

(Digital) Storytelling Workshop

Storytelling and Research



ICER - Pro

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ENCARE - Enhancing Capacities of UAS staff for more successful EU funded Research
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Main Objective

Help researchers use storytelling techniques to communicate more compelling and coherent project proposals, especially in sections such as the extended summary, broader impacts, or narrative description.

Learning Outcome:

Participants will practice storytelling techniques in projects.

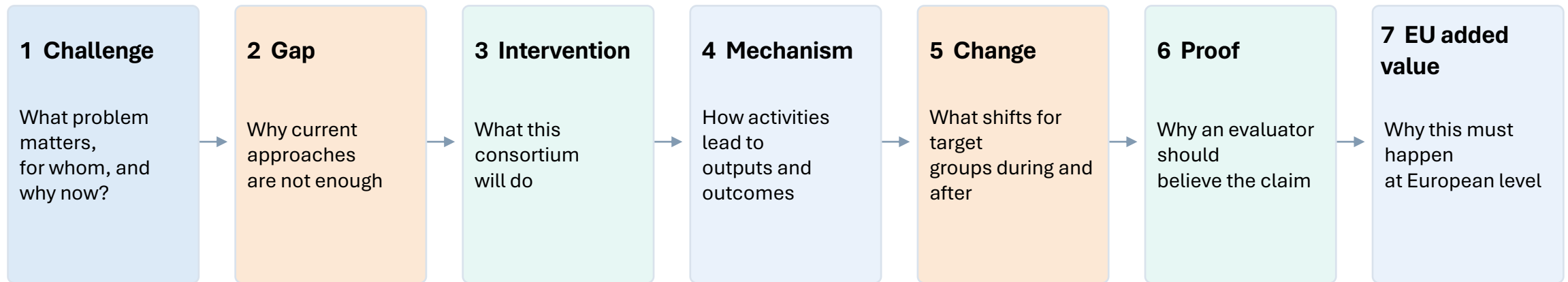


In 1 sentence, what's your research about—and why should **we** care?



Where is the story?

A proposal, as a whole, is a credible narrative under evaluation constraints.



Imagine each box as a cohesive piece of information. All of the pieces must come together logically and clearly in the evaluator's mind. , If one box is vague, the story breaks. Weak proposals usually fail because the causal chain is foggy, not because the idea is missing.



Exercise 1: The backstory

Connect emotionally with the research by crafting a compelling backstory.

Write a short paragraph (100–150 words) answering:

- Why did I start this research?
- What problem triggered my curiosity?
- Who or what is affected by this issue?
- What moment or event made it feel important to pursue?



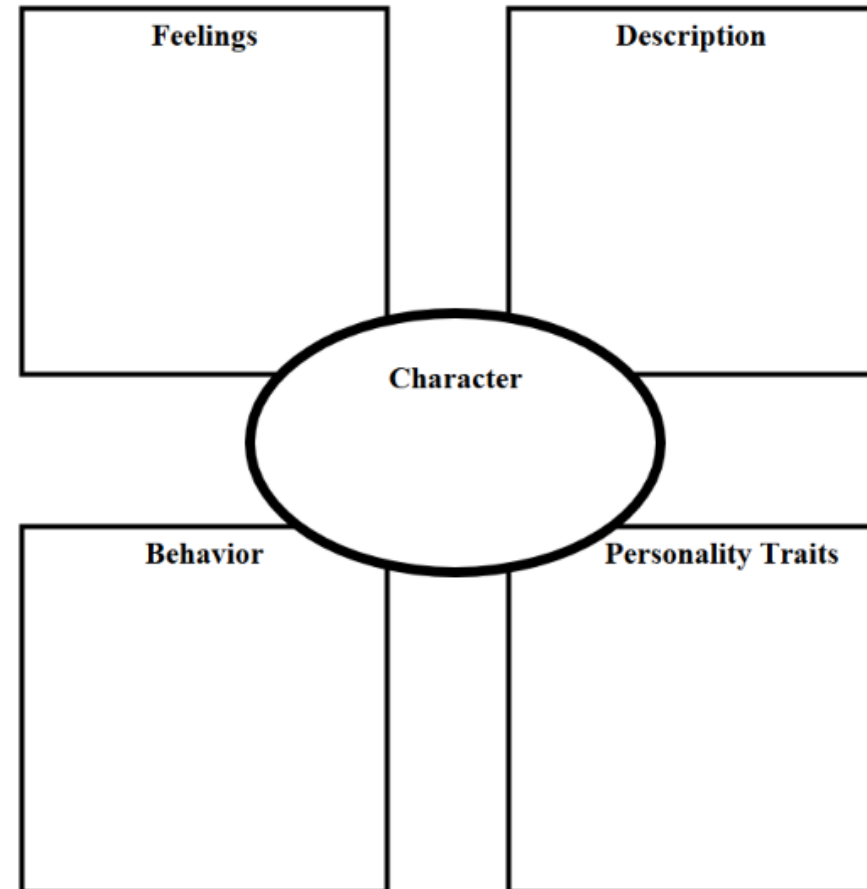
Exercise 2: Character Map/Chart

Identify and humanize the key players in your research. Know your stakeholders (or the characters of your story).

List 2–4 "characters" from your research (e.g., participants, scientists, stakeholders, or even abstract concepts like climate change).

For each character, answer:

- What do they want?
- What's stopping them?
- Why should readers care about them?

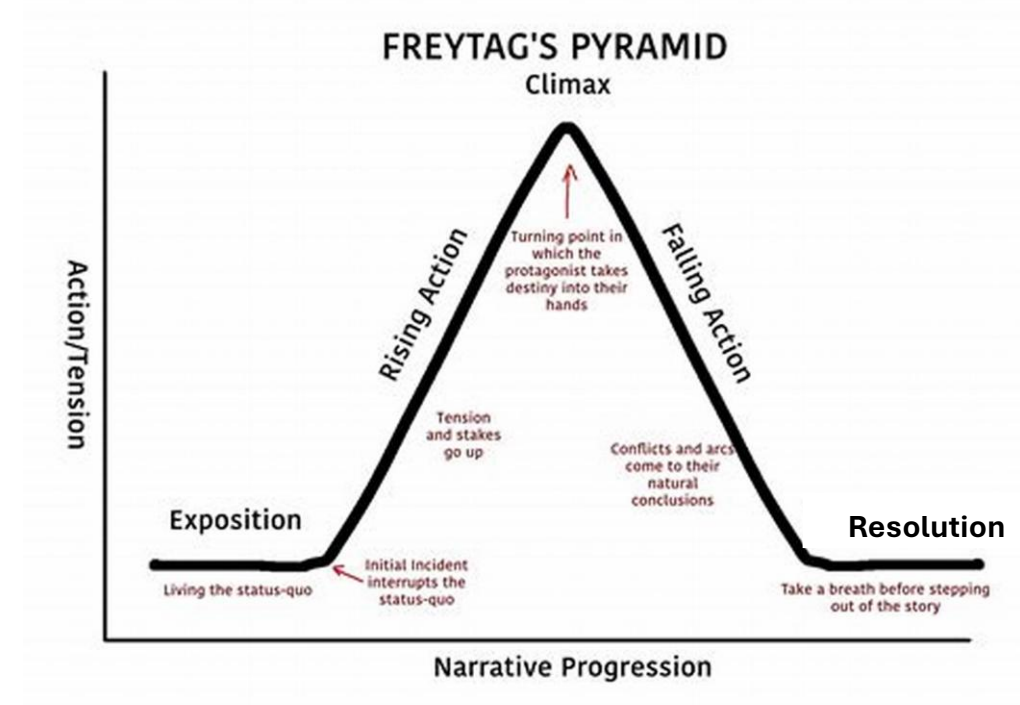


Exercise 3: Story Arc/plot

Structure a proposal like a story (narrative) with a beginning, middle, and end (3 or 6-part arc).

Map your research onto a classic narrative arc.

Or a table...



Exercise 3: Story Arc/plot

Story Element	Your Research Version
Exposition The world before your research	CHALLENGE
Conflict The core problem or research gap	OBJECTIVE
Rising Action Your methods, steps, or process	ACTIVITIES
Climax The key finding or breakthrough	RESULTS
Falling Action What the results mean	OUTCOMES
Resolution Implications, next steps, future work	IMPACT



Exercise 4: Rewriting using Storytelling

Take a formal research abstract and rewrite it in a more story-like tone. Use transitions, emotional relevance, characters (where possible), and tension. Visualize your research as a film.

Use Persuasive Writing elements

- Use Metaphors;
- Write human-readable, purpose-driven sentences;
- Use action verbs to help clarify purpose, create momentum, and add specificity;
- Avoid vague language;
- Remember the perspective. Tension (not necessarily the problem) creates drive;
- Use keywords or phrases that hint at movement, stakes, or transformation.



Exercise 5: Reader's Perceptions

Understand your reader's emotional and intellectual journey as they read what you wrote.

You have 60 seconds or 100 words to make the reviewer care. What do you say? Adopt a Reviewer mindset. Why should I (the reviewer) care? Why does this matter? Why does your research matters beyond academia?

- Create a timeline of how a reader feels as they move through a research paper you wrote. When are they curious, confused, excited, or sceptical? Mark places to insert tension, relief, or surprise. Use the table to document your findings.



Thank You!

Sandra Ribeiro

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Please check the following tools for further information:

[CARPE Website](#)

(general project information & training material)

[LinkedIn](#)

(news & up-dates)

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