

## Background

Extract from (Knafllic, 2015)

### “The 3-minute story & Big Idea

The idea behind each of these concepts is that you are able to boil the “so-what” down to a paragraph and, ultimately, to a single, concise statement. You have to really know your stuff—know what the most important pieces are as well as what isn’t essential in the most stripped-down version. While it sounds easy, being concise is often more challenging than being verbose. Mathematician and philosopher Blaise Pascal recognized this in his native French, with a statement that translates roughly to “I would have written a shorter letter, but I did not have the time” (a sentiment often attributed to Mark Twain).

### 3-minute story

The 3-minute story is exactly that: if you had only three minutes to tell your audience what they need to know, what would you say? This is a great way to ensure you are clear on and can articulate the story you want to tell. Being able to do this removes you from dependence on your slides or visuals for a presentation. This is useful in the situation where your boss asks you what you’re working on or if you find yourself in an elevator with one of your stakeholders and want to give her the quick rundown. Or if your half-hour on the agenda gets shortened to ten minutes, or to five. If you know exactly what it is you want to communicate, you can make it fit the time slot you’re given, even if it isn’t the one for which you are prepared.

### Big Idea

The Big Idea boils the so-what down even further: to a single sentence. This is a concept that Nancy Duarte discusses in her book, *Resonate* (2010). She says the Big Idea has three components:

1. It must articulate your unique point of view;
2. It must convey what’s at stake; and
3. It must be a complete sentence.”

### In the lab today:

Working in groups of 2 or 3, using the big idea worksheet, formulate your Big Idea.

Possible scenarios:

1. You are starting a student club and you want students to join.
  2. You work for the students’ union and you want someone to be a class rep.
  3. You are a lecturer and you want students to succeed in your module.
  4. You are raising money for “Wells for Zoë” and you want people to donate.
  5. You work for the railway and want people to take the train instead of other transport.
  6. You work for a shop in Dublin City Centre and want people to shop there, rather than online.
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## The Big Idea Worksheet

Template from (Knafllic, 2015):

Identify a project you are working on, where you need to communicate in a data-driven way. Reflect upon, and fill out the following:

Who is your audience?:

1. List the primary groups or individuals to whom you will be communicating.
2. If you had to narrow that down to a single person, who would it be?
3. What does your audience care about?
4. What action does your audience need to take?

What is at stake?:

1. What are the benefits if your audience acts in the way you want them to?
2. What are the risks if they do not?

Form your big idea. It should:

1. Articulate your point of view.
2. Convey what's at stake.
3. Be a complete and single sentence.

## Bibliography

Knafllic, C. N. (2015). *Storytelling with Data—A data visualization guide for business professionals* (1st ed.). Wiley.