



## Sustainability Ambassadors

# Impact Storytelling Tips

### My Project in 5 Short Stories

**STORY 1: Announce your plan!** Here is the problem, my intended impact, and the relationship to my city or community climate action goals. Plus a few critical stakeholders who need to know.

**STORY 2: Show us the roadmap!** Here are the steps I plan to take, the resources I will need, my research questions, the experts I will consult, and other stuff I don't know yet.

**STORY 3: Take us on a journey!** This is the story of how I'm implementing my plan, the steps, insights, obstacles, and... my perseverance!

**STORY 4: Celebrate your data!** I did it! Here is my impact data and how it relates to my city or community climate actions goals. (Gallons of water saved, GHG emissions avoided, pounds of waste reduced, trees planted, acres or river miles restored... money saved!)

**STORY 5: You can do it too!** Here are the expanding math stories for the "projected impact" if others did what I did. All the people in my family, my classroom, my entire grade level, everyone in my grade in my entire school district, every household in my city...

### Amplify!

Amplify your work by aligning with other nonprofits focused on climate action. Have you studied the work of [Front and Centered](#), [Got Green](#), [Puget Sound Sage](#), [Hip-Hop is Green](#), [People for Climate Action](#), [Climate Solutions](#), [Sunrise Movement Hubs](#), [350 Seattle](#)? There are more! Link your work to the larger movement.

### What Voice Will I Use?

**Straight Up:** I will speak from my own direct, moral passion for what is right and what I am doing to achieve it. Follow my example!

**Curiosity:** I will organize my story around a few pointed questions that need answering, and by posing them and exploring them, and modeling my own intentional curiosity, my audience will be motivated to seek the answers themselves.

**3rd Person Omniscient:** I am the nameless but wise narrator who knows the thoughts and feelings of all of the characters in my story. You, too, can see yourself in my story.

**I am Salmon:** Anthropomorphize your voice by placing your full, sensory, lived experience inside a different species or natural element. Write your impact story from the point of view of a salmon, a crow, the oldest tree in your neighborhood, a water molecule, the river...

- See Mary Chapin Carpenter's "*I am a Town*" - [Lyrics](#) | [Video](#)

**Imagine it already happened:** I will narrate my story from the future where the impact I initiated back in 2022 expanded systemically to alter multiple intersectional behaviors, policies, economics, and institutions. It worked. Here's how it unfolded.

**Historical build up:** My impact story builds on the events, patterns, norms, shifts, innovations that came before me. It's sort of obvious now that this is what we are ready to do. What we need to do.

**Recipe:** Let me cook up a solution using these ingredients. You can do it too. It's not hard.

**Spoken Word:** This is my rhythm poem exploring the mystically informed narrative of what I feel, what I think, what's happening, and what action I am taking.

**Poetry:** Write in a poetic form that is natural for you such as free verse. Consider how this form is related to spoken word or song lyrics. Is there value in using a chorus?

**Literally Laundry List:** I am listing for you a rapid rhythmical sequence of the issues, the players, the needed actions, my actions, the amplification of my actions, your actions, our actions together. See Billy Joel's "*We didn't Start the Fire*" [Lyrics](#) | [Video](#)

**This is You:** Description how you (not the writer but the reader/listener) will experience this issue and resolve to take action for all of the right reasons. Of course you made this change. And you feel great about it. And you told others about what you did, and....

**Resolution:** This is the voice of formal policy agreement based on shared values. "Whereas, I am a sophomore in the city of Kirkland and care deeply about the future of our planet. Whereas, the future of our planet is in peril due to human caused climate change. Whereas my city government is leading by example in developing a visionary Sustainability Master Plan. Whereas, the city cannot implement this master plan without the active engagement of thousands of residents including youth.... Therefore, be it resolved that...

See EXAMPLE: [Imagine a Day Without Water 2021: Resolution Template](#)

**Debate:** It could be achieved in this way. But look at it this other way. A skillfully articulated debate reveals that truth but the audience gets to enter into the display of choices and feel what is right on their own terms.

**Dialogue:** Write in the style of a screenplay or stage play with characters in dialogue working through the story elements you want to convey. What are the points of view and attributes that make these characters compelling vessels for the impact journey.

**Influencers:** Build your case upon the voices and actions of scientists, or politicians, or athletes, or artists, or actors who are leading on this issue and modeling behaviors that we should all emulate.

**Scenarios:** Here are three ways that these actions might unfold and the relative values of different possible outcomes. Which one will we choose? Which one did I choose?

**How it Works:** A crisp, confident, technical voice explaining how it works & why it's important.

**Satire:** A crisp, authoritative, technical voice clearly explaining how it works and why it is important. But... It's the *exact opposite* of what should be happening. For example

- Preserving and Protecting Pristine Car Habitat
- The Importance of Watering the Sidewalk
- It's so beautiful how oil drops make a rainbow stream in the parking lot when it rains.
- See [Majestic Plastic Bag](#)
- Trailer for a new play/film: [The Plastic Bag Store: Part Film, Part Installation, All Bags](#)

## Video Storytelling Ideas

**IDEA 1:** Frame your face and tell your story in one take. Practice it! Then take the best take.

**IDEA 2:** Frame your face in multiple settings to give context for your project, then edit, and add music, and cool titles.

**IDEA 3:** Shoot a "walk-and-talk" with you behind the camera but narrating in real time. Edit the best clips so it feels like "we are there."

**IDEA 4:** Interview your friends, family, or experts via Zoom then edit for snappy dialogue like a mini-podcast.

**IDEA 5:** Interview both experts and regular people. Edit a montage juxtaposing perspectives, insights, personal actions.

**IDEA 6:** Frame your face asking some great questions. Then answer each one with a creative excerpt from the news, a movie, a commercial, webinar, or some other source.

**IDEA 7:** Check out this [Mockumentary Creation Tips](#) doc. Create a satire with super serious music and deadpan voice. Have you seen this "mockumentary" on the [Majestic Plastic Bag](#)? Or check out the nifty trailer for a new play/film in NYC: [The Plastic Bag Store: Part Film, Part Installation, All Bags](#)

**Here's some starter ideas...**

- Why plastic water bottles are the best choice.
- Why electric vehicles are dumb.
- Why solar panels are an eyesore in the neighborhood.
- Why it's critical protect pristine car habitat.

## Resources and Examples:

- [Answer in Progress](#): YT channel that models vlog journey of experiments to answer a question ([Example](#)). Notice the balance of vlog and graphics, inclusion of interviews, informal yet informational tone. Great model for longform IP journey vlogs
- NY Times Opinion Video series "[We're Cooked](#)" is about our broken food system and the three chances you get to help fix it, and save the planet, every day.
- [Video Storytelling 101](#): Slideshow tutorial by Samantha from one of our earlier trainings, guides through filming, compiles resources, tools to use
- **Interesting Tiktoks:**
  - [Informal explanation showing screenshots](#)
  - [Creative educational graphic story](#)
  - [Creative graphic story, lots of facts, longform TikTok content](#)
  - [Idea #3 type walk and talk, educational](#)

## Graphic Design Storytelling Ideas

**IDEA 1:** Create a PowerPoint (but cool) with images and infographics. Record your voice. Add the perfect music.

**IDEA 2:** Create an infographic poster or series of infographic posts.

**IDEA 3:** Create a photo essay. Then add text for critical points and data stories.

**IDEA 4:** Display your raw data with BIG, LOUD numbers, colors, backbeat.

**IDEA 5:** Annotate a map layer to show the geographical elements of your impact. Have you seen all the tools at [mywater.world](#)? Be sure to see some of our [Map Stories](#).

**IDEA 6:** Try your hand at animation.

**IDEA 7:** Record a timelapse video of you drawing a story or using collage elements. Use some cool music and your own narration.

**IDEA 8:** Video record yourself making a painting, drawing, or sculpture in several stages. Add commentary or text to reinforce your message.

## Resources and Examples:

- [Master Class slides and tips](#) from Wendy Collins - King County Graphic Artist
- [Video on the Color Blue](#) (1:20) with inventive and theatrical infographic animation.
- [Segmented Infographic](#): This graphic uses color and contrast to give a lot of information in one work. It's a great example of text/image balance, minimalism, and readability. Use numbers!!

- [Process Infographic](#): See how the graphic uses color and shapes to illustrate a process. How does it guide your eye?
- Use templates from [Canva](#) or [HubSpot](#) to get you started
- Israel Artist using plastic to make huge globe sculpture | [Article](#) | [Video](#)

## Public Presentation Storytelling Ideas

**IDEA 1:** Stand up and make a 2-minute pitch for your club or classroom to join you.

**IDEA 2:** Create a PSA for your school morning news.

**IDEA 3:** Pitch your school faculty to join you in a campaign.

**IDEA 4:** Share the moral purpose of your impact project with your faith community.

**IDEA 5:** Attend an event or meeting of a local non-profit that is also serving youth. Speak up!

**IDEA 6:** Develop a mini-lesson for younger students perhaps at a school you once attended.

**IDEA 7:** Get on the agenda at a local service club like Rotary, Kiwanis, Chamber of Commerce.

**IDEA 8:** Make a 3-minute “Public Appearance” at a school board or city council meeting. Your voice and your ideas matter more than you think.

**IDEA 9:** Tell your story as an interview on local Public Radio or TV.

**IDEA 10:** Testify at the state capitol on Youth Lobby Day.

## Blog / E-News Storytelling Ideas

**IDEA 1:** Write up your impact story as a class assignment like a science report, economic study, narrative fiction, or a spoken word piece.

**IDEA 2:** Share a blurb in your school or the PTA e-news.

**IDEA 3:** Post on your school district's “Sustainability Page.” If they don't have a dedicated page, help them start one!

**IDEA 4:** Submit your impact story to one or more local youth or adult blogs. Research the ones you like and reach out to them! Have you seen our [student SAWG BLOG?](#)

**IDEA 5:** Craft a Letter to the Editor in a local newspaper.

**IDEA 6:** Send an email to city, county, or state elected officials advocating for stronger policies related to your impact project.