

MODULE 3: BUILD YOUR STORIES

Identifying Stories

Potential Story Topic:

What or who might you tell a story about?

Actor(s) to Move:

To whom might this story be designed for?

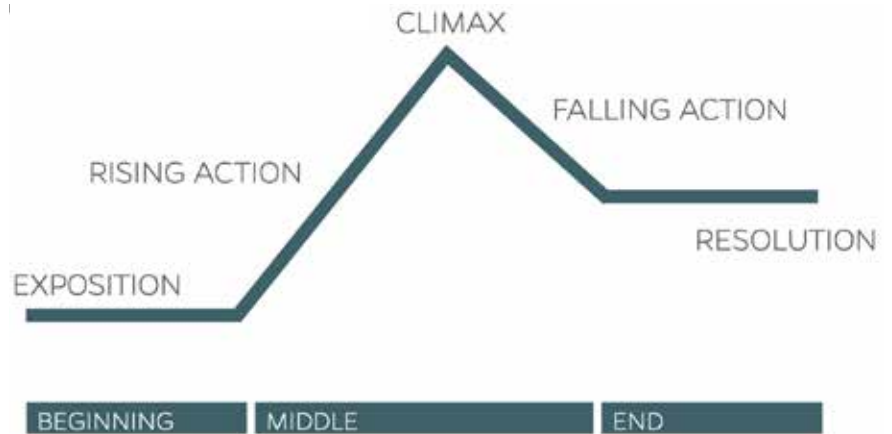
Elements to connect/affirm

How might this story connect to the identified actor(s), affirm or connect to their experiences, shift their perspective and help them act to accomplish your goal?

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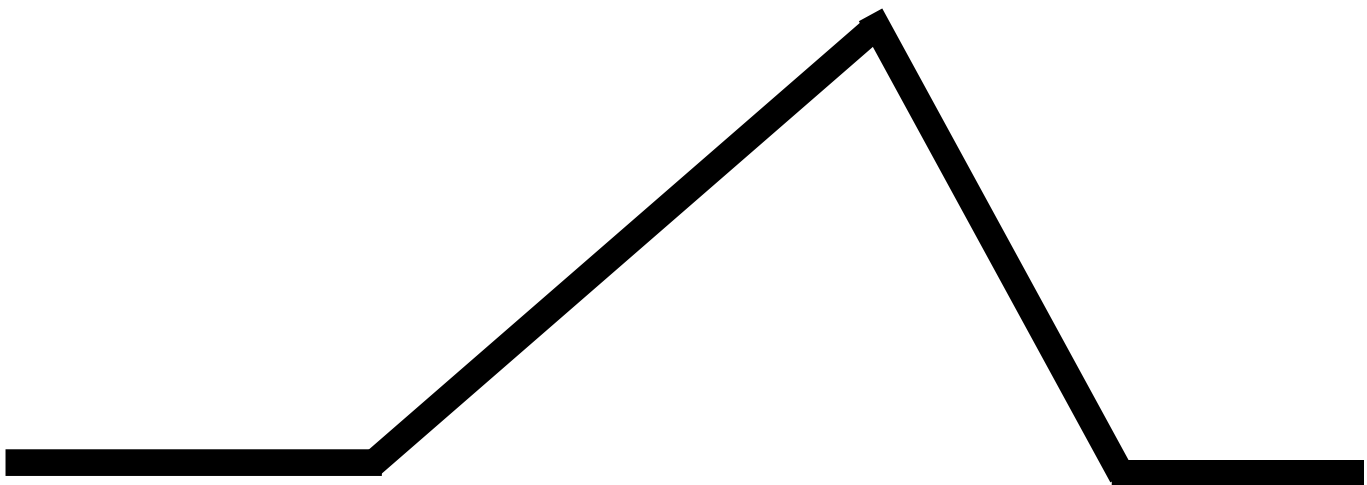
If storytelling doesn't come naturally to you, there are tools that can help.

Our dive into the science of story shows that the narrative arc, famously illustrated by Gustav Freytag's story arc which he created after examining the complete oeuvre of Shakespeare, is one of the most effective ways of conveying facts to non-expert audiences. The arc offers a map for establishing characters, creating tension and resolving that tension in a tight package. When stories follow this arc, and we experience uncertainty about the outcome of the story, we become engrossed and often we find it easier to take the perspective of the main character of the story.



We find it helpful as you are building your stories to actually plot the points of the story on a copy of the arc to ensure that you are not skipping critical parts. For example, organizations often skip that top moment of the climax. This is a moment of uncertainty -- and often what makes a story interesting. The uncertainty is seen as vulnerability, and often organizations try to downplay that. Yet vulnerability is what leads to a sense of authenticity.

Use this diagram to help plot your story as you complete the second part of this worksheet.



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Story Concept Worksheet

(complete for each story targeted to an actor)

3.3 Hero:

3.4 Antagonist:

3.5 Which basic plot are you using?

- ☐ Overcoming the monster
- ☐ Rags to riches
- ☐ The Quest
- ☐ Voyage and Return
- ☐ Comedy
- ☐ Tragedy
- ☐ Rebirth

3.7 What emotions are activated?

- ☐ Pride
- ☐ Parental Love
- ☐ Hope
- ☐ Sadness
- ☐ Fear
- ☐ Anger
- ☐ Other:

(positive, activating emotions to reach new actors long-term)

(negative, limits perspectives, motivates in short term.)

3.6 Is this plot different than typical ILO stories?

(If no, would a different plot structure be more effective with your actor?)

☐ Yes

☐ No

3.8 How will you apply elements of narrative transportation?

entering the emotional world of the character

including vivid details (images, senses)

characters we identify with

3.9 Examine the terms you use. If you didn't work at the ILO would you understand the story vocabulary?

☐ Yes

☐ No

(If no, how might you use definitions instead of terms of art or acronyms to explain?)

3.10 Examine the narrative you are sharing. Does it contribute to the discussion positively or reaffirm harmful narratives?

☐ Positive

☐ Affirms

(If affirms, how might you identify a counter narrative that could demonstrate a new perspective?)