**Instructions**

The 3-minute story is exactly what it sounds like. Assume you only had three minutes to tell your audience what they need to know about a given topic: how would you say it? This exercise ensures concision because it forces you to identify what critical details need to be included, but also what details aren’t relevant and can be omitted. If you’ve ever found yourself unexpectedly giving an update on a project you’re working on, being able to concisely brief your audience shows a command of the subject. It also builds your confidence as a communicator and demonstrates respect for your audience’s time. If your project requires a formal presentation, this exercise reduces dependence on your slides if you're able to articulate the main points in a spoken narrative. Let's get started writing a 3-minute story for a work project of your own.

First, choose a project where you need to communicate something to someone, and then complete the following steps. If you can talk about your topic publicly, I welcome you to share your completed 3-minute story here for community feedback—but please don’t submit anything confidential or sensitive!

**STEP 1:** Identify. Rather than jumping straight into writing (which some may find hard if you don't routinely do this), it’s helpful to do some initial planning. Consider: what is the main message you want your audience to know? Can you articulate it in a single sentence? If you’re feeling stuck, use the Big Idea worksheet to help you achieve clarity and concision, which will set you up for success in planning what components will resonate with your audience.

**STEP 2:** Storyboard. Now that you have an overarching goal, what details do you need to include to support it? Use the following storyboarding exercise to create a visual outline of your content, giving you a plan of attack in structuring your story.

**STEP 3:** Plan. Consider your chosen audience. Will you start with your main point or do you need to lead up to it? If you’re feeling stuck, use these questions to consider how you might organize the details in your story:

-Is your audience familiar with this topic?

-Do you anticipate they will respond favorably or unfavorably the recommended action?

-Are there any biases which may make your audience resistant to the message?

-Did they ask for the project or will you need to convince them why they should care?

-Does your audience know you? If not, will you need to establish credibility by detailing them on the robustness of the analysis?

**STEP 4**: Write. On a blank piece of paper (or your preferred word processing tool), write out your 3-minute story. Your end result should have the critical details in support of your main message and should be tailored to your specific audience.

Modified from the book Storytelling with Data, Knaflic, 2019