

7 Story Telling Techniques and How To Apply Them

Story Telling is actually the oldest way to deliver a message – or to explain the world. Ancient people used story telling. You are using story telling for yourself and your work, even if you don't call it exactly that. You're already a story teller, but it's always good to improve your skills. So here are 7 techniques to help you explain yourself better.

1. Have an Enemy and a Hero

Stories need a good guy and a bad guy – also called a hero and an enemy. The enemy can be a thing, like a desert or even a fear within the hero. The arc of the story is how the hero beats the enemy.

2. Use Conflict

Conflict is how the friction between the enemy and hero manifests. Maybe it shows up as the hero deciding to cross the desert, or when you, decided to figure out how to defeat a problem. Conflicts also describe the obstacles you encountered on your way to success. If the hero has no struggle, then it's a lame story.

3. Omit any Irrelevant Detail

Omit any detail that doesn't move the story forward or develop the characters. This is about keeping the readers' attention. If they don't need to know about your red bicycle to understand the arc of your story, don't tell them about the bicycle.

4. Tell the Story Like You Talk

Talk like you would normally talk. Sound as an average person.

5. Make It Visual

There's a reason children's storybooks are mostly pictures, and that so many of the greatest stories ever told have been made into movies. Images bring a story to life. You can tell a story just by standing up and talking, but by adding images you will make it more powerful.

6. Make It Personal and Easy to Relate To

Use images of what actually happened, or where it happened. Use images of the real people in the story. And again, talk like you talk. Show your personality. Reveal a bit of your weaknesses and your fears. Everybody else has those weaknesses and fears, too. This leverages a subtle power of storytelling: when we tell our own story, often we are telling other people's story too. Those people are your ideal audience.

7. Add Surprise

A story with no surprises is boring. You knew this already, but it bears repeating. Whether it's a good surprise or a bad surprise, every good story has at least one surprise. This is an essential to a story as conflict.