

How to tell a one minute story

Outline

1. Story basics (beginning)
2. SADPIE (middle)
3. Caveats (end)

1. Story basics

What kind of story are you telling and who are you telling it to?

- oral stories
- audio stories
- theatre plays
- movie narratives
- written stories
- static stories (i.e. pictures)

1. Story basics

A story you're telling someone ideally has the following elements:

- real emotion and authenticity
- conflict
- interesting details that paint a picture (try to engage many senses)
- eye contact
- inflection in your voice
- a learning or change

2. SADPIE



Setup. Action.
Details. Punchline.
Introspection. Ending.

2. SADPIE

Setup:

Setup should be quick and to the point. 5 – 15 seconds. Statement. Learning generalization. Funny/interesting hook.

1. Any conflicts? What stuck in your mind? How did it make you feel? Any pictures you took with your phone? Is there something new you did that you want to talk about?
2. Why did that stuck in your mind? Why did you take a picture? What was funny/sad/upsetting/special about the new thing you did? Is there any generalization you can make about yourself or other people from this moment?
3. Rephrase it in a short sentence that starts with: I learned about... or I found out about how... Or use a hook: I almost got arrested for public disobedience this weekend...

2. SADPIE

Action:

Action should describe what happened: I got up a little late, spilled my coffee as usual, hushed out the door, and still missed the bus. But thank god I missed it.

What were the steps that got you somewhere? Pick 2-3 stops before arriving at your destination (punchline).

2. SADPIE

Details:

Details paint a picture in the audiences mind: The only available seats were the ones in the sun. That plastic was on fire! I had to shift around in my seat until it cooled enough for me to sit still.

Interleave action and details. Can you describe something that engages their sense of smell/hearing/taste/feeling/seeing?

2. SADPIE

Punchline:

The punchline or conclusion is that revealing or funny moment near the end of the story where you learn something new. It ties back to the setup.

Anchor your punchline around a strong emotion.

2. SADPIE

Introspection:

What does this all mean? What does it say about the world, about how things work? What did you learn? How did that change you?

2. SADPIE

Ending:

Wrap up your story. Can you end with a question that engages your audience and lets them think about how they feel about a topic?

2. SADPIE

Setup – Action Details Punchline – Introspection Ending

10s

30s – 40s

10s – 20s

Keep in mind, this works best with actual conflicts or interesting things that happened.

3. Caveats

Stories are about communication. Sometimes it's the right tool, sometimes there is no reason to use it. Like anything, it's a skill that needs to be practiced.

Thank you

