

The Science Through Storytelling Worksheet

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this exercise is to gain additional practice adapting our scientific messages to various genres, but to also challenge students to do this in a surprising convention.

INSTRUCTIONS

If you are using this activity as an extension of the Genre Switch Game: Tailoring for Audience and Format chapter of *SciComm + Science + Work*, students should complete this worksheet using their talk topic from the Genre Switch Game. If you are using this as a stand-alone activity, here are some suggested sources for topics students can use to create their stories:

Secondary School Students	Undergraduates	Graduate Students/Postdocs
- A recent lab exercise - A scientific news report or documentary reviewed in class	- An experiment or finding discussed in class - Scientific article/journal club	- Research project - Scientific article/journal club

Examine the 6 key components of stories below, and fill out the worksheet identifying those story concepts within your source material. Then use the story structure on the following page to draft your brief 6-line folktale about your scientific topic.

Six Key Components of Stories:

1. **Character(s) - who/what is involved?** (e.g., cells, animal subjects, models, etc.)
2. **Setting - where does it take place?** (e.g., background, body system, etc.)
3. **Tension - what is the conflict/problem?** (e.g., what is not known? what is the question the science is trying to answer?)
4. **Action - what is done about it?** (e.g., how is the science going to answer the question?)
5. **Climax - what is the peak moment?** (e.g., what's the biggest finding?)
6. **Resolution - how does it all wrap up?** (e.g., what's the grand conclusion - how does the new finding address the gap/resolve the tension?)

Identify the story concepts within your scientific topic.

Character(s): _____

Setting: _____

Tension: _____

Action: _____

Climax: _____

Resolution: _____

Storytelling Format - Using this format, even long or complex stories can be told in just a paragraph. See if you can pare down a scientific/research story to just these lines.

Once upon a time, there was...

Every day...

One day...

Because of that...

Because of that...

Until finally...

Example 1:

Once upon a time, there was a family of cells found migrating near the lands of Notochordia with amazing potential to grow into something sensational. **Every day**, they grew in their little niche, changing shape and mastering their fate, or so they thought. **One day**, the surrounding nations took notice--Dorsalvania to the north and Ventrovia to the south--each trying to influence the little family. **Because of that**, the family went to war with itself, dividing into factions, which became a pattern for the rest of their lives. **Because of that** development, new and fertile lands were born. **Until finally**, the land toward Dorsalvania found peace by seeking balance and the land toward Ventrovia found their voice and song.

Example 2:

Once upon a time, there was a scared little rat. **Every day**, she would be placed in a terrifying box that smelled as if a cat was hunting her nearby. **One day**, as she huddled in the corner trying to hide from the invisible cat, a lever popped out of the far wall of the box. **Because of that**, the little rat cautiously approached the lever to investigate and pushed it with her nose. **Because of that**, the cat smell started to go away, as if the evil cat had been scared off! **Until finally**, the little rat was no longer afraid of this box because she knew she could use her magical lever to frighten off that silly cat.

Write your 6-line story following the template on the next page.

Once upon a time, there was _____

Every day, _____

One day, _____

Because of that, _____

Because of that, _____

Until finally, _____
