

What is a Portfolio?

Learn how you can show off all the different, amazing things you've accomplished in this introduction to digital portfolios.

Courses

Digital Portfolios

Background

Overview

Learn about digital portfolios and create a basic wireframe of an ideal portfolio homepage. (45 - 50 minutes)

Badge & Course

This project is part of Mouse's [Digital Portfolios course](#). If learners finish this project successfully, they will have completed 1 of 3 required projects for the [Portfolio Style badge](#).

To learn more about other Mouse courses, please visit our [Course Directory](#). To learn more about our badges, please visit our [Badge Directory](#).

Outcomes

You will be able to:

- Identify types of portfolios, who uses them and how different portfolio styles can work for different audiences
- Identify elements of real-world portfolios that you might want to include in your own
- Identify achievements and proud moments from your personal history that you would include in a portfolio
- List and prioritize your audiences for your portfolio
- Create wireframes of web pages

Standards Alignment

All Digital Portfolio activities have been aligned to Common Core, Next Generation Science (NGSS) and International Society for Technology in Education (ISTE) learning standards. You can find all of those alignments here:

- [Common Core & ISTE](#)
- [NGSS](#)

Gear

- [Digital Portfolio Examples](#) (you can use these or find your own!)
- Access to wireframe.cc or paper, pens and rulers for sketching wireframes

Activity Flow

Step 1: Intro

Step 2: Do Now: Quick Reflection (3 minutes): Reflect and share out about accomplishments outside of school.

Step 3: What's A Digital Portfolio? (5 minutes): Learn the definition of a digital portfolio and get to know related vocabulary.

Step 4: Looking at Portfolios (5 minutes): Examine the homepages of real-life digital portfolios and think critically about style and audience.

Step 5: Audience Match-Up (10 minutes): Match example digital portfolios to their likely audience. Think critically about story, audience, message and style (SAMS).

Step 6: Envisioning Your Dream Portfolio (5 minutes): Apply the SAMS method to a personal portfolio.

Step 7: Wireframing (15 minutes): Create 2 wireframes of a personal portfolio- one of the homepage and one of another page.

Step 8: Share it Out (5 minutes): Share wireframe examples and receive constructive criticism.

Facilitators: These times are rough estimates. Be sure to look to the content of the project's steps to help you plan the timing, flow and content of the lesson for your specific group of learners.

Prep

If you don't have several computers for this activity, you can print out the digital portfolio examples ahead of time.

Glossary

- In this activity, we use the terms “digital portfolio” and “website” interchangeably.
- Digitize: convert (pictures or sound) into a digital format that can be processed by a computer.
- Embed: To insert an object. For example, you can embed you a video or image into your website or blog.

What is a Portfolio?

- Footer: The section at the bottom of a web page. This often includes copyright information and some navigation links.
- Header: The top section of a website, which often includes such things as a logo, a tagline, links to social networks, a contact number and navigation.
- Hyperlink / Link: a word, phrase, or image that you can click on to jump to a new document or a new section within the current document.
- Layout: the way different elements like text, tabs, menus and graphics are arranged.
- Main Content: The main content is the information most relevant to a particular page.
- Menu: A list of options to choose from, usually from a “Menu Bar” at the top of the page.
- Navigation: A type of menu that lets users move around the website. There can be many levels of navigation with main navigation and sub-navigation.
- Sidebar: Sections to the right or left of the page. Usually, websites have 1, 2 or no sidebars. Sidebars often include things such as additional information, navigation, contact forms, newsletter sign ups and advertisements.

Evidence

At the end of this project, participants will use what they’ve learned about the story, audience, message and style of digital portfolios to create a wireframe of their ideal of a digital portfolio of their own successes.

Evidence Checklist

Learners have met target outcomes if:

- They can list at least 3 achievements they would like to share with an audience.
- They can identify an audience for their own portfolio
- They can correctly use the vocabulary in this activity to identify parts of a digital portfolios.
- They can create either digital or analog wireframes to sketch an ideal portfolio.
- They create at least 2 wireframes
- Their wireframes include references to multiple projects or achievements.

Associated Projects:

- UX/UI Design
- Telling Your Story

Debrief Questions

- What websites were the digital portfolio examples created on? See if you can find other digital portfolios created with that same platform
- What seemed good about those platforms and what didn't? Do they seem easy to learn or difficult? Do they all provide the same features? Do they all cost the same amount?

Extension Ideas:

- Have learners conduct web searches for digital portfolios that show off projects or interests similar to their own.
- Research different platforms for creating digital portfolios and have students pick their favorites.

Step 1: Intro

Jake Dunn
High School Student

Create a WIX site!


HOME

WRITING

DIGITAL PIECES

MEDIA

BLOG



Hello, a bit about me:

- MY WRITING
- MY WORK
- MY MEDIA

Welcome to my Digital Portfolio. This website depicts all of the work that I have completed throughout this year in Honors English. It displays the growth and the progress that I have made, as well as the assignments I am most proud of. Over the past eight months, I have put time, energy, and effort into my tasks and have learned more than ever because of it. Reflecting on my work has shown me how far I have come as both a student, and a person.

Think back on the last few years of your life. You've probably done quite a few things you're proud of. Not just report card stuff, but also things like: earning a spot on a sports team, nailing a choir solo, tutoring your neighbor, or posting a how-to video online. All of these things count as accomplishments. They make up who you are as a person and can say as much about you (if not more) than a school transcript alone.

So how do you keep track, organize and share these accomplishments?

Step 2: Do Now: Quick Reflection



Think back on the last few years. You've probably done quite a few things you're proud of.

In 3 minutes, write down at least 3 things you've accomplished that you're proud of.

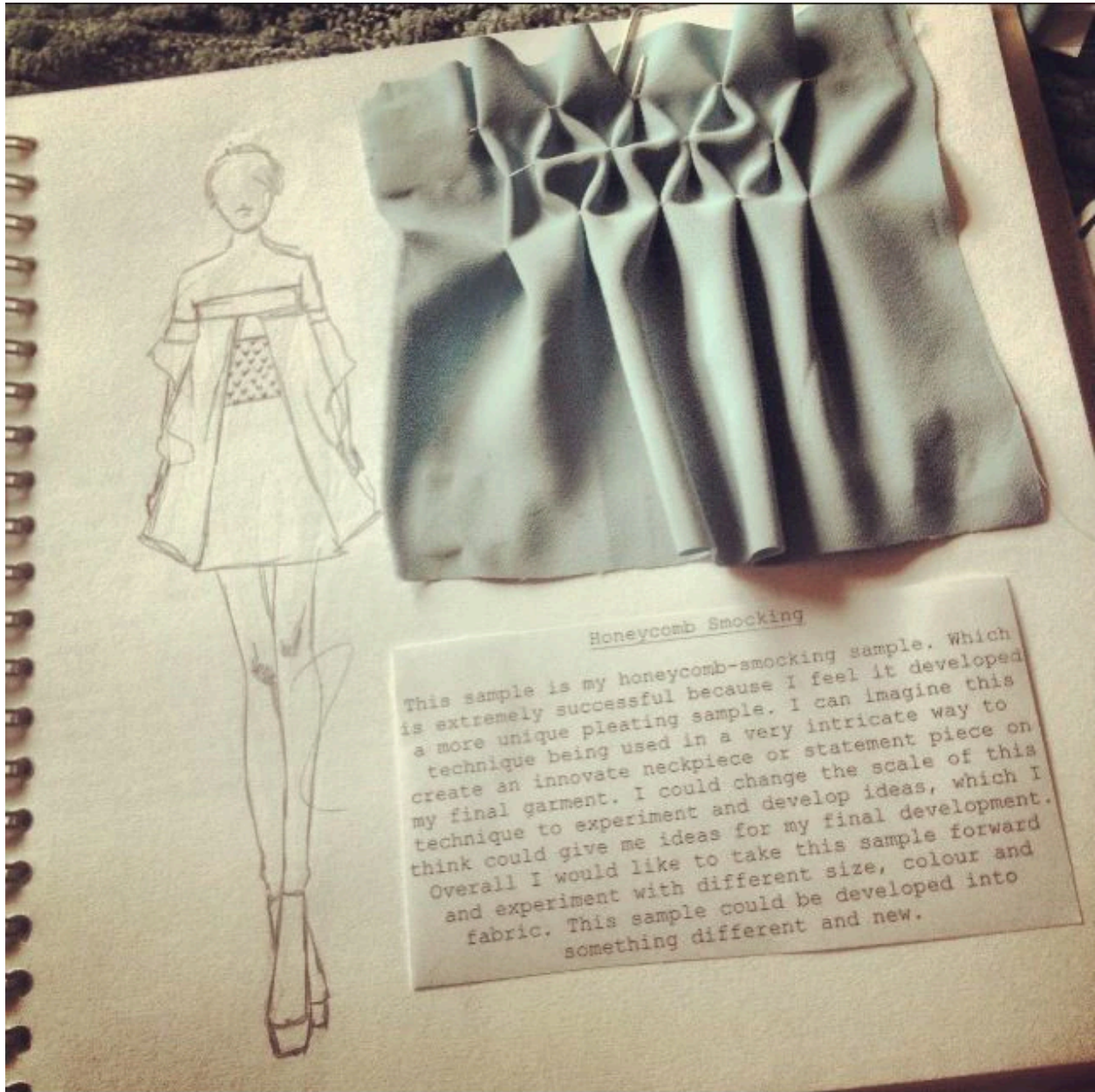
Facilitation Notes

Have a few students share out what they wrote down. You can further the discussion by asking "How do you track, organize and share these accomplishments?"

Adjust the length of time for reflection based on your students' engagements and needs

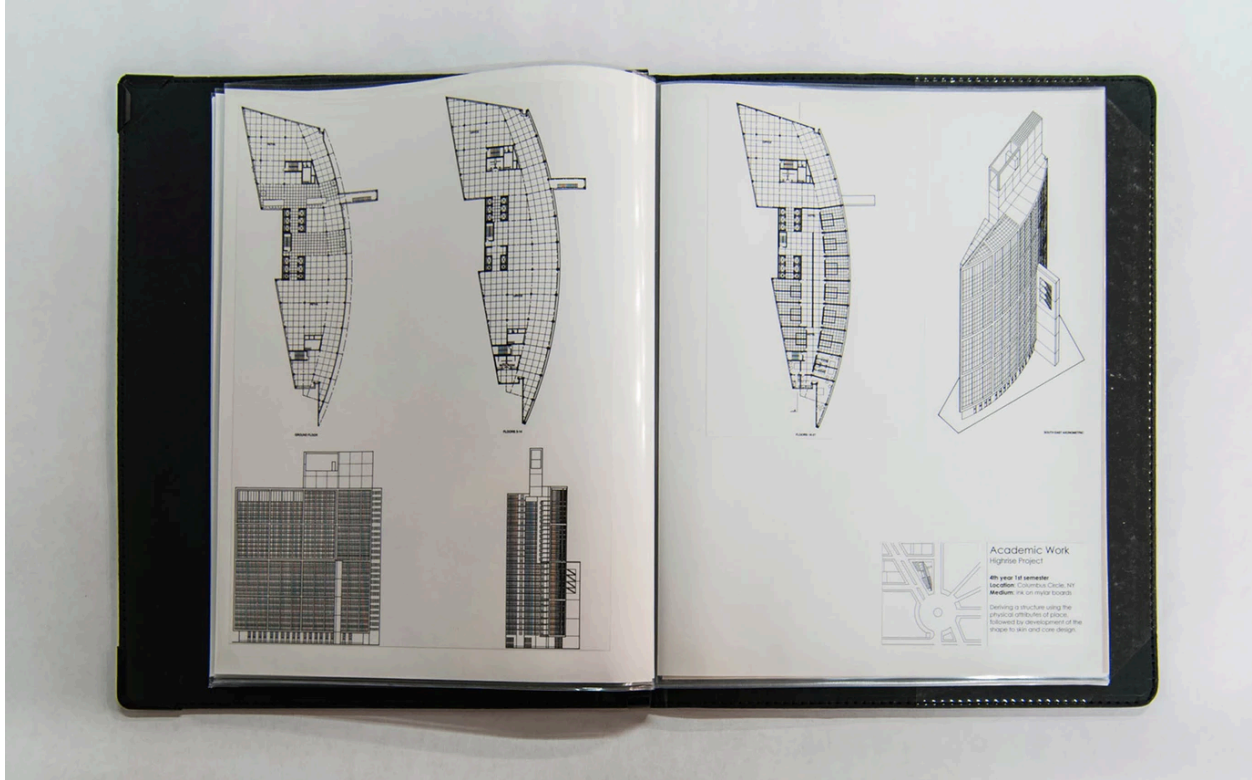
Step 3: What's A Digital Portfolio?

A portfolio is a collection of work that shows off the skills and experience of the creator. Traditional portfolios include a variety of projects in a book or binder, which can be brought or mailed to an employer or college admissions counselor.



A fashion designer's portfolio

What is a Portfolio?



An architect's portfolio

These days, it is just as common to have a digital portfolio as it is to have a physical one. A digital portfolio (sometimes called an e-portfolio) is just like a traditional one, but it exists in an online space. Digital portfolios let you share your experiences, show off your work, and reflect on your accomplishments, but they have the advantage of being accessible anywhere online. Both kinds of portfolios are used by students and professionals of all kinds.

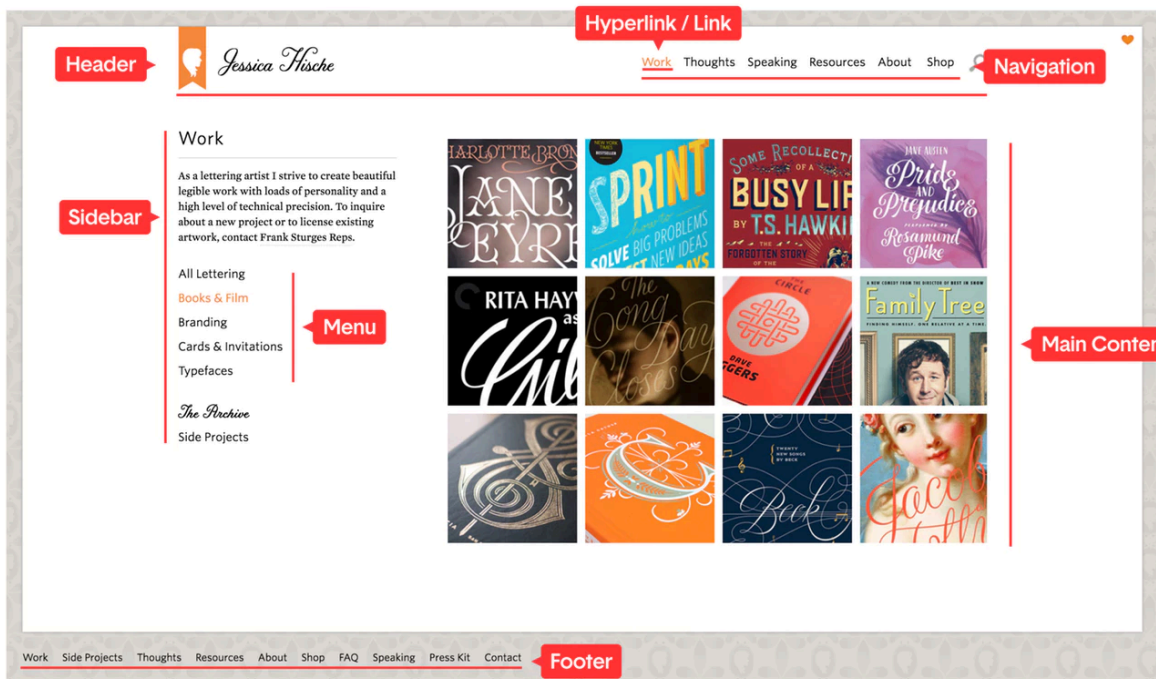
Vocab

Talking about the creation of websites and digital portfolios requires knowing some new words you might not have heard before. So let's review a few:

- **Digitize:** convert (pictures or sound) into a digital format that can be processed by a computer.
- **Embed:** To insert an object. For example, you can embed you a video or image into your website or blog.
- **Footer:** The section at the bottom of a web page. This often includes copyright information and some navigation links.
- **Header:** The top section of a website, which often includes such things as a logo, a tagline, links to social networks, a contact number and navigation.

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- **Hyperlink / Link:** a word, phrase, or image that you can click on to jump to a new document or a new section within the current document.
- **Layout:** the way different elements like text, tabs, menus and graphics are arranged.
- **Main Content:** The main content is the information most relevant to a particular page.
- **Menu:** A list of options to choose from, usually from a “Menu Bar” at the top of the page.
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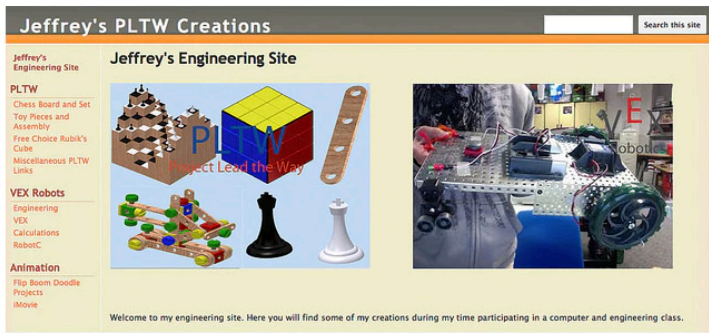
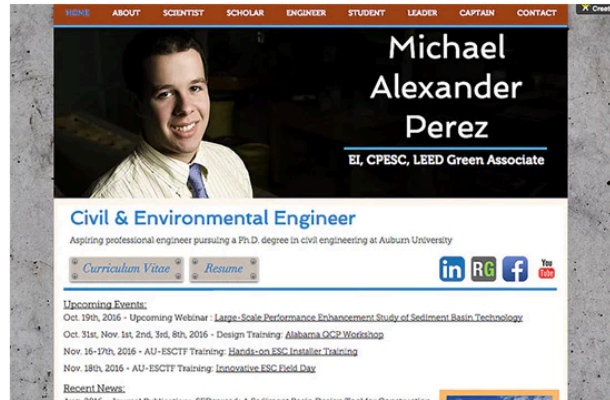
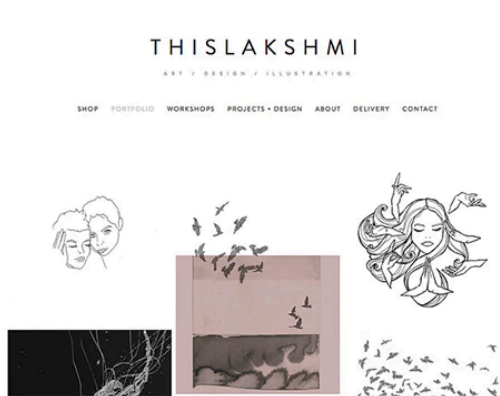
Facilitation Notes

Skip this step if your learners are already well versed in this vocabulary.

Step 4: Looking at Portfolios

Now that you've got the vocab down, let's take a look at some examples of digital portfolio homepages. Do this on your own or get into pairs.

[Click here to look through some digital portfolio examples.](#)



Facilitation Notes

You might choose to have students get into pairs or groups to look at just one or two of the example portfolios and then share out their notes with the class. Or you might assign each student/pair one portfolio example and then have them do a

Pair-and-Share with a nearby group when they're done taking notes.

What is a Portfolio?

Make notes on what you see:

- What do you notice about what's included in each portfolio?
- What categories, sections, pages or links do you see?
- Who do you think the audience is for this portfolio? Who did they make it for?
- Write down anything you see that you really like: certain types of layout, colors, or information.
- What are some things you didn't like?
- What questions came to mind when looking at these?
- Do you see words you see that you don't understand?

When you're done, present your findings to the rest of the group. What things did all the sites seem to have in common? What other trends and themes do you see?

Facilitation Notes

Keep track of the students' observations on a board or projector or have students submit their answers to a shared doc or via a LMS like Google classroom. Help them find the right vocabulary for features such as "homepage" and links. Help them to categorize the features and themes they saw. Discuss both similarities and differences in portfolio design.

Step 5: Audience Match-Up



Each of the portfolios you looked at above had a target audience. That is, they were created with a particular viewer in mind- whether that was college admissions counselors, clients, or employers. While many of the portfolios are made up of similar elements (sidebars, pictures, navigation options, hyperlinks) the look and information will be different depending on the target audience.

Let's look more closely at the information in some portfolios to try to guess who their audience is. Open each portfolio on the left and click around. Then match it with an audience from the list on the right:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| 1. Portfolio 1 | A. Web design clients |
| 2. Portfolio 2 | B. General college admissions counselors |
| 3. Portfolio 3 | C. Art collectors or galleries |
| 4. Portfolio 4 | D. Art school admissions counselors |
| 5. Portfolio 5 | E. Catering clients |

After matching each portfolio to an audience, we're going to analyze each of them with the SAMS method. SAMS stands for **Story, Audience, Message, Style**, and it's a great easy-to-remember process when you're trying to look deeper into any piece of media you come across:

1. Story:

- What story does the portfolio tell about the owner?
- What stories does the portfolio tell about projects the owner worked on?

2. Audience:

- What clues helped you determine the audience for each portfolio?

What is a Portfolio?

- How do you think these design and information choices speak to the creator's intended audience?

3. Message:

- What message is the portfolio sending about the owner?
- How does the design of the portfolio contribute to the message (for instance do the choices of colors and images set a certain tone?)

4. Style:

- What design elements did you notice (fonts, colors, images, layout)?
- If you could redesign the portfolio for the owner, what would change about the design? Why?

Facilitation Notes

Answers: 1-B ; 2-D ; 3-A ; 4-E ; 5-C

Students could be divided into groups, with each group navigating and taking notes on one or two different portfolios. When they get back together as a large group, they can then share their guesses and compare notes.

To make this task more challenging, you could have students guess at an audience without consulting the list on the right.

Step 6: Envisioning Your Dream Portfolio

Now that you've seen a few portfolios, you're going to start coming up with a vision for the kind of portfolio you'd like to have. Use the same SAMS method to think about your own portfolio:

1. Story:

- What story does your portfolio tell about you and your projects?

2. Audience:

- Who will the audience for your portfolio be?

3. Message:

- When you build your own digital portfolio, what message will it send?
- What links, documents pictures or other artifacts would you include to engage your audience and deliver your message?

4. Style:

- How will you use style and design elements to tell your story and message?
- Look back at the vocab you learned in the "What is a Portfolio?" step to think about what website elements you'd like to include (header, sidebar, etc.)



Take some time to write down your answers to these questions. Go into as much detail as possible because you will be looking back on these ideas through the entire portfolio-creation process (although, you can always change them later if you want to).

Facilitation Notes

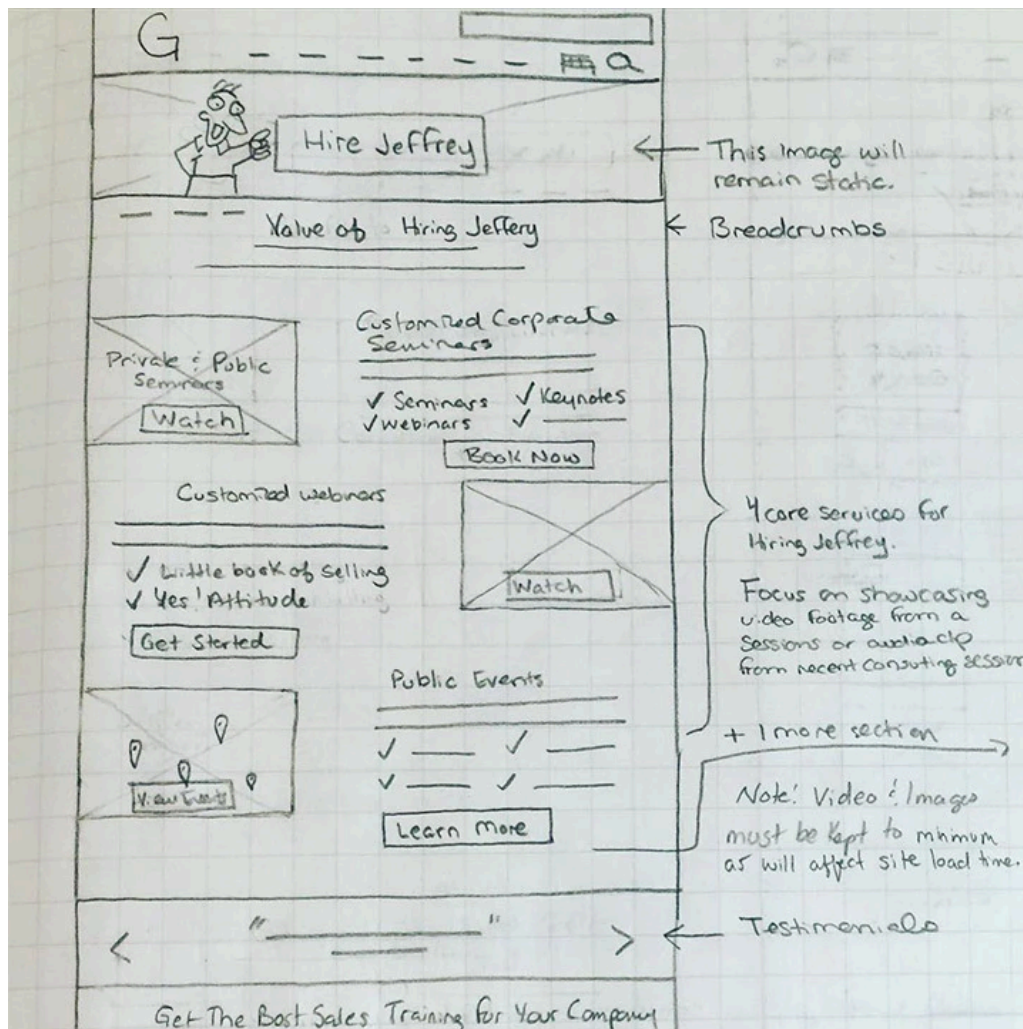
Have your students look back through the vocab list to think about layout and style for their sites. They might even try to identify the terms they learned about in some of the portfolios they looked through.

If you have more time, or would like to assign homework, you could ask your students to write a letter to their audience explaining their portfolio. This could be turned into a portfolio statement later on.

Step 7: Wireframe

Now you're going to use your thoughts and notes from the last step to make a sketch of your digital portfolio.

In the web design world, designers help their clients envision a new (or updated) website by creating rough sketches of every page in the site. This helps teams make decisions about the site before anything gets coded, so the design is easier to change. These sketches are known as wireframes. Wireframes can be created using software or by hand.



Hand drawn wireframe

What is a Portfolio?



A digital wireframe

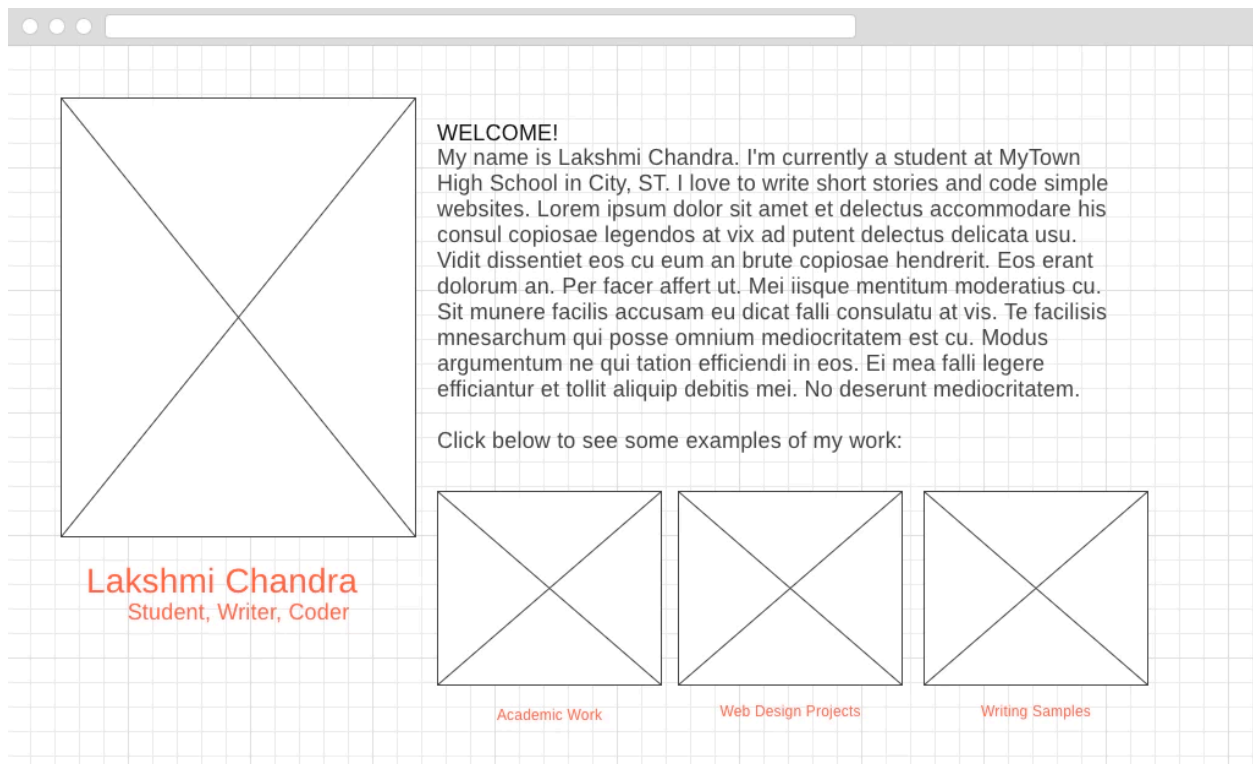
1. You're going to create wireframes for your dream portfolio! First, revisit some of the portfolios you looked at in the Audience Match-Up step. Make a note of the different design elements and layouts you see that you like. You may even want to create simple sketches of design elements you like.

2. Now, create wireframes of your portfolio's home page and for one other page in your portfolio. You can sketch it by hand (a ruler and graph paper can be very helpful for this!), use image-making software like Microsoft paint or Photoshop, or try a simple online wireframe creation tool like wireframe.cc.

***Remember to keep your target audience in mind when coming up with your designs!**

What is a Portfolio?

Here's an example that we made using wireframe.cc:



Optional Design Element! As you can see in the examples above, web designers often use fake text, known as filler text or dummy text, to show where a block of text might go without having to write it out. The most common filler-text is known as “Lorem Ipsum.” **Lorem Ipsum** is blocks of text made up of Latin words taken from an essay by the Greek philosopher Cicero. **Why Latin?** Most people these days can't understand the language, which lets designers use real blocks of text without having clients get distracted by actual words. If you're creating digital wireframes and want to use Lorem Ipsum, you can find it [here](#) or [here](#)!

Step 8: Share it Out



Share your final wireframes.