The Writing Center

Narrative Mechanics in Academic Writing

The Writing Center @MSU

Today's Agenda:

I. Introduction & Think, Pair, Share (5 minutes)

II. Writing for Specific Audiences and Storytelling (5 minutes)

III. Group Activity (~12 minutes)

IV. Wrap-up (5 minutes)

V. Questions + SWAG (remaining time)

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Intended Learning Outcomes

Through this presentation, you will learn more about:

- Writing for specific audiences
- Using storytelling in academic writing
- Understanding the requirements of your audience



Think, Pair, Share (3 min.)

- How do you typically frame a research paper?
- What strategies do you use when writing?
- Do you use stories to convey a message in your writing? Why or why not?

Writing for Specific Audiences

First, consider the following about your audience:

- What is their background? Who are they?
- What is their educational level regarding your topic?
    - Are they familiar with the vocabulary of your field?
- What is the reader going to do with the information you provide?
    - Are they making a decision? Being informed? Asking questions?

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Storytelling in Academic Writing

Stories can turn stated facts into **engaging journeys**.

Through storytelling, you can:

- Help readers visualize your ideas
- Improve the human connection between you and the reader
- Appeal to a wider audience





How do you Implement Storytelling?

- **Show**, rather than simply telling, how you learned or accomplished something.
- Focus on your **actions**. What did you do? What prompted you?
- **Map your story.**
    - For example, show how past attempts brought you to your current investigative journey.





Group Activity

In groups of 3-4, take about 10 minutes to review two different journals from your field. Look at the aims and scopes of each. Here are a few options:

- Journal in Science Teaching (JRST)
- A DBER journal from your field
  - Journal of Engineering Education (JEE), Journal of Chemical Education (JCE), etc.
- Journal of College Science Teaching (JCST/NSTA)





Group Activity

Compare the scope and aims of the journals and consider how you might tailor a paper for each.

- Organize these thoughts however you like, but a table like this might be helpful:

Journal in Science Teaching (JRST)	DBER journal

Reflection

Now, in your groups, reflect on the following questions:

- What surprised you during this activity?
- How might you adjust your writing/formatting for each of these journals?
- How does your audience change based on the journal?
    - How would you appeal to that audience?

Support Tailored for You

As a writer/student:

- 1:1 consultation with a WC consultant
- Write-ins
- Graduate Writing Groups
- Thesis and Dissertation Writing Camp

As an instructor:

- 1:1 consultation with Beth: bethsabo@msu.edu
- WAC Workshop Series
- WAC 4-Day Institute
- Schedule a workshop for your class


Questions?
WC SWAG!

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