



# Finding a Story

## *start with some basic story types*

There are numerous different stories you can tell with a single dataset. Sometimes when you are getting started with one it can be hard to narrow in on aspects of the data that build a strong narrative. This is a list of some of the basic types of stories you can find in data. Consider it scaffolding you can use to start building your story on top of.

## Factoid Stories

*Why does this one data point stand out from the others?*

Sometimes in large sets of data you find the most interesting thing is the story of one particular piece of information. This could be an “outlier” (a data point not like the others), or it could be the data point that is most common. A detail about one particular piece of your data can fascinate and surprise people. It can also give them an easier way to start thinking about the whole set of data.

## Interaction Stories

*Why do these do aspects of the data change with each other?*

When two aspects of your data seem related, you can tell a story about how they interact. The fancy name for this is “correlation”. If one measure goes up, the other goes up too. If one goes down, the other goes down. In other cases, they might interact as opposites (when one goes up, the other goes down). You need to be careful not to guess about reasons for the interaction, but noticing the relationship itself can be a good story that connects things people otherwise don’t think about together.

## Comparison Stories

*What is the meaningful difference between these parts?*

Comparing between sections of your data can be a good way to find a story to tell. Often one part of your data tells one story, but another part tells

a totally different story. Or maybe there is a smaller portion of your data that serves as an example of an overall pattern.

## Change Stories

*What made this part of the data change from this to that?*

People like to think about how things change over time. We experience and think about the world based on how we interact with it over time.

Telling a story about change over time appeals to people's interest in understanding what causes change, and they can often remember seeing the differences.

## Personal Stories

*How does this data connect to the lives of the audience?*

Some stories are interesting because they connect to your real life.

Personalizing the story creates a connection to the real world meaning of the data and can be a powerful type of story for small audiences. Stories about someone's personal experiences can make the data seem more real.