Story Structure Template

(CAR = STORY)

	Questions	Answers for YOUR story
Pre-story	 What main idea you are trying to communicate? What do you want your audience to DO as a result of your story? 	
<u>CONTEXT</u> Subject Treasure	 When and where? <u>Who is the Subject?</u> Hero is real/fictional/you? Audience: "Hey! That 	
<u>I</u> reasure <u>O</u> bstacle	 could be me!" <u>What does the character</u> <u>want?</u> Identify their passion or Treasure. <u>Who or what is getting in</u> 	
	<u>their way?</u> - Identify the villain or Obstacle .	
<u>A</u> CTION	 What happened to the hero? Conflict? Temporary setbacks? Ups and downs along the way? Research done? Conclusions drawn? 	
<u>R</u> ESULT <u>R</u> ight lesson wh <u>Y</u>	 What happened to the hero in the end? Did he/she win or lose? Right lesson: This is the moral of the story. Conclusion should link back to the reason whY you told the story (the main idea) and compel audience to DO what you wanted it to do. 	

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Story Elements Checklist

(MAKERS)

	Questions	Ideas for YOUR story
<u>M</u> etaphors and Analogies Ch. 24	 <u>Use metaphors:</u> In your stories (The yellow cab in chapter 5). As an entire story in itself (pioneers and settlers in chapter 15; giant steps in chapter 16; building a cathedral in chapter 2). Instead of telling a complete story (Disney cast members, consumer is boss, FMOT, all in chapter 24). <u>Generate great metaphors:</u> Use the magazine picture collage exercise. Ask your audience what kind of animal/car/book/movie, etc. their idea would be. 	
Appeal to Emotion Ch. 18	 Are you trying to influence a decision that was made on purely emotional grounds? If so, you need a highly emotional story, not a rational one (Special Olympics in chapter 18). If your audience doesn't naturally care about your topic, what does it care about? Connect your idea to those things (don't mess with Texas, "I've never been to Japan" in chapter 18). Generate empathy: Identify the people affected by the decision you're trying to influence. Tell their stories. Use consumer research verbatims and qualitative discussions as sources for emotional content. 	
<u>K</u> eep it Real Ch. 13	 Take your abstract idea and explain it with a concrete story about a single example. (Examples are on the banks of the Tammerkoski River in chapter 2; <i>BusinessWeek</i> on Bounty in chapter 4; "Lisa" the high potential shopper and Julie Walker, achiever mom in chapter 13). Avoid technical jargon your audience might not understand. Make the facts, numbers, or events relevant to your audience—something they can relate to in their everyday 	

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	lives (snowstorm in the courtroom in chapter 13).	
	• Be brutally open and honest about difficult subjects. Avoid waffling or weasel words typical of management speak today (making payroll in chapter 13).	
<u>E</u> lement of Surprise	Grab your audience's attention with a surprise at the beginning:	
Ch. 19	• What's unusual or unexpected about your story? (Examples are stories on moonlighting required in chapter 26, canceling your retainer in chapter 10, the sharecropper's daughter in chapter 11.)	
	• Does it involve a newsworthy event? (Consider revolution in Egypt in chapter 8, earthquake in Japan in chapter 8.)	
	End your story with a surprise to seal it in memory:	
	• Make use of ones that occur naturally in your story (first day of history class in chapter 19, jury room tables in the Introduction, giant steps in chapter 16).	
	• No natural surprise at the end of your story? Create one. Hold back a key piece of information till the very end (after a lifetime of failure in chapter 16, on the banks of the Tammerkoski River in chapter 2, James and the tea kettle in chapter 26).	
	<u>Ah-ha moment stories</u> : The next time you have a surprising, eye-opening moment, write a story about it (breakfast in Mexico in chapter 19).	
<u>R</u> ecast your audience	• Arrange a scene or event for your audience to participate in (new promotion policy and clean desk policy from chapter 29).	
into the story	• Does it pass the acid test? After it's over, will your audience thank you for teaching them such a valuable lesson? If not:	
Ch. 29	- Keep the suspense brief—minutes or hours, not days (first day of history class in chapter 19, clean desk policy).	
	- Direct the drama toward yourself (first day of history class).	
	- Treat all audience members equally (clean desk policy).	

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	- Stage an experiment or demonstration your audience can take part (private-label taste test in chapter 29).	
	• Get the audience involved in <i>telling</i> the story (count the stars in chapter 29).	
<u>S</u> tylistic Elements	<u>Great beginnings</u> —Start your stories with one (or more) of the following devices: • A surprise (see chapter 19).	
Ch. 14	 A mystery (1983 discovery journey in chapter 5; building a cathedral in chapter 2; three researchers in chapter 20). A challenge—quickly introduce a relatable main character facing a difficult challenge (how <i>not</i> to present to the CEO in chapter 1; Gail firing herself in 	
	 Writing Style: Write the way you speak: Use short sentences (15–17 words per sentence). Use small words (15 percent or fewer words over two syllables). Write in the active voice (15 percent or fewer passive voice sentences). Get to the verb quickly (place the verb at the beginning of sentences). Omit needless words (Fresh Fish story). Stories should be 250–750 words, or 2 to 4 minutes when told orally. 	
	 <u>Literary devices to use often:</u> Dialogue Include real names of characters. Repetition (building a cathedral story in chapter 2, the three researchers in chapter 20). Don't announce or apologize in advance of a story. Just tell it. 	

Mnemonic: CAR = STORY MAKERS

 $\underline{\mathbf{C}}$ ontext, $\underline{\mathbf{A}}$ ction, $\underline{\mathbf{R}}$ esult =

 \underline{S} ubject, \underline{T} reasure, \underline{O} bstacle, \underline{R} ight lesson, wh \underline{Y}

+ <u>M</u>etaphors, <u>A</u>ppeal to emotion, <u>K</u>eep it real, <u>E</u>lement of surprise, <u>S</u>tylistic elements