
“Crafting Stories to Win the Hearts, Minds, and VOTES of Lawmakers”

Worksheet Exercise

Goal

The purpose of this exercise is to walk participants through a process, step-by-step, to craft a personal story that translates the impact of public policy on the lives of actual people. The sections and questions below are intended to offer *guidance* to participants, not be an exact formula. While some advocacy stories may contain all elements noted below, most do not. Yet, it is critical for participants to stop at each section, ask the key questions, and determine if the element can assist the “citizen-advocate” – the *story-teller* – in the pursuit of their policy goals.

Process

Working with your partner, review these elements. In each section, suggestions are made for your consideration, and sample sentences are offered for you to complete. These are meant as suggestions to help you craft your story.

Elements of Great Advocacy Story-Telling

1. “The Want” – Begin with the End in Mind (*the “sinker”*)
 - The advocate knows what the “ask” is, and the legislators desired reaction. What are your goals?
 - When you have told your story, how do you want the legislator to think and feel?

Possible Sentence to Complete: “I want this legislator to

2. “The Opening “ – Set the Stage and Establish the Stakes (*the “hook”*)
 - Establish context for the life you’re about to describe.
 - Begin the story, thinking about the first sentence.

Possible Sentence to Complete: “If we don’t do ... it could result in...”

3. "Paint the Picture" – Details and the Senses (*the "hook"*)

- What did you see, hear, touch, taste, smell?
- Make it real. Be practical, specific, and graphic – don't hold ANYTHING back!

Possible Sentence to Complete: "It was as if I could (hear/feel/touch)..."

4. "The Struggle" – Describe the Challenges (*the "line"*)

- Identify the conflict.
- Struggles are mental, philosophical, emotional, physical – even personally internal.

Possible Sentence to Complete: "We didn't know it would be this hard. We were up against..."

5. "Discovery" – Provide interesting and impactful facts (*the "line"*)

- Don't give away everything up front or until it has the most impact.
- Try to balance the past and the present. How what you learned then can impact what happens now or in the future.

Possible Sentence to Complete: "And we learned that..."

6. "We Can Win!" – Introduce the Potential of Success & Joy (*the "sinker"*)

- Success – Our hero wins
- Comfort/Joy – Our audience participates

Possible Sentence to Complete: "We have the opportunity to..."

7. "The Button" – Finish with the request (*the "sinker"*)

- Have your ending sentence clearly memorized and know when to use it.
- Exercise restraint.

Possible Sentence to Complete: ... (*Sorry...no sentence to finish here – you finish the story!*)