

Getting started with ArcGIS StoryMaps

This document contains step-by-step instructions on how to create and publish a StoryMap using ArcGIS StoryMaps – our new StoryMap application.

What is a StoryMap?

ArcGIS StoryMaps is like a PowerPoint...but better! StoryMaps helps you to communicate content – or ‘stories’ – with the assistance of custom maps, text, images and videos. This combination leads to an immersive and interactive experience that guides your audience through a digital narrative.

The use of StoryMaps gives your narrative a stronger sense of place, illustrates spatial relationships, and adds visual appeal and credibility to your ideas. It’s a surefire way to engage your students in the classroom and improve their – and your – technological literacy at the same time.

Even if you don’t have a map that you would like to use, Story Maps is still a fantastic platform for creating engaging learning materials, making it perfect for a range of subjects, in addition to Geography.

ArcGIS StoryMaps versus Classic StoryMaps

There are currently two StoryMap websites available for teachers: [Classic StoryMaps](#) and our new [ArcGIS StoryMaps](#). What version should you use?

If you **have never** used Esri’s Classic StoryMaps, it is recommended you jump right in with the use of our new ArcGIS StoryMaps. If you **have** worked with Classic StoryMaps, it’s likely you have some favourite storytelling templates and features you’ve grown accustomed to.

Whilst you will be able to continue to *create* and *edit* stories in Classic StoryMaps until 2024, it is recommended that you make the leap and give the new ArcGIS StoryMaps a go; the new application incorporates classic templates in a single story builder, giving you the flexibility to mix ‘n’ match your storytelling patterns.

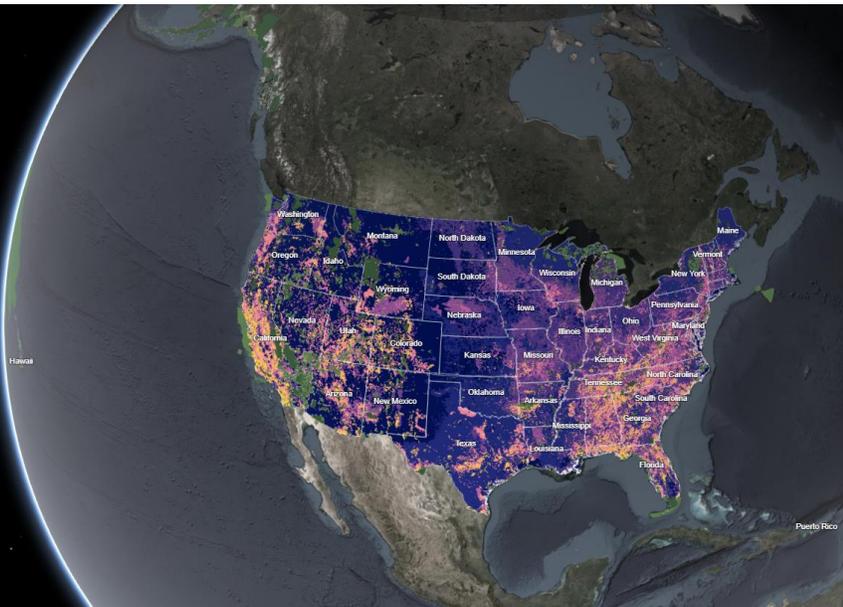


To summarise the timeline, Classic StoryMap builders will be available until July 2024. After July 2021, only critical maintenance updates will be made to Classic StoryMaps. After July 2024, you will not be able to build new StoryMaps on the classic platform however, you will still be able to access pre-existing stories that you have created. To learn more about deadlines for Classic StoryMaps, click [here](#).

NatureServe recently unveiled the Map of Biodiversity Importance (MoBI), an innovative tool for identifying critical areas for species conservation.

Building on habitat suitability models for 2,216 of the nation's most imperiled species, coupled with information on range size and degree of protection derived from those models, the Map of Biodiversity Importance project provides a series of maps for the Lower 48 United States— 15 in all—that can help inform conservation efforts.

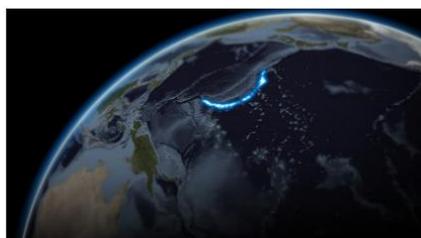
The brightest colors on the map indicate where multiple imperiled species co-occur, and are *not* already safeguarded by our current protected areas estate. This map also takes into account the geographic range of each species, so that plants and animals with limited distributions—and therefore fewer opportunities for conservation actions—are weighted more heavily than wide ranging species.



A look at the new ArcGIS StoryMaps: The Map of Biodiversity Importance: An Overview by NatureServe (accessible here: <https://arcg.is/1SDTaj>)

What are we reading?

You can find inspiration by visiting some of our favourite Story Maps. All images below are hyperlinked. Click any to visit the StoryMap online.



How deep is Challenger Deep?

John Nelson

Explore the lowest point on the Earth's crust, Challenger Deep, located within the already-deep Mariana Trench in the western Pacific Ocean.

[View the story](#)



Coastal flooding

NOAA/NOS, Old Dominion University, Esri

Learn how coastal communities are being impacted by sea level rise and about the data that can help.

[View the story](#)



(Farm) Animal Planet

Esri's StoryMaps team

Take a look at livestock production around the world and consider the consequences of increasing demand.

[View the story](#)

Alternatively, you can access the full gallery of ArcGIS StoryMaps [here](#).

What should your StoryMap be about?

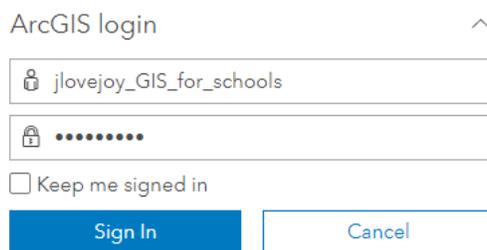
Your StoryMap can be about anything. You may choose to build a StoryMap about a topic you are interested in or you may choose to build a StoryMap that aligns with the ACARA Geography curriculum:

- *Year 7 Unit 1: Water in the World* – explore the water cycle, global water sources, or how water is valued and used in different countries and cultures.
- *Year 8 Unit 1: Landforms and landscapes* – investigate geomorphic processes shaping Uluru or how human activity is affecting beaches.
- *Year 9 Unit 1: Biomes and food security* – examine how humans alter biomes to produce food and materials or how challenges like land degradation and climate change threatens food production.
- *Year 10 Unit: Geographies of human wellbeing* – explore modern slavery or the link between education and birth rates.

Getting started

This instructional guide will walk you through how to create a StoryMap using ArcGIS StoryMaps. You can compare your progress to one that we prepared earlier by visiting <https://arcg.is/1LH4qu>.

1. Visit <https://storymaps.arcgis.com/> and sign in using your ArcGIS Online username and password.



ArcGIS login

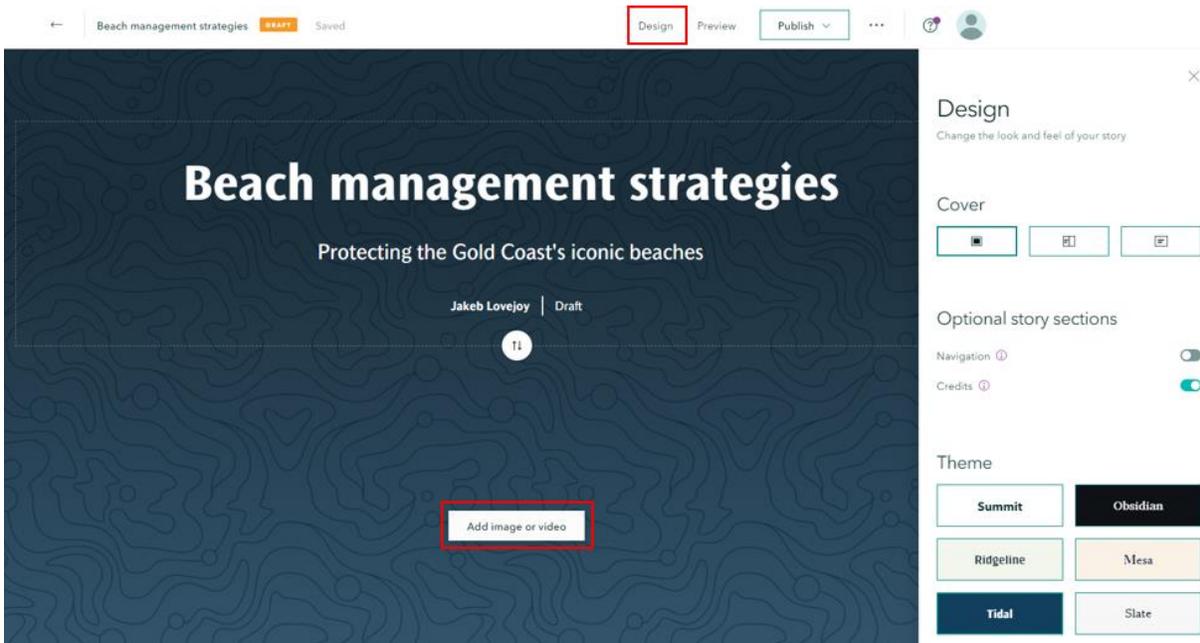
Keep me signed in

2. Once you have logged in, click **New Story** in the top-right corner of the webpage.



+ New story

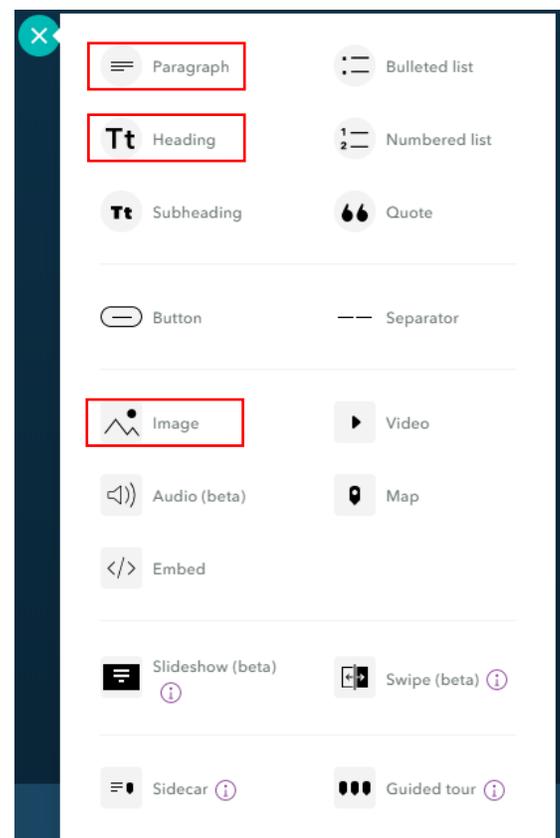
3. Enter a title and sub-title (optional). This is the first thing your audience will see. Set the tone and make it more appealing by clicking on **Design** to customize your font, theme and colours. You can also add an image or video.



4. Scroll down to begin your story. Click on the '+ Tell your story...' icon to begin creating your story. You will be presented with a range of options for adding text and media. The Slideshow, Swipe, Sidecar and Guided tour options allow you to combine media, maps and text for an immersive experience.

Add a heading, introductory paragraph and image to get started. Press the + icon each time you want to add a new feature.

You can continue to mix and match the various text, formatting and media tools to make a story that is completely unique and that meets your needs.

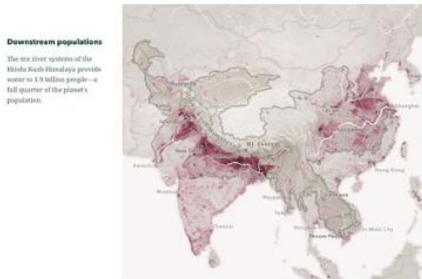


After you have added heading, sub-heading and image, your StoryMap should look like this:



5. Click on the + icon again. You will now select from either the Slideshow, Sidecar or Guided tour templates. Click on the information icon to obtain an insight into each template. By doing this, you will be better equipped to choose the template that will suit your narrative best.





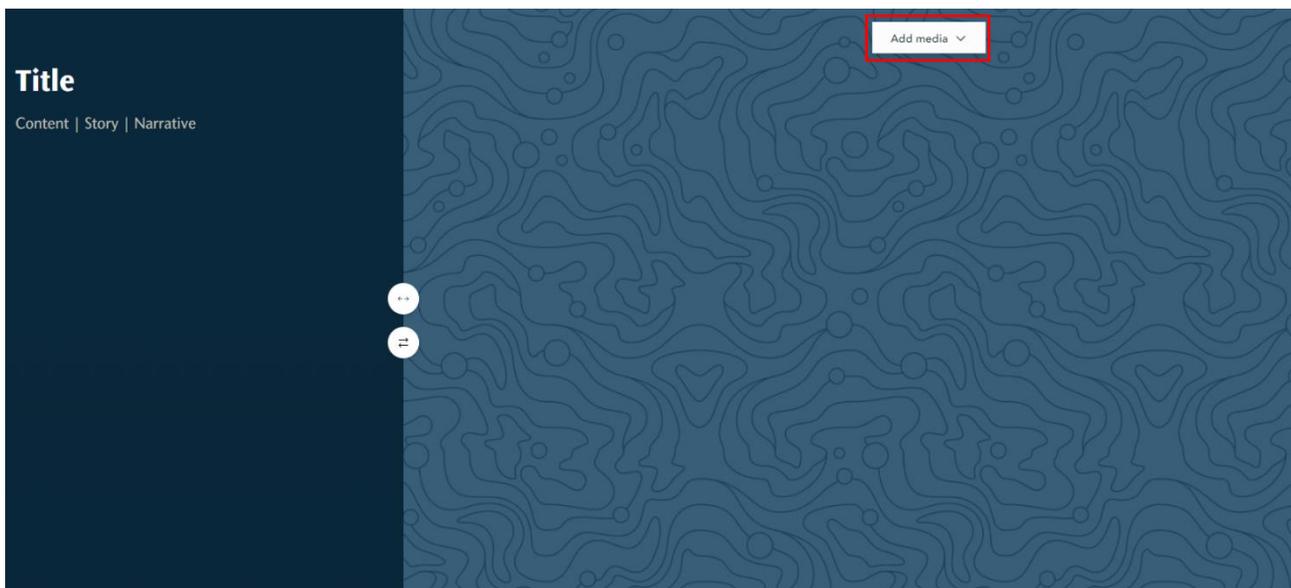
In our StoryMap, we have chosen to go with a docked panel sidecar template. If you accidentally add the wrong template, or decide that another one might be better suited, you can click on the **bin** icon to delete it from your StoryMap.



Docked panel

The narrative panel and the media are positioned side by side. This is recommended for long narrative content.

6. Continue to add to your story. You can use the + icon in the left-hand column to continue to utilise text, media and formatting tools. In the right-hand side, you can add a range of media types. Choose to add a map.

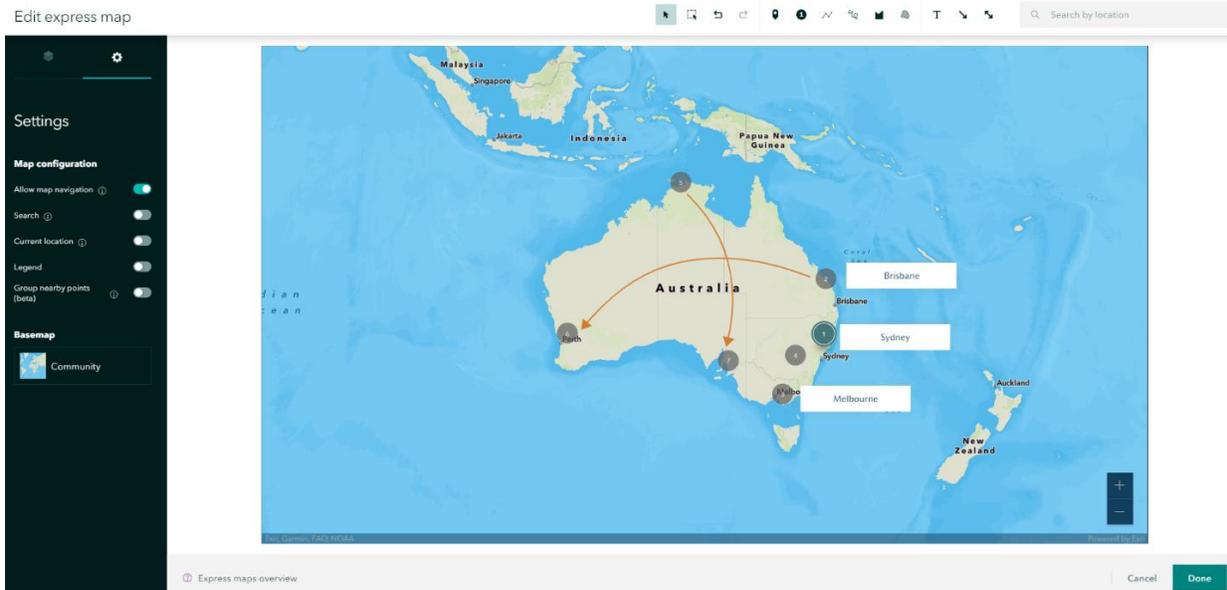


7. Click 'New express map' in the top-right corner. This allows you to create a map on the fly. Alternatively, you can also choose from any map that you have created in ArcGIS Online or from the Living Atlas.

+ New express map

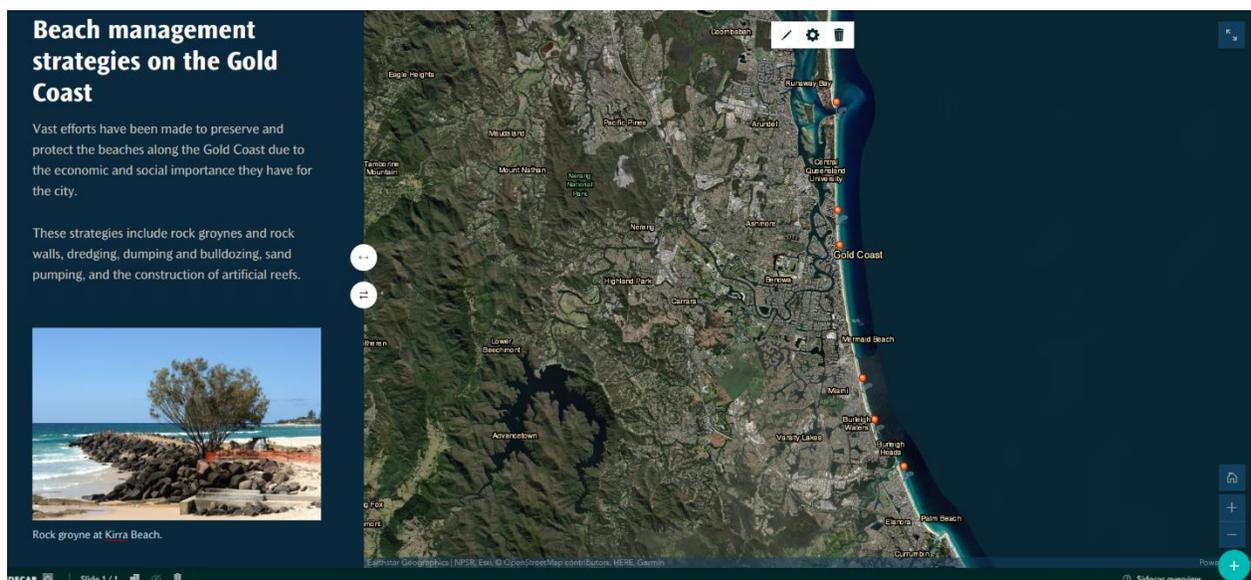
8. Edit your express map.

- Add points, text and lines using the toolbar at the top.
- Search for a specific location using the search bar.
- Enable a legend or change your basemap in the Settings pane to the left.
- Swap from the Settings tab to the Layers tab to name your layers and add additional images.

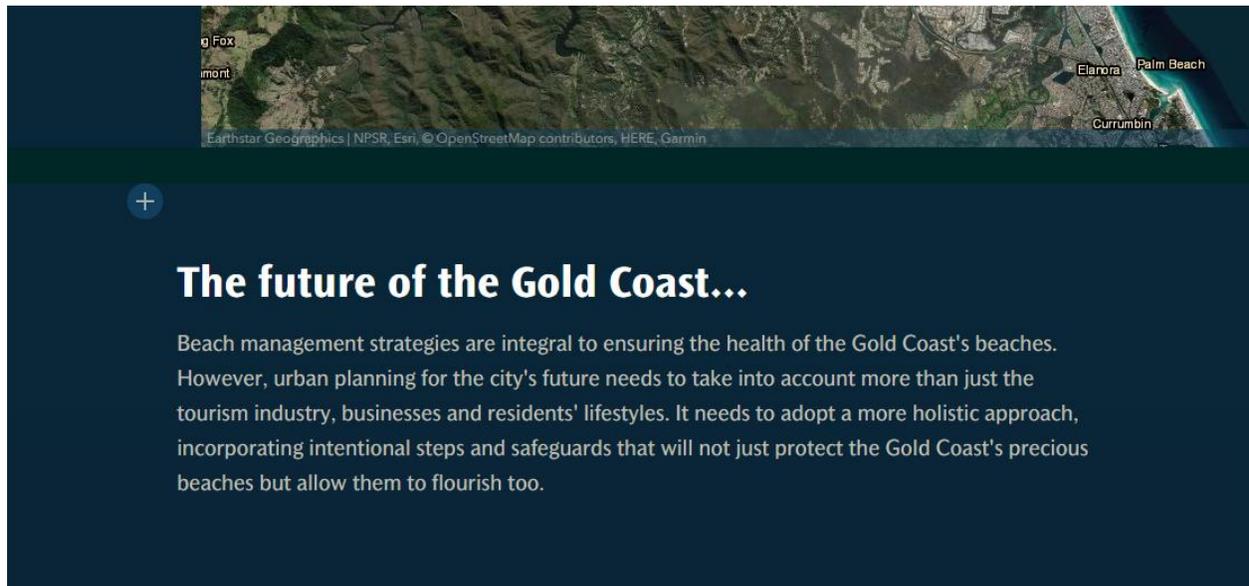


Once you've finished creating an express map – or adding other media – click **Done**.

9. You have now created your first slide in the sidecar. Although the content will be different, it should look like the image below. Continue to add slides to your Sidecar template by clicking on the + icon in the bottom-right corner. You can add as many as you need. Experiment by adding new maps and different types of media.



10. Once you have completed your Sidecar segment, simply scroll down to continue with your StoryMap. You can add additional content as you see fit by simply clicking on the '+' icon.



11. A reference section also exists at the bottom of every StoryMap. If you choose to populate this section, it will appear at the tail of your StoryMap. If you leave it blank, it will not be visible to your audience.

References

Images

Beach erosion near the Palm Beach Surf Live Saving Club. (1954). Accessed from:
<http://www.goldcoaststories.com.au/the-cyclone-of-1954/>

Coastal erosion, heavy flooding forecast for Pacific (2015). Accessed from: <https://www.sbs.com.au/news/coastal-erosion-heavy-flooding-forecast-for-pacific>

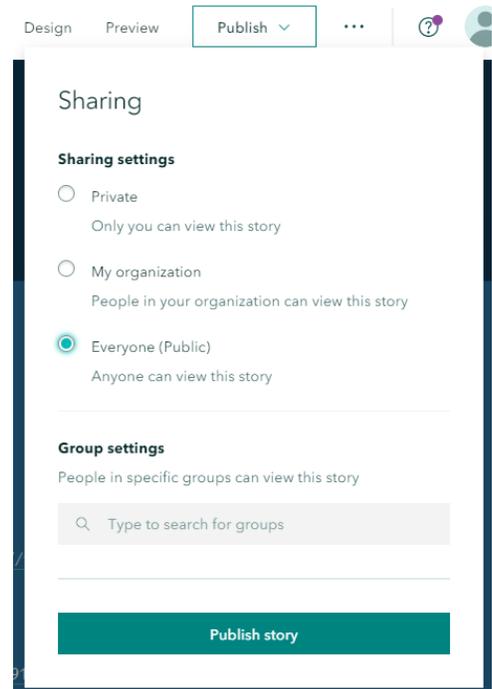
Erosion at Surfers Paradise following severe storms. (2009). Accessed from:
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Erosion_Surfers_Paradise-10and_\(3569193237\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Erosion_Surfers_Paradise-10and_(3569193237).jpg)

Publishing and sharing your StoryMap

Now that you have completed your StoryMap, you simply need to publish it and share the link so that your intended audience can view it.

1. Click **Publish** to enable a drop-down menu. Specify your sharing settings. If you only wish to share with your class, or teachers and students from your school, choose 'My Organization'. If you wish to share it with the public, choose 'Everyone'. Note: if you choose to keep it private, you will not be able to share it with others. Click **Publish story** once you have specified your sharing settings.

ArcGIS StoryMaps will automatically check your story for any potential issues. If there are any present, it will identify the issue for you and alert you to it. You are still able to publish the story with issues however, this may mean that certain features may not be viewable e.g. a YouTube video.



2. Share your map by clicking on the 'Link' icon. By doing so, it will automatically copy the StoryMap url. You can paste this url into a document or an email to share with colleagues and students.



Even though you have published and shared your StoryMap, you can go back and edit it at any time. The new ArcGIS StoryMaps saves as you go too so you do not have to worry about losing your work in the event of an internet dropout.

StoryMaps: a perfect tool for the classroom

StoryMaps really are the perfect tool for the classroom. They serve to deliver content-based learning in a dynamic and immersive way as students and classes can investigate media and interactive maps in one cloud-based location without ever having to leave the webpage.

They also present a new format for which senior geography students can present their field and data reports. This allows you – as their assessor – to interact with their maps in a dynamic way, rather than looking through static images, text and diagrams.

Next Steps:

Request a free ArcGIS Online Account for your school:

Australian schools can request a free ArcGIS Online account as part of Esri Australia's Classroom GIS Initiative. A school subscription provides additional map layers, content, features and privacy. Learn more about ArcGIS Online, and apply for your ArcGIS Online School subscription at <http://esriaustralia.com.au/education>

Speak to Esri Australia's Education Program Manager:

Australian schools can seek additional support or speak to our Education Program Manager by emailing education@esriaustralia.com.au.