



# Teacher-Powered Schools Media Toolkit

*Created by*  
**Center for Teaching Quality, 2017**

## SOCIAL MEDIA

As a teacher-powered school, you have the chance to show off your amazing school and share your experiences publicly. Engaging with others teaching in teacher-powered schools and educating those interested in starting on their own teacher-powered journey are great ways to build connections and community.

**Engage with us!** Follow our accounts and comment, share, like, re-post, and re-Tweet! Find us on Twitter ([@teacherpowered](https://twitter.com/teacherpowered)) and Facebook ([Teacher-Powered Schools](https://www.facebook.com/Teacher-Powered-Schools)), and be sure to use **#teacherpowered** so we can find and share your posts. Have news, update, or an event you want promoted through the Teacher-Powered Schools accounts? Email Amy Julian at [ajulian@teachingquality.org](mailto:ajulian@teachingquality.org)

**New to social media?** Give it a try! Setting up a Twitter and Facebook account is easy and takes just a few minutes. Once you're signed up, check out this [tip sheet](#) and watch the Twitter for Teacher Leaders videos—[Connecting on Twitter](#) and [Hashtags Explained](#)—to get familiar.

Once your account has been created, add your bio, post about your experiences, and tag organizations and individuals—including your colleagues, administrators, district, and school.

**Not sure what to post?** Here are a few examples:

### Twitter

- What's a #teacherpowered school? Designed and run by teachers, inspired by students. Perhaps yours will be next [www.teacherpowered.org](http://www.teacherpowered.org)
- 83% of Americans believe teachers have know-how to make classrooms better. It's a #teacherpowered fact! Learn more: [www.teacherpowered.org](http://www.teacherpowered.org)
- Nearly 8 in 10 teachers believe #teacherpowered schools could work. I'm one of them! Learn more: [www.teacherpowered.org](http://www.teacherpowered.org)
- #Teacherpowered schools are run by those who know students best: teachers! Learn more: [www.teacherpowered.org](http://www.teacherpowered.org)

## Facebook

- Ever asked yourself what your school would look like if YOU were in charge? I have! As a #TeacherPowered leader, I believe school success should be put in the hands of those who know students best—the teachers! Learn more: [www.teacherpowered.org](http://www.teacherpowered.org)
- Did you know that 9 in 10 Americans agree teachers should have more authority in decision-making in schools? That's why I'm proud to work at a #TeacherPowered School—to change people's minds about what education is and what it can be. Learn more: [www.teacherpowered.org](http://www.teacherpowered.org)

## Post from events and convenings

- Quotes, photos, and videos of presenters and from sessions.
- Photos of yourself and colleagues learning, collaborating, and having a GREAT time!
- Your thoughts and experiences over the course of the event.

## #TeacherPowered Twitter chat

#TeacherPowered Twitter chats take place on the first Wednesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. EST and features a different topic (related to teacher-powered schools) each month. These chats are a great way for you to share your experiences, ask and answer questions, and connect with members of the teacher-powered community! Be sure to extend invitations to the chats to your colleagues and administrators—everyone is welcome!

Twitter chats can move very quickly, so don't worry if you feel like you missed something in the chat—all #teacherpowered chats are saved and shared through [Storify](https://storify.com). Don't worry if you join late or have to step off early, any participation is good!

## Setting up and managing a school account

When it comes to social media, the line between personal and professional use can sometimes become blurred. If you don't feel comfortable posting from your personal Twitter and Facebook accounts, consider setting up a professional, class, or school account.

Not only can Twitter and Facebook be great for personal use, they can also be instrumental in offering glimpses into schools. Sharing via social media can provide insight into your school and classrooms, spotlight the impact the teacher-powered model has on students, and show interactions between teachers and students and among teacher teams.

Here are a few tips for setting up your school accounts:

- Choose a name. For Facebook, the school name can serve as the account name (e.g. [Social Justice Humanitas Academy](#) and [Chrysalis Charter School](#)), but for Twitter, where account names come in the form of "handles," you may have to be creative (e.g. [@AvalonSchoolMN](#), [@BTUPilot](#), and [@HughesSTEMHS](#)).

- Assign more than one person permission to post on the school's behalf. When you're in the classroom, someone else could be posting from a meeting.
  - Use visuals! Photos and videos are great for spotlighting the teacher-powered impact on students; however, *district policies and state laws may restrict what can be shared*. Most schools require documented permission from students' guardians before photos can be posted—be sure to check with your school before sharing. The **VISUALS** section below has 5 tips for sharing photos while also protecting students' identities.
- 

## TRADITIONAL MEDIA

The teacher-powered schools movement is gaining momentum, and we need your help in spreading the word! As a member of your community, you can serve as a local contact for media outreach. Need ideas, advice, or support for contacting your local media? Email Amy Julian at [ajulian@teachingquality.org](mailto:ajulian@teachingquality.org).

Reaching out to and building relationships with media outlets is an ongoing process but is a very important component to effectively spread the word about the teacher-powered schools movement. When you work with the media, keep in mind that their job is to draw readers, viewers, and listeners by running relevant, compelling, and localized stories.

Here are a few considerations for building effective relationships with media:

- **Know the reporter.** Reporters typically have an issue they cover, and finding the best reporter—typically covers education—can be as simple as visiting an “about us” or “staff” page. Once you have established contact with one reporter, go back to that same reporter.
- **Be sensitive to deadlines.** Reporters usually work under tight deadlines and often need information quickly. It's ideal to reach out to reporters before 11 a.m. and be proactive about asking reporters for their deadlines so you're aware of them in the future. Also, communicate when YOU are free so they know when to reach you.
- **Return calls or emails promptly.** If a reporter shows interest in your pitch by calling you back, aim to follow up with them as soon as possible, keeping in mind they may have a deadline. Demonstrating your responsiveness is an effective way to build the relationship.

Pitching to media can be intimidating, but remember that this is how reporters get the majority of their stories. Here are a few tips for effectively pitching a teacher-powered story:

- **Create and practice your pitch.** Before picking up the phone, practice verbalizing your talking points. Make sure your pitch answers who, what, where, when, why, and how.
- **Make it relevant.** Make sure the story idea you are pitching is suitable for the media outlet and reporter you are pitching to. Emphasize the **NATIONAL** reach of the Teacher-Powered Schools Initiative and the fact that you teach at a **LOCAL** teacher-powered school.

- **Be clear, concise, and convincing.** Speak clearly and be sure to provide your name and reason for calling off the bat. If you have to leave a message, keep it short and sweet. Use language that teases the reporter with language that may pique their interest. *“I’d like to tell you about how teachers in our local community are transforming student learning and the teaching profession in new ways through teacher-powered schools.”*
- **If at first you don't succeed, try again.** Consider identifying several reporters or editors at that same outlet who might be interested in your story, and be sure to follow up.

Below are templates with general language about teacher-powered schools. *Please* feel free to insert your own quotes, details, experiences, and information—both about you *and* your school!

### Website blurb

“Across the country, a growing number of educators are transforming student learning and the teaching profession in new ways through teacher-powered schools. The teacher teams in more than 120 teacher-powered schools across the country—including here at **SCHOOL NAME**—have secured autonomy to design and run their schools and make decisions influencing school success and student learning. Learn more about the Teacher-Powered Schools Initiative at [www.teacherpowered.org](http://www.teacherpowered.org).”

Share your pride by featuring one of the badges below on your website and show the world that your school is officially teacher-powered!



### Newsletter copy

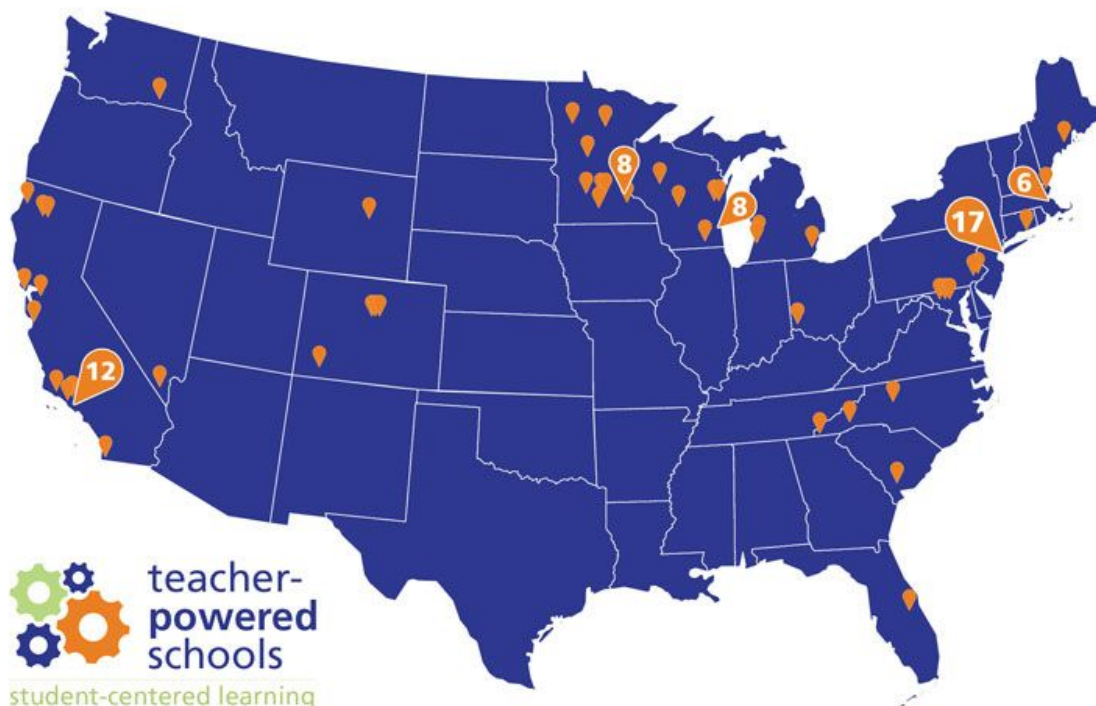
“Across the country, a growing number of educators are transforming student learning and the teaching profession in new ways through teacher-powered schools. In these schools, teacher

teams have secured autonomy to design and run their schools and make decisions influencing school success and student learning.

There are currently more than 120 teacher-powered schools across the country—including **SCHOOL NAME** in **CITY, STATE**—serving students from preschool to age 21 in urban, suburban, and rural settings. Learn more about the Teacher-Powered Schools Initiative at [www.teacherpowered.org](http://www.teacherpowered.org)!

Share the map to show you're a part of a growing movement!

## More than 120 teacher-powered schools are operating in 18 states



### News release

Across the country, a growing number of educators are transforming student learning and the teaching profession in new ways through teacher-powered schools. In these schools, teacher

teams have secured autonomy to design and run their schools and make decisions influencing school success and student learning.

The teacher team at **SCHOOL NAME**—which has been teacher-powered since **YEAR**—has secured autonomy to design and run the schools and make decisions influencing school success, including curriculum, budget, and selecting personnel.

**INSERT YOUR QUOTE.** Example: *“Teacher-powered schools put a new spin on the concept of ‘teacher leadership’,” said John Smith, first grade teacher at ABC School. “The idea behind our school is to put the success into the hands of those who know and understand our students best—the teachers.”*

The Teacher-Powered Schools Initiative is a joint project of [Education Evolving](#) and the [Center for Teaching Quality](#). For more information and for a complete list of teacher-powered schools, visit [www.teacherpowered.org/inventory](http://www.teacherpowered.org/inventory). For more information about **SCHOOL NAME**, please visit **WEBSITE**.

---

## VISUALS

Social media posts, newsletter pieces, write-ups, and news items are all made more interesting through visual content. Images and videos convey stories and create connections instantly; they personalize information, statistics, and ideas.

If planning to share content directly from your classroom(s) and/or school, be sure to consider involving parents and guardians in that process. Invite them to participate by sharing and interacting with posts. Be sure to explain your motive for connecting your classroom or school and how that connects to learning for students.

[This letter](#) provides a template for how a classroom teacher and school leader can communicate with families and seek explicit permission for sharing photos and videos through social media. It should be modified to fit specific needs based on the platform and purpose for sharing. (*Note the brackets [ ] that identify where specific information would need to be added/modified to fit specific purpose.*)

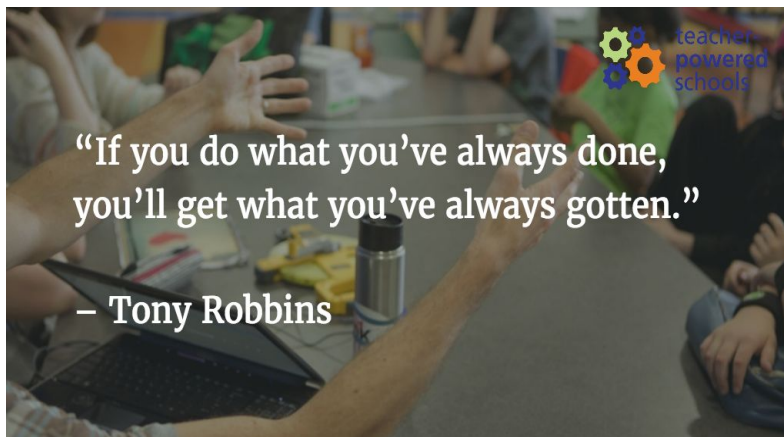
Visuals are a powerful way to share the story of your school—but publically posting pictures of students can be tricky. If you haven’t yet received permission from families or if student identities need to be concealed, you can still create strong storytelling images. Here are a few ways to harness the power of visual storytelling—and maintain student’s safety and anonymity online.



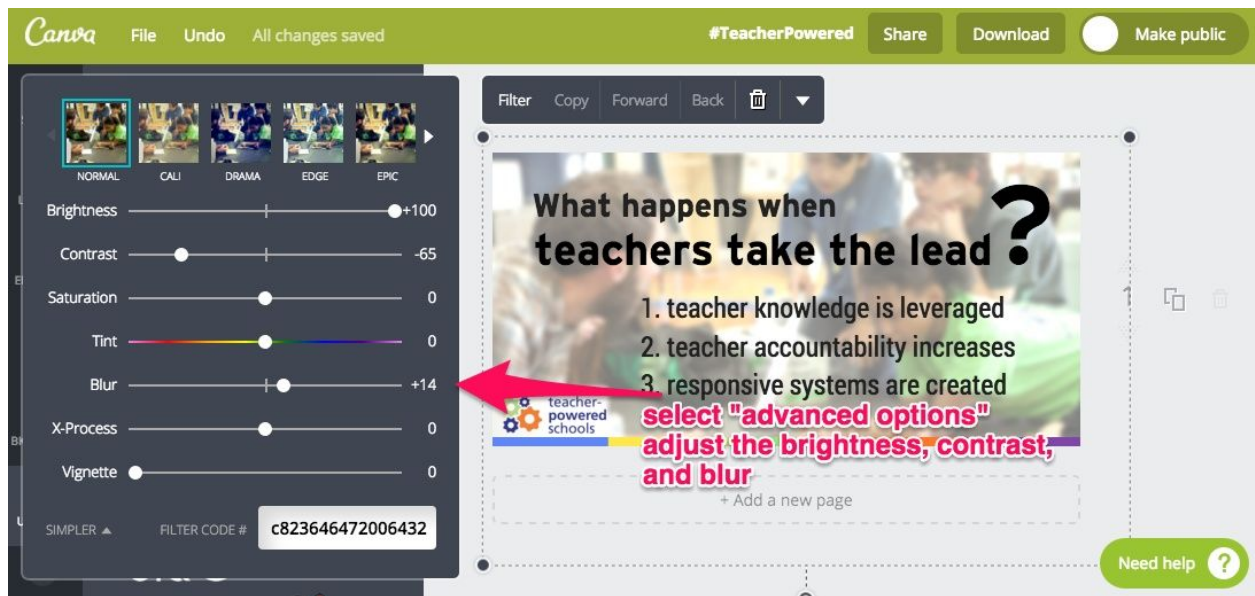
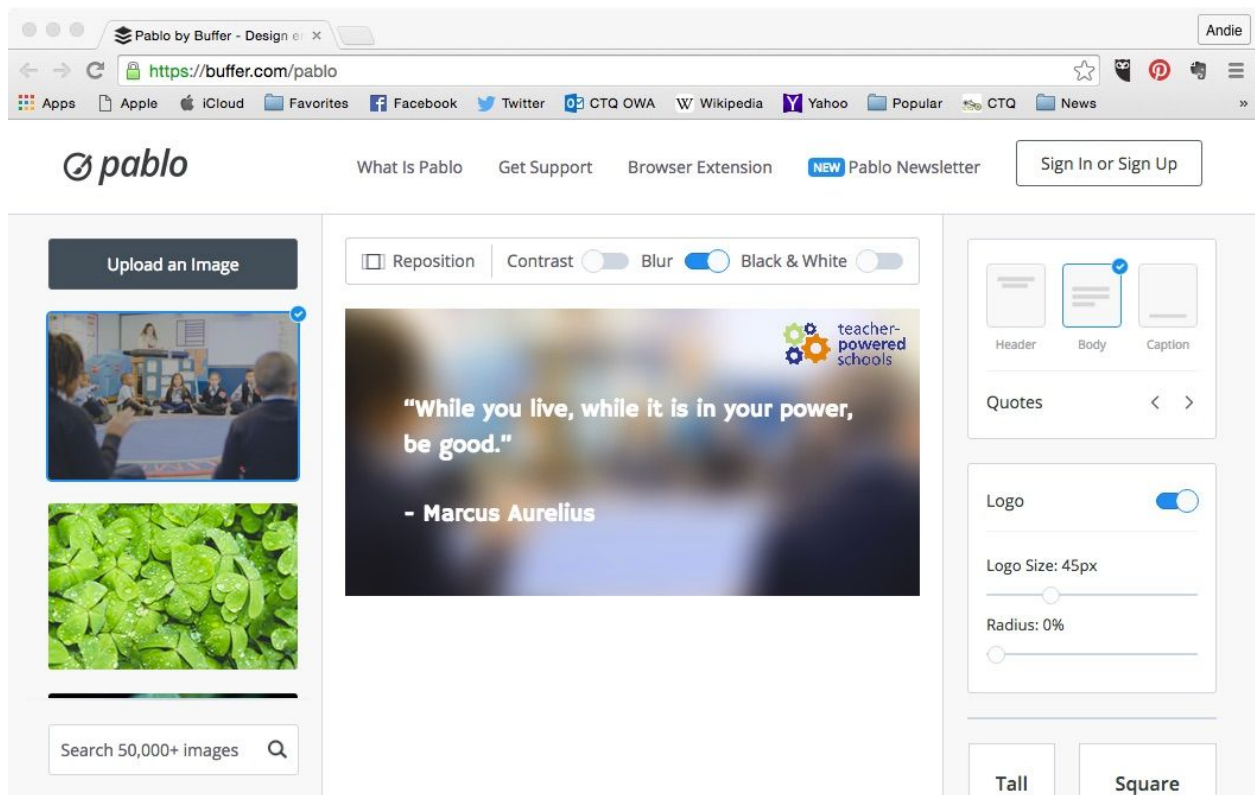
## Here are 5 ways you can have powerful visual content *and* protect students' identities:



**1. Get close.** Detail shots—such as a close up of student's hands working on a project or feet walking through the hallway—can tell a compelling visual story.



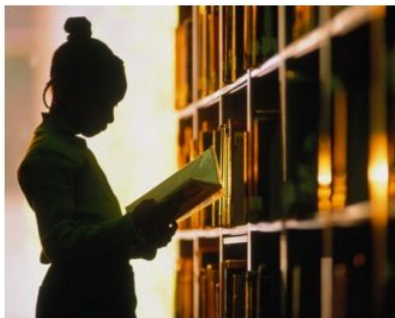
**2. Blur it out.** I know, I know... you strived to get that shot perfectly in focus. But a subtle blur can be a useful technique—especially paired with text—in sharing images that are easily identified as students but doesn't reveal their individual faces. [Pablo](#) and [Canva](#) are two great online tools you can use to achieve this effect.



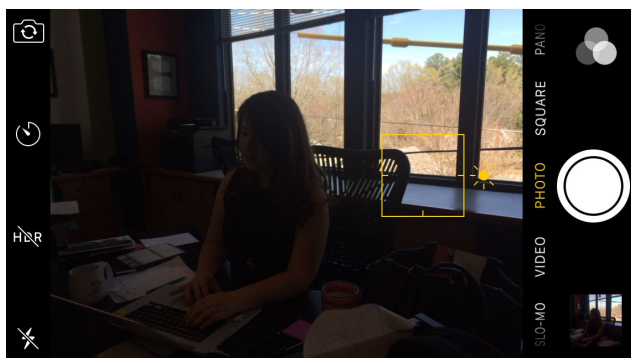




**SMARTPHONE HACK:** You can also achieve a “blur effect” by utilizing your smartphone’s depth of field. Try it yourself! Hold a “thumbs up” 4-5 inches in front of your camera. Your camera will autofocus on the object closest to it—which will “blur” your background subjects. Smartphones have a very small depth of field—so you must have your lens very close to the subject to achieve this effect.



**3. Backlight.** Backlight is another technique that, when done tastefully, can capture silhouettes that are easily recognized as students without revealing their individual identities. To do this correctly, the students will need to be in front of a bright light source (such as a window).



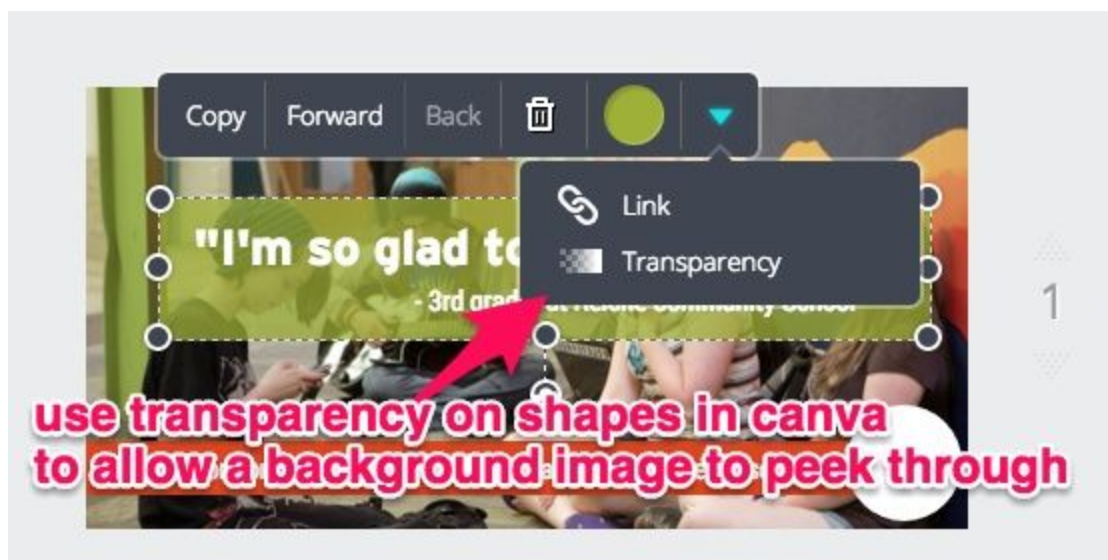
**SMARTPHONE HACK:** Most smartphones will automatically try and prevent this, but you can “trick” your phone into creating this effect by touching the lightest part of the screen.

**4. Over the shoulder shot.** Commonly used in cinematography to establish empathy with the subject, over-the-shoulder shots are not only visually interesting, but they also conveniently conceal the identity of the subject.





**5. Strategically placed text or graphics.** Camouflage a student's face with a strategically placed textbox or other artwork.



Gathering great images is the base to creating compelling visual content—but it's only the start! Now incorporate those visuals in a variety of other mediums to share the story of your school in a powerful way.



## FREE Tools

For all online tools, it is recommended that you use the latest version of Chrome or Firefox.

Tools for Designing Images & Graphics	
Tools	Tips & Tricks
<a href="#">Piktochart</a> Best for creating infographics with large amounts of information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Plan, plan, and plan some more! Layout your data and determine your story BEFORE you start designing. Check out this layout cheat sheet to help you determine the best layout for your content.</li><li>• For more tips, check out Piktochart's <a href="#">helpful video series</a> for beginners.</li></ul>
<a href="#">Canva</a> Most useful for creating “snack sized” and highly shareable visual content such as blog graphics, presentation slides, and graphics for social media.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Check out the <a href="#">Canva design school</a> for tips and tricks, and even materials for using Canva in the classroom.</li><li>• Read <a href="#">tips and tricks</a> from CTQ blogger (and <a href="#">Canva lover</a>) Bill Ferriter</li></ul>
<a href="#">Pablo</a> Pablo is a boiled down, basic version of Canva. Best for creating highly-sharable social graphics in minutes.	
<b>Powerpoint</b> While not free, powerpoint is a software many people already have and use. What most people don't know, is that powerpoint can be a powerful graphic design program.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Checkout these <a href="#">free templates</a> for creating infographics in powerpoint.</li></ul>

Tools for Designing Websites & Digital Newsletters	
Tools	Tips & Tricks
<a href="#"><u>AdobeSlate</u></a> Best for creating text-and-photo-based scrolling web pages, such as a mini-magazine or newsletter.	Don't forget to provide your audience with a clear next steps via a concise call-to-action
<a href="#"><u>Smore</u></a> An online flyer and newsletter design tool—but, with such an simple interface, the possibilities are endless.	Checkout these <a href="#"><u>classroom uses</u></a>

Tools for Creating Videos	
Tools	Tips & Tricks
<a href="#"><u>AdobeVoice</u></a> Easily use your voice to narrate an animated video. Use this tool to pitch an idea, explain a concept or inspire action. (app available for download on iPhone or iPad only)  HS <a href="#"><u>Student Example 1</u></a> : Film Analysis <a href="#"><u>Promotional video</u></a> of this used in classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The optimal length for video marketing content? As short as possible. Try and keep videos less than 2.5 minutes (even shorter if possible!)</li> <li>• Our ears are worse critics than our eyes. Ensure you are in a quiet place when doing an audio recording.</li> </ul>
<a href="#"><u>iMovie</u></a> Although not free, this tool is an easy and powerful way to create movies layered with images, video clips, music, and/or audio voice-over. (app available for download on iPhone, iPad, or Macbook only)	Here's a <a href="#"><u>video tutorial</u></a> on using iMovie on the iPad  Here's a <a href="#"><u>storyboard template</u></a> to plan project before taking images and video clips.

---

## Questions? Reach out to the communications team at CTQ:

Media and Marketing — Amy Julian, [ajulian@teachingquality.org](mailto:ajulian@teachingquality.org)

Created by the Center for Teaching Quality, 2016

