

Storytelling Step-by-Step

This document is a step-by-step guide to storytelling, walking you through the process of creating stories that will have an impact on your audience. We encourage you to use this factsheet alongside the Equity Principles for Storytelling which provides some considerations and questions for storytelling.

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STEP 1: WHY ARE YOU TELLING THE STORY?

- **Determine your purpose for telling this story.** Is there a lesson you want your audience to learn or an action you want them to take from your story? What emotion do you want them to feel?
- **Incorporate your purpose in the beginning and end of your story** to hone in on the message. Keep your purpose in mind as you go through the next steps.



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STEP 2: WHO ARE YOU TALKING TO?

- **Decide on who your audience is** (think about demographic, geographic location, etc.) and think about their understanding of a concept - for example would they understand specific jargon?
- Depending on your audience, decide **what language(s) you want the piece to be shared in.** For more details, see the Equity Principles for Storytelling factsheet.
- **Use audience-specific relatable and relevant examples** and characters in your story.



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STEP 3: WHERE ARE YOU SHARING THIS?

- Determine **where your audience is primarily consuming content.** Social media, traditional media, mailing lists, internal comms?
- Do you want your story to be **available to the public or only to a select group?**
- These questions will impact steps 4 and 5. It will help determine what you want to include, some platforms allow for longer content than others. It may also factor into the best medium to use.



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STEP 4: WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT AND WHO ARE YOU FEATURING?

- What are the **key facts the audience needs to know** to understand this story?
- **Consider whether you are personally connected to the story** and whether you will be sharing your perspective or whether the story should not include your personal view. If the story shares your personal view it may also be more effective to use 1st person.
- **Use a specific, personal examples** to talk about a more general issue. For example, a persons personal experience on a review committee may reflect the broader challenge in philanthropy of making tough decisions with not enough funding.
- Where possible **use quotes and work with those being quoted** to ensure it is not taken out of context. For more details, see the [Equity Principles for Storytelling factsheet](#).



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STEP 5: HOW ARE YOU GOING TO SHARE THE STORY (MEDIUM)?

- **Choose your medium** with your overall objective and audience in mind.
- **Consider different mediums beyond text.** Alternative mediums could include photo essays, a video, or an audio podcast.
- When selecting your medium, be sure to review the [Equity Storytelling Considerations](#) points focused on Imagery and Accessibility.



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STEP 6: HOW ARE YOU CONSTRUCTING THE STORY?

- **Create a descriptive title** that tells the audience what they should expect to read
- If the article is long, **consider adding headings to break it into sections.** This can help make sure the story is simple to follow and enjoyable to read.
- **Ensure sentences clear and relatively short,** avoid jargon language and long paragraphs.
- **Ensure there is a flow to the story,** maybe that is chronological or a plot mountain but make sure the narrative moves in a way that is easy for the audience to follow.
- Make sure your **story formatted in a way that makes it accessible for a diverse audience.** Be sure to review the Equity Storytelling Considerations points focused on Language, Translation and Accessibility.



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STEP 7: DRAFTING, REVIEWING AND EDITING

- Do a complete rough draft and **take a step away before coming back to edit.**
- When you edit **check for grammar, spelling, clarity and consistency.** You can often edit out about a third of what you first write.
- **Fact-check any facts quoted,** including those that came up in any interview.
- **Seek feedback** from someone else, a fresh pair of eyes is invaluable. You may need the person featured to review. For more details, see the Equity Principles for Storytelling factsheet.



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STEP 8: PUBLISH!

- Share your content and thank those who helped make it happen!

