation on/off to be able to have control what kind of comments will appear on your VoiceThread.



If the VoiceThread is set to Public, no comments- everyone can see your VoiceThread, but is not allowed to leave a comment.

If the VoiceThread is set to Public, yes comments- everyone can see your VoiceThread, and is allowed to leave a comment.



It is a fine line in an educational setting to allow maximum freedom to receive maximum collaboration from people around the world who could contribute to your project. Depending on the age of your students, you can relax the options from private to public that allows comments from anyone. Leaving Comment Moderation on, always leaves you with a barrier to shield your students from inappropriate or non-constructive comments.

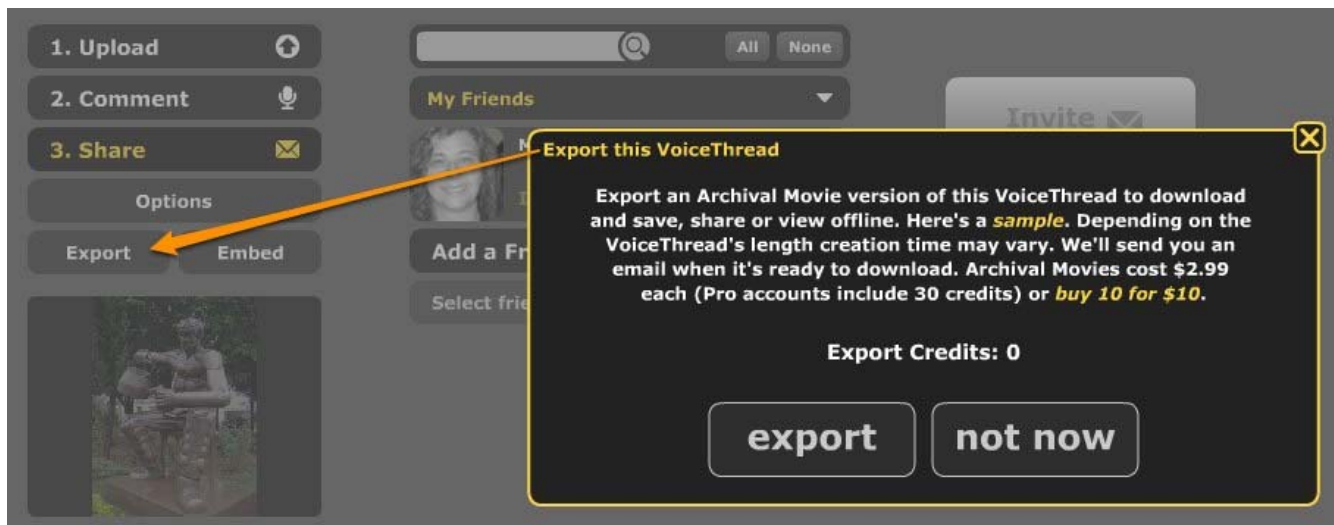
Under the Options menu, you will be able to customize your VoiceThread further.



6. Export and Embed your VoiceThread

The last step for your VoiceThread project is the option of exporting it or embedding it into your blog, website, wiki or other social network place of choice.

The Export feature gives you the ability to download a movie version of your VoiceThread to be able to share and show offline. With an Educator Pro Account, you will have to purchase the ability to export for \$2.99 each VoiceThread or 10 for \$10.00.



In order to embed or link to your VoiceThread in a website, blog, wiki or other Social Network site, click on the “Embed” button

The screenshot shows the VoiceThread interface with the 'Embed' button highlighted. An orange arrow points from the 'Embed' button to the 'Embed this VoiceThread' dialog box. The dialog box has a title 'Embed this VoiceThread' and a close button. It contains a 'Quick post:' section with various social media icons like iGoogle, MySpace, Friendster, Facebook, orkut, Bebo, Tagged, Blogger, Hi5, Live Spaces, Piczo, LiveJournal, BlackPlanet, Vox, Multiply, Pageflakes, MiGente, Comment, Freewebs, myYearbook, TypePad, Xanga, and Netvibes. Below this is an 'Or copy code:' section with a 'Copy' button and a text area containing the following code:

```
<object width="480" height="360"><param name="movie" value="http://voicethread.com/book.swf?b=158754"></param><param name="wmode" value="transparent"></param><embed src="http://voicethread.com/book.swf?b=158754" type="application/x-shockwave-flash" wmode="transparent" width="480" height="360"></embed></object>
```

An orange arrow points from the text 'Copy this code to embed in your blog or website' to this code block. Below the code block is a 'Copy' button. At the bottom of the dialog box, there is a text field containing the URL 'http://voicethread.com/share/158754/' and a 'Copy this' button. An orange arrow points from the text 'URL of your VoiceThread' to this URL field. At the very bottom of the dialog box is a large 'done' button. An orange arrow points from the text 'done' to this button.

Choose any of the icons to easily post to any of the Social Network sites listed or copy and paste the code or URL link directly in your website.



Create

- Create and choose your Identity
- Add Images, Documents, Videos
- Import directly from Flickr or Facebook

Comment

- Voice (with a microphone or telephone)
- Text
- Audio file
- Video (with a webcam)
- Doodle- Captures your drawing while you leave a voice comment

VoiceThread

Share

- Choose between different Settings (Private or Open) VoiceThreads
- Allow others to contribute
- Export as a stand alone movie
- Embed directly into website, blog or wiki