

## **Introduction to Variables in Articulate Storyline**

**Age:** 18+ / **Intended Audience:** Higher Ed or Workplace Training

**Content Area:** E-Learning Authoring Tools

**Overview:** This is a lesson for any learner interested in gaining knowledge on how to use variables in Articulate Storyline. It is important for the learners to have a basic understanding of how “triggers” work in Storyline before going through this lesson. The verbiage and activities are more catered to learners that are 18 and older. This could be used in a higher ed or workplace training environment and is designed to be online and synchronous, but it could be easily adjusted to in-person if needed. In this lesson, learners will be introduced to the concept of variables and get to practice using them in a breakout activity. After the breakout activity, learners will discuss how the activity went and share any tips or tricks they found to help them in the future.

**Time to complete:** 1 Hour

### **Materials Needed**

- Laptop
- Access to Articulate Storyline
- Storyline Example file
- Headset/microphone
- (Facilitator Only) - Presentation file to follow along with lesson plan

### **Student Learning Outcomes or Topics Covered**

- Learners will gain an understanding of what variables are and how they are helpful in Articulate Storyline.
- Learners will practice how to compose a plan when thinking about variable interactions.
- Learners will display the ability to plan out an interaction and put variables to use.

### **Step-by-Step Description of the Lesson**

**Note:** For all activities, if questions come up, take the time to address them. If the question relates to something later in the course, be sure not to jump ahead. If the question is far off-topic, save it and follow up with that learner later.

## **Activity 1: Lecture / What Are Variables, and Why They Are Useful**

**Time: 5 Minutes**

Instructor Resources Needed:

- *Have a presentation ready that covers the basics of variables*
- *Have a Storyline project that demo's final product of variable interactions*

1. Using a presentation, introduce the basic concepts of variables in Storyline. They are programmed through the triggers section in the Storyline. Explain that they can be programmed in 3 different ways,
  - a. number values
  - b. true/false
  - c. or text
2. Variables give you more control over interactions in Storyline and allow you to design features that create a more engaging or interactive experience for the user.
3. Provide broad examples as to why these can be helpful.
  - a. *(Instructor Note: Have a Storyline project that demo's a few of these ready to help illustrate these points)*
  - b. Capturing a name and using it throughout the course
  - c. Causing elements to appear on a slide after users have completed steps
  - d. Programming in math for unique situations
  - e. Programming complex interactions
  - f. Locking down navigation for learners, to name a few.
4. We will get into how to do some of these things with the activity we have planned later.

*Instructor Note: Do a pulse check to ensure everyone is on track and fill in any gaps in knowledge if needed.*

## **Activity 2: Lecture/ Planning your Variable Interaction**

**Time: 10 Minutes**

Instructor Resources Needed:

- *Have a presentation ready that shows screenshots of the example course, planning steps, and variable names*

1. **Say:** Let's look at an interaction we can set up using variables in Storyline. For now, try your best not to focus on the "how to" in the tool just yet, and let's just try and plan out how the variables will interact. For this example, we will look at a course with a main navigation page, three lessons, and a knowledge check.

Planning out interactions with variables can become confusing quickly, so it is essential to think of a workflow to help the whole interaction make sense to you. Some people prefer to write it out with pencil and paper. Some digital tools can also help with planning, Miro is a tool that can allow you to draw relationships between multiple variables quickly.

2. **Ask:** This course has a knowledge check, but if we just leave it open for the user to jump to, what could happen with this course?
  - a. **Expected Response:** Users will jump to the knowledge check without taking the course. This could cause frustration, or the learner will not get the information they need.
3. **Say:** That's correct! We can use variables to help create "guardrails" for the user so they have to complete the lessons before moving on to the knowledge check. Storyline allows us to make an object appear only if variables are a specific value.

For this situation, we can create variables that help track the completion using a finish button at the end of each lesson. We can tie multiple actions to the finish button, This means we can make the course go back to the main menu AND adjust a variable simultaneously.

We will need three different variables, 1 for each lesson. For the sake of this example, let's call them.

- KCShow\_Lesson1Completed
- KCShow\_Lesson2Completed
- KCShow\_Lesson3Completed

We are going to set these as "True/False" variables and make their default value False.

4. **Ask:** Why do you think I have suggested the naming conventions listed here?

- a. **Expected Response:** Having a naming convention may help organize the variables, especially if the project has many different variables being used.
5. **Say:** That's right; no matter the project size, it is good to think of a naming convention for your variables. If you happen to use multiple variables for one slide or purpose, then putting a tag on the front will make them easier to find in your project later.

### **Activity 3: Modeling / Demonstration of how to create a variable in Storyline.**

**Time: 10 Minutes**

Resources Needed:

- *Storyline 360 Access*
  - *Storyline Example file that mirrors the course layout from the example in the lecture.*
1. The instructor will share the Storyline program and demonstrate how learners can create a variable through the "Trigger Wizard" option in Storyline.
    - a. The Instructor should advise learners to open the example file and follow along.
  2. *Specific steps for the instructor in Storyline: If using another example, feel free to adjust*

Create a trigger on a button > Make it so that "When user clicks button, Adjust variable X to True"

- Set up variable X to be a true/false variable.

Create another trigger on the same button > Create it so " When user clicks button, it jumps to Main navigation slide"

When creating the variable, make it a true/false variable similar to the one discussed beforehand.

### **Activity 4: Breakout Activity / Learners create the interaction using variables**

**Time: 20 Minutes**

Resources Needed:

- *Storyline 360 Access*
  - *Storyline Example file that mirrors the course layout from the example in the lecture*
1. Breakout Activity Instructions
    - a. You will be split into groups of 2 or 3
    - b. Your goal during the activity is to fully program the example file provided so that the knowledge check icon on the main navigation page only appears after completing all three lessons.
    - c. Everyone in the group should complete the activity. If you get stuck, ask your group for help. If your group can't figure it out, contact the instructor.
    - d. If you finish early, brainstorm other ways to use variables or find other resources that elaborate more on how variables can be used in Storyline.
  2. The instructor starts going into breakout groups after 5 minutes to check on progress and see if anyone needs assistance.

### **Activity 5: Breakout Debrief Discussion / Learners talk through lessons learned**

**Time: 10 Minutes**

1. The instructor leads a conversation about how the activity went for the learners, answers questions, and addresses any concerns.

#### ***Suggested Questions:***

- Did anyone have any issues they found resolutions to that they want to share?
- Are there any tips or tricks that you discovered during the activity?
- For those that were able to look for resources, what did you find?
- Was anyone able to brainstorm any other creative ways on how to use variables?

### **Activity 6: Modeling / Troubleshooting Variables**

**Time: 5 Minutes**

Resources Needed:

- *Storyline 360 Access*
- *Storyline example file*

1. **Say:** In some cases, you might not be sure if your variables are actually changing depending upon how you programmed them. There is a way while you are previewing the course to see what your variable is set to.

**2. Instructor demonstrates these steps in Storyline:**

In a text box, you can go to the insert tab, click on "reference," and then select the variable that you want to see the status of.

3. **Say:** It is recommended to put a label like "Lesson 1" and then use the insert option after that so you can easily recognize things during the course. These helper labels are a fantastic way to confirm your programming is working correctly without playing the trial-and-error game forever.