

## Medical Writing Doesn't Have to Be Complicated.



With the holidays right around the corner, I thought I'd keep the December edition of newsletter short and sweet. In this issue, I'll share a few best practices for the art of storytelling in science writing I picked up at science writing workshop earlier this month.

## Making Science Writing Sexy: The Art of Storytelling

### Using Narrative to Communicate Science



funded workshops on in early December. The central theme was narrative writing in science. This workshop couldn't have come at a better time, as I continue to see elements of storytelling infiltrating more areas of science—and medical—writing.

So, why should science writing tell a story? The short answer is: to keep you reading! Some people may consider reading about science boring unless they either are scientists or science enthusiasts. Others may find the long words intimidating and hard to follow. For some readers, science may not seem as exciting or “sexy” as other topics, so we science writers have to get creative to keep you from skipping over our articles.

Then there's the major side effect of technology: The human attention span continues to plummet, driven by the endless wells of information on social media and digital publications. With so much content readily available at your fingertips, articles are literally competing—and begging—to be read. The lack of interest and short attention spans mean science writers have to overcome two enormous hurdles to grab—and hold—your attention. And this is where the journalism and the art of storytelling come into play.

## Three Tricks to Make Science Writing More Interesting Using Storytelling

In a nutshell, a science writer's job is to make you care enough to read what he or she writes and keep your interest. Three key ways to do that using storytelling or narrative I learned at this workshop are:

**1) Use some of the same elements of narrative storytelling** when writing a science narrative. This strategy includes the classic narrative arc where a story starts off slowly, builds to a climax, and then cools down with the main problem in the story is resolved. In other words, sometimes it's okay to take your readers on a roller coaster ride.

**2) Characters**—if appropriate—can engage the reader while serving as an instrument to communicate the science.

**3) If possible, use characters in the story to make readers think about controversial or taboo topics in a less-biased, more objective way.** An example of this is this award-winning article from [StatNews](#) that doubled as a reading assignment for the workshop.

### So... what's next?

I have many things in the works for 2019, and I'll share a few details in my next newsletter. In the meantime, I'd like to wish you all the happiness this season can bring and even better year to come.

Stay tuned!



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