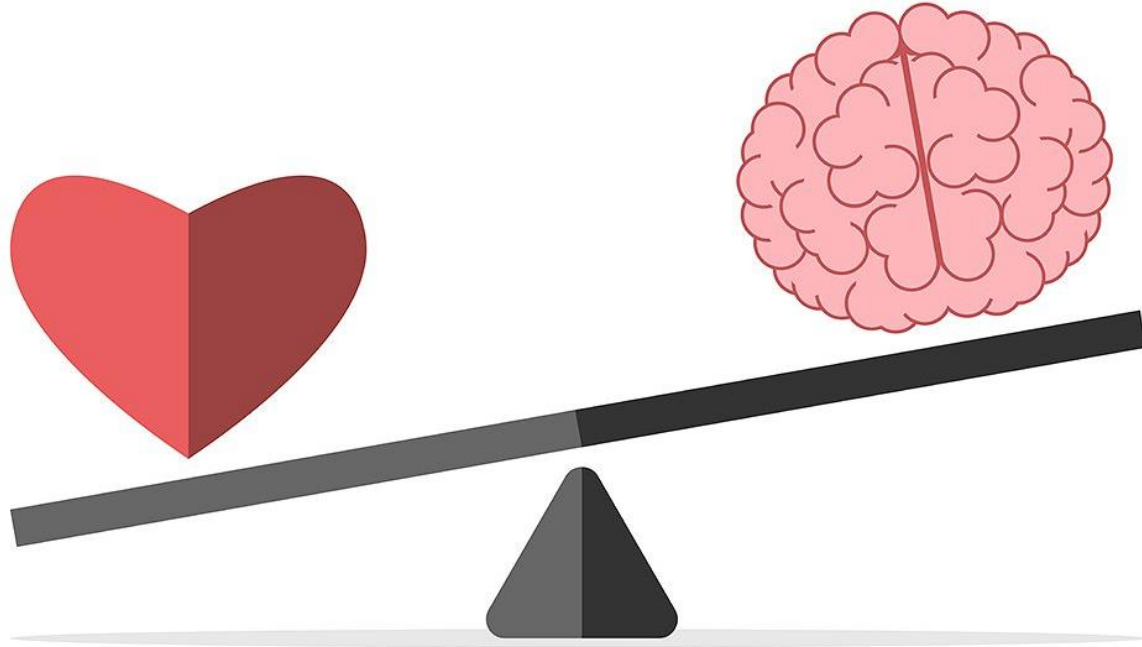Communicating
with **Broader
Audiences**
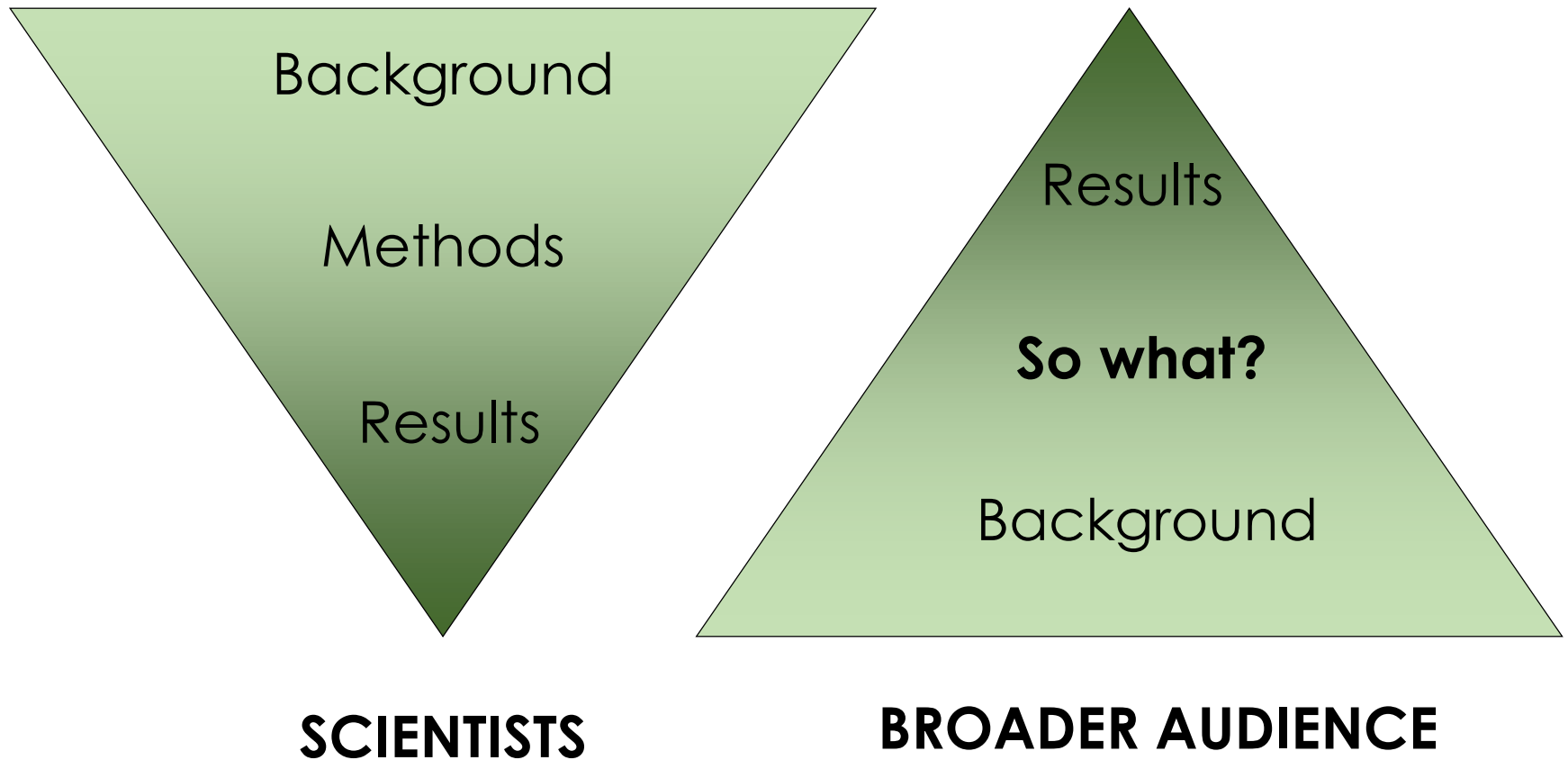
Who's your **audience** and what do they **need** to know?

More information & data will not convince most people
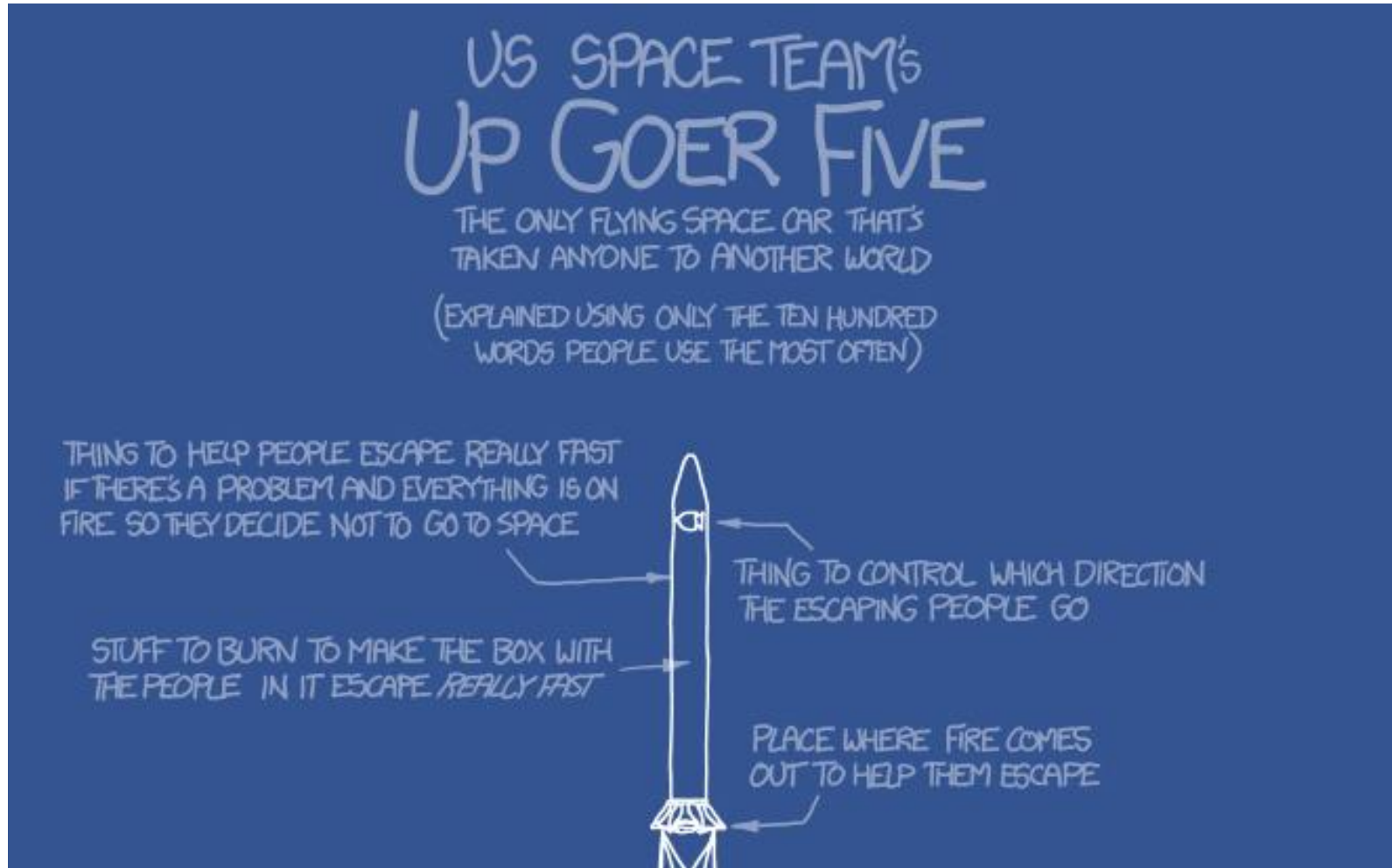
Tap into the lens of your audience's **values** & **cultural identities**

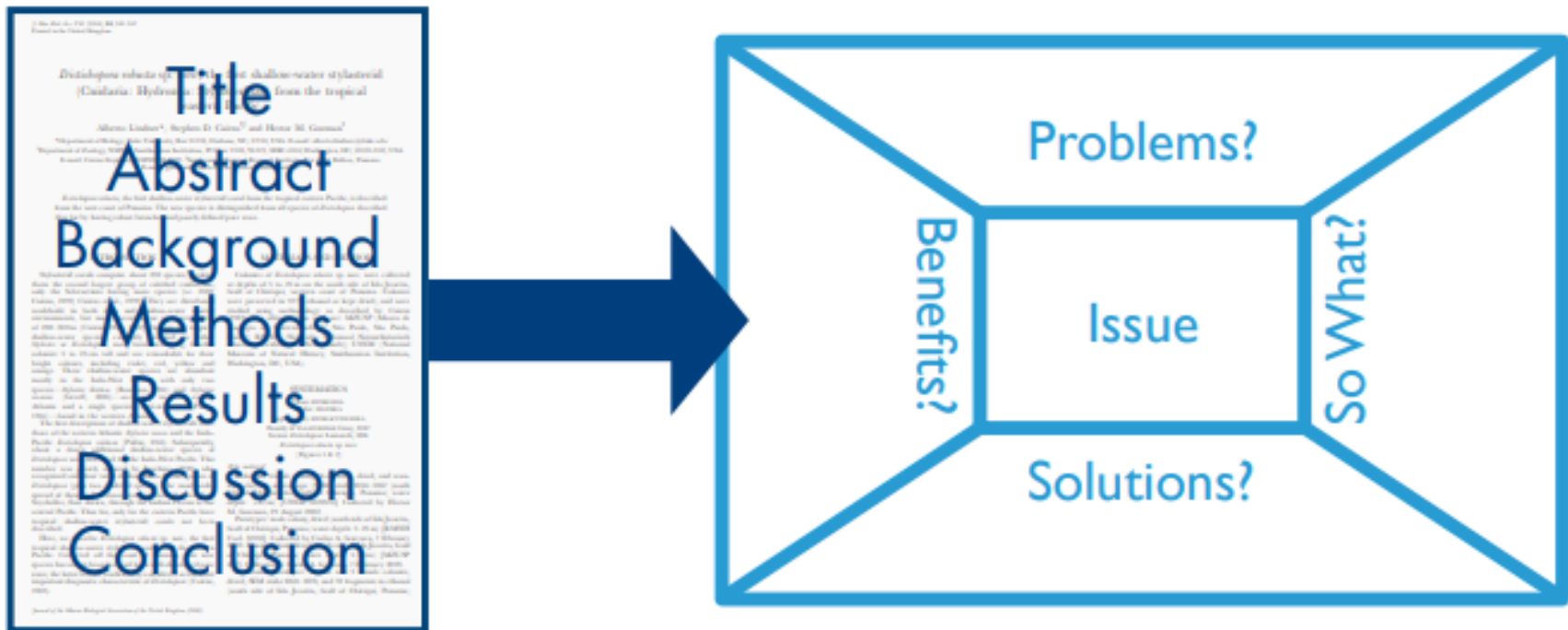# Need to **reverse** your communication approach

SCIENTISTS

BROADER AUDIENCE

Remove the Jargon

Message Box is a tool to Distill & Communicate

From Nancy Baron's "Escape from the Ivory Tower: A Guide to Making Your Science Matter"

Who is your audience?

'general public'

- Journalist/media
- Elected official
- Governmental policy maker
- Non-governmental Organization
- Charitable Foundations
- Practitioners/Resource managers
- Consumers/Resource users
- Concerned Citizens
- Scientists in your field
- Scientists not in your field

What's the **problem**
your research is addressing?

What are the
benefits
to solving this
problem?

What's the
issue?

So what?
Why should
your audience
care?

What's the **solution**?

What's the central **issue**?

- The **big picture context** of your work
- Needs to be broad enough to encompass your key points by specific enough to set up what's to come
- **Concise** – no more than a short phrase
- Revisit once you've filled out the rest of your message box
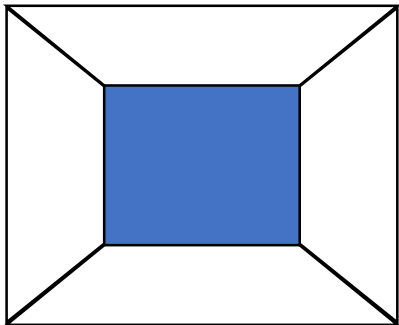
What's the central **issue**?

- Safeguarding public spaces from terrorists

- Ocean acidification and seafood

- Value of green space and trees to communities

- Understanding the universe through gravitational wave astronomy
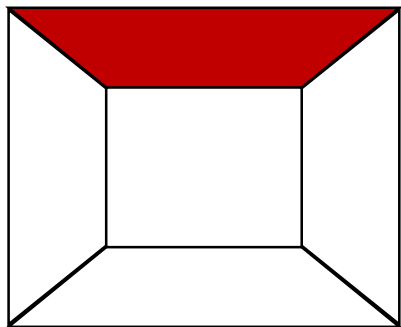
- **Conserving wildlife corridors**

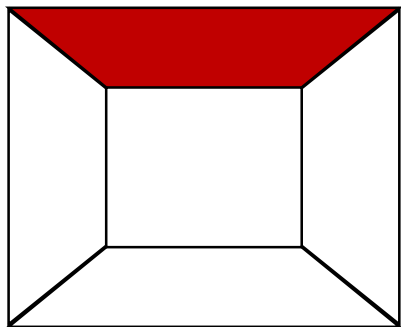 Audience = Members of US Congress & their staff
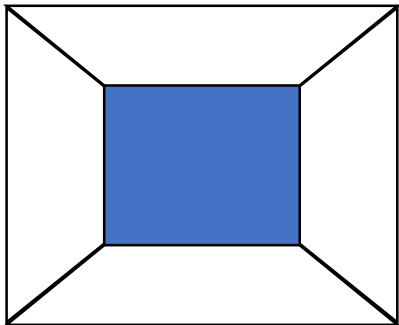
EXAMPLES

What's the **problem** your research is addressing?

- **Issue** = broad context to set the stage

- **Problem** = specific to your research questions

- Try to stick to one problem per audience/message

What's the **problem** your research is addressing?

- Many species of wildlife in the US are declining

- US loses ~2 million acres of natural land per year. This loss fragments wildlife habitat & limits movement

- Wildlife do not observe political boundaries, yet federal, state, local, and tribal agencies don't coordinate land decisions
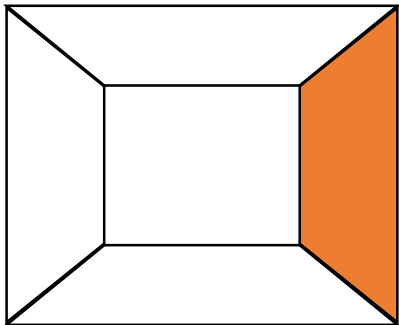
EXAMPLE

So what? Why should your audience care?

MESSAGE → So What?

Policymakers → Does this support my agenda? Do my constituents care?

Managers → What will it cost - time, effort, money? Who supports this?

NGOs → How does this fit our agenda?

Scientists → Is it groundbreaking? It is robust? How does it affect my work?

Media → Is it news? Will it sell? Is it a good story?

Foundations → Does this fit within our portfolio?

Conc. Citizens → How does this affect safety/health, livelihoods and natural resources?

From the COMPASS workbook

So what? Why should your audience care?

- Wildlife provide recreational, aesthetic, spiritual, and economic value to Americans
  - $145 billion/year on hunting, fishing, wildlife viewing
- Wildlife support healthy ecosystems
- Survival depends on day to day movements, seasonal migration, and shifting ranges due to climate change
  - Includes important species such as elk, mountain lions, salmon and more
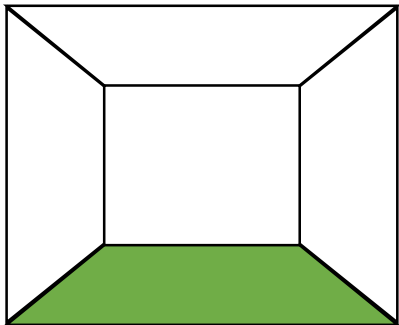
EXAMPLE

What are the **solutions**?

- Is your audience involved in the solution? Will they act upon the solution?

- When advocating, consider using "if" statements and then state the expected outcome

- Solution needs to solve the problem
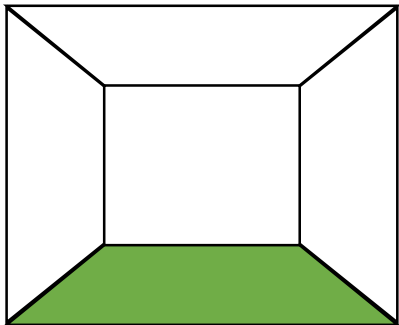
What are the **solutions**?

- 25 years of research indicates that connections between natural areas are crucial for long term wildlife survival

- Congress should pass the Wildlife Corridors Conservation Act which will provide resources to identify and prioritize corridors for wildlife. It will require all relevant federal, state, local and tribal governments to coordinate land use decisions.
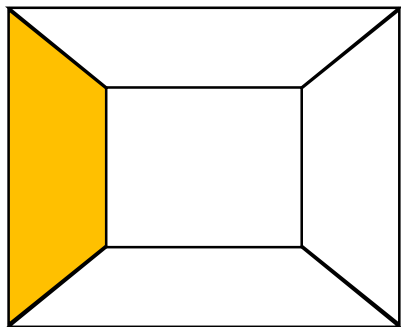
EXAMPLE

What are the **benefits** to solving this problem?

- Tie into the "so what" for your audience

- Be specific, if possible:

WHO is likely to benefit,
and **WHERE**, and **WHEN**

Broader-scale benefits? Make it clear that the solution is a part of the bigger puzzle

What are the **benefits** to solving this problem?

- Conserve wildlife and the many values they provide by allowing movement

- Prevent species from becoming endangered, which avoids costly recovery efforts

- Reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions

- Increase revenue from wildlife viewing, hunting, and fishing
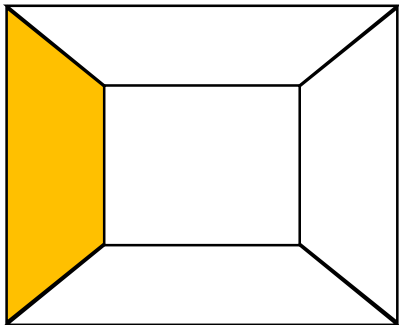
EXAMPLE

Make your message **memorable**

- Support your message with data, but only include numbers and statistics if they're *illustrative*

- *Compare* numbers or concepts with something most people can relate to

> "In the Midwest, it's **7°F warmer** in the winter than it was in 1974. That's the difference between wearing and not wearing long underwear."
> — Dr. Tracy Holloway, Univ. Wisconsin

- Use specific, quick examples

- Be judicious with your metaphor use

- Lead with *what you know*, not what you don't know