



# Telling your Science Story

## The Power of Narrative in Research Communication

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# Overview...

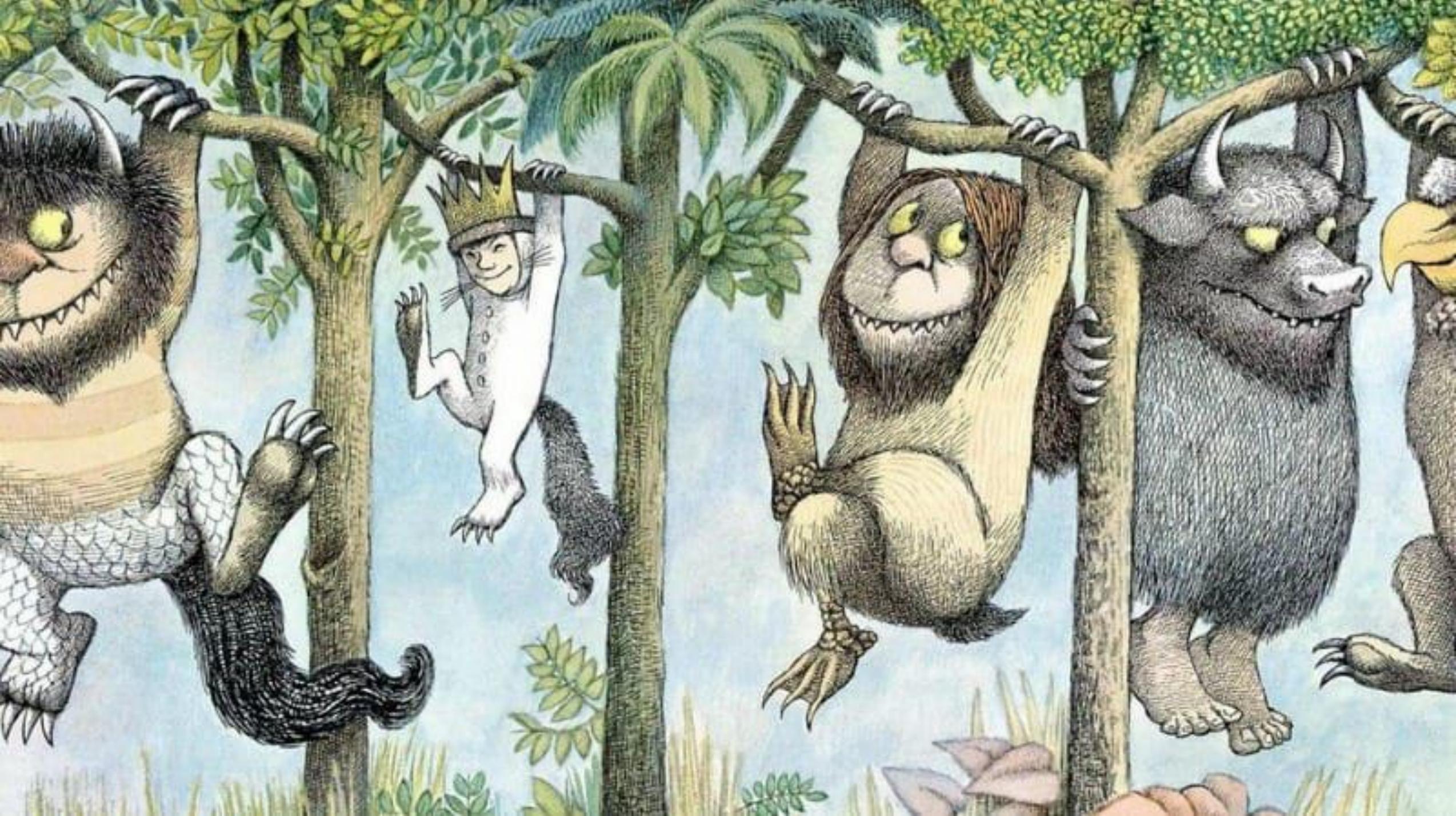
- What are the elements of a good story?
- How does storytelling affect your brain?
- Why should you communicate research through storytelling?
- How can you communicate research through storytelling?

What makes a good story?

Think of a story you loved as a kid...

- Why did you love it?
- What made it memorable?
- What elements do you still remember, to this day?





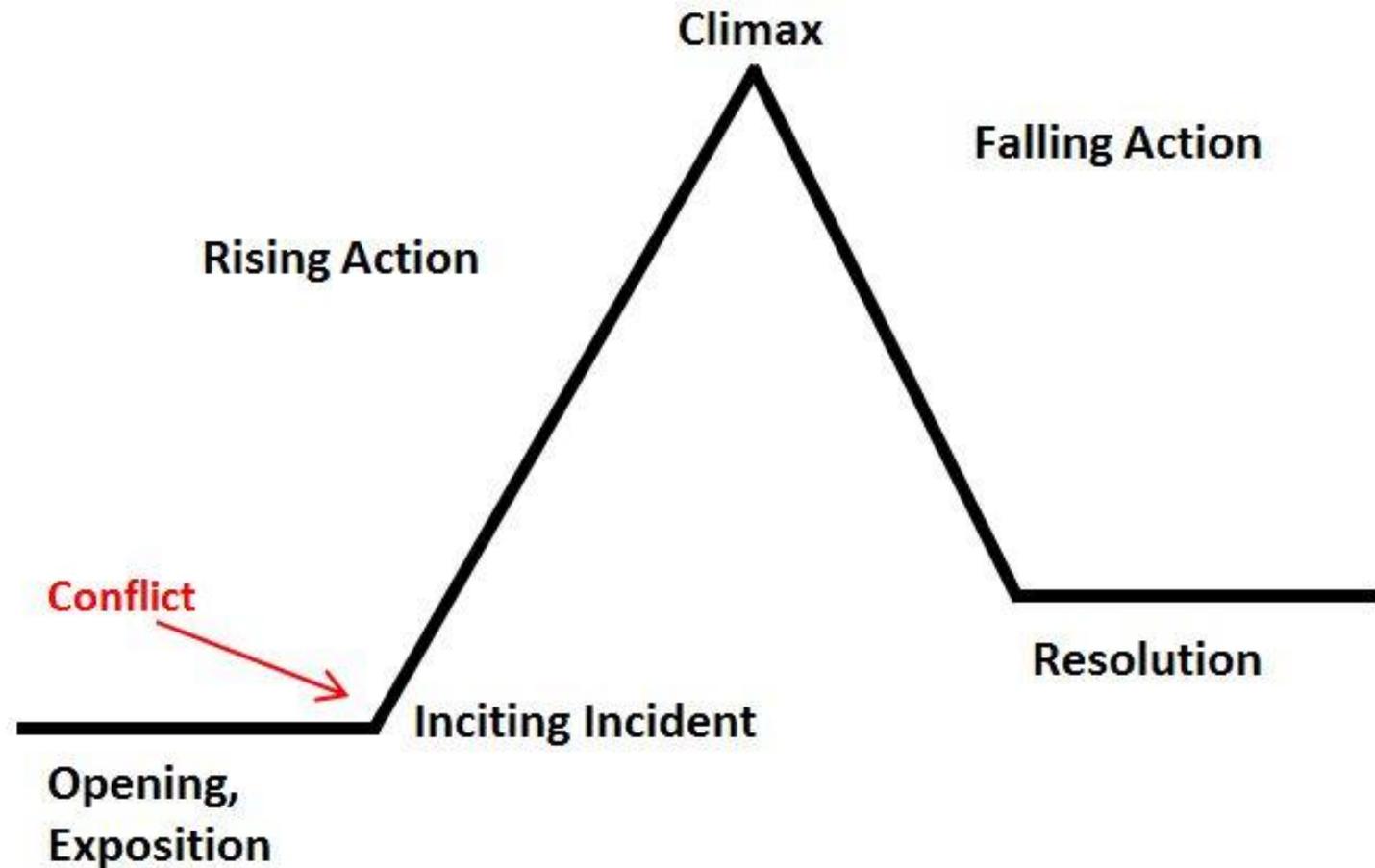
# What are the elements of a good story?

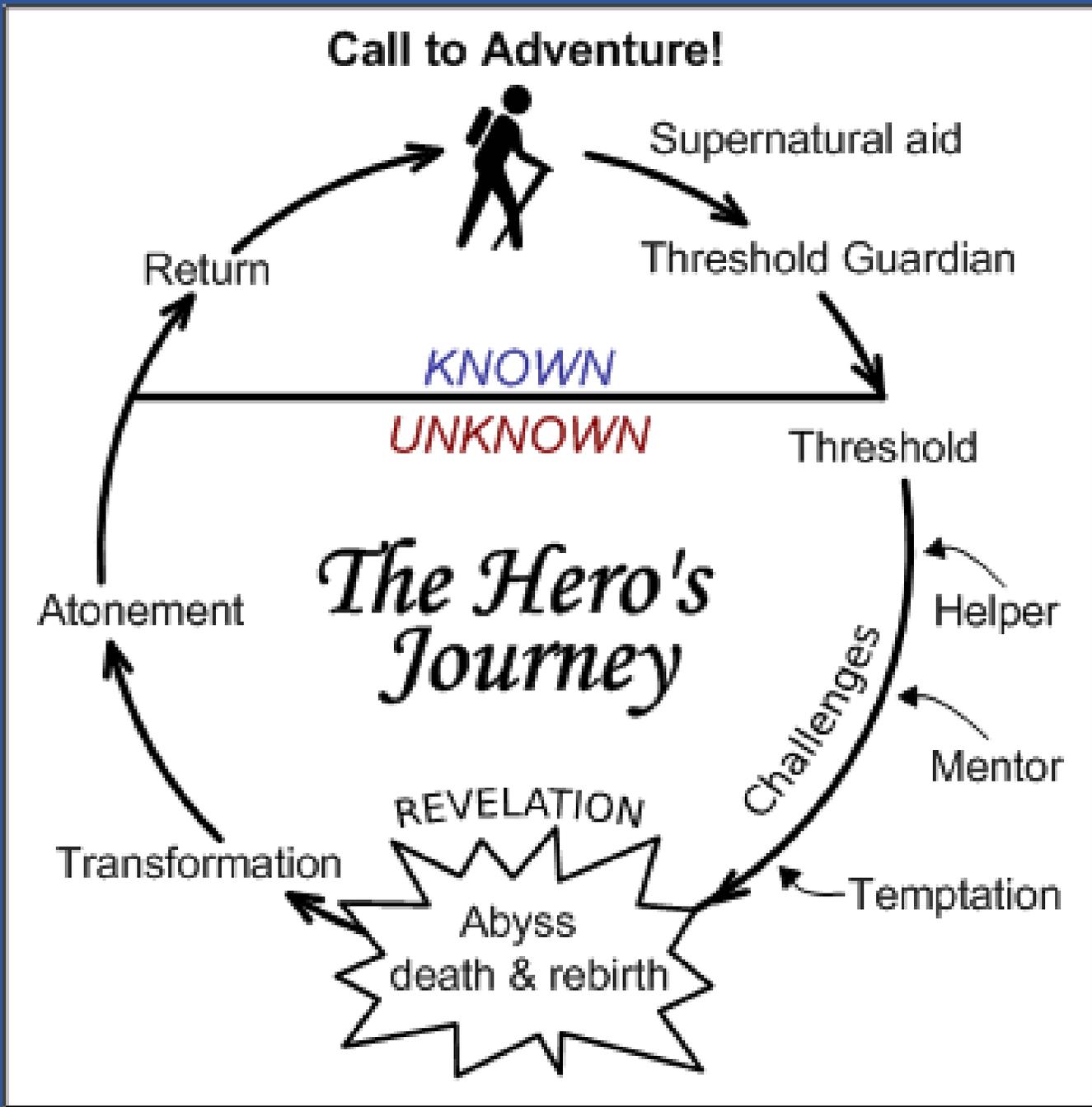
Combine...

- Narrative
- Imagery
- Conflict
- Characters
- Emotion

...to hook your audience and tell a compelling story

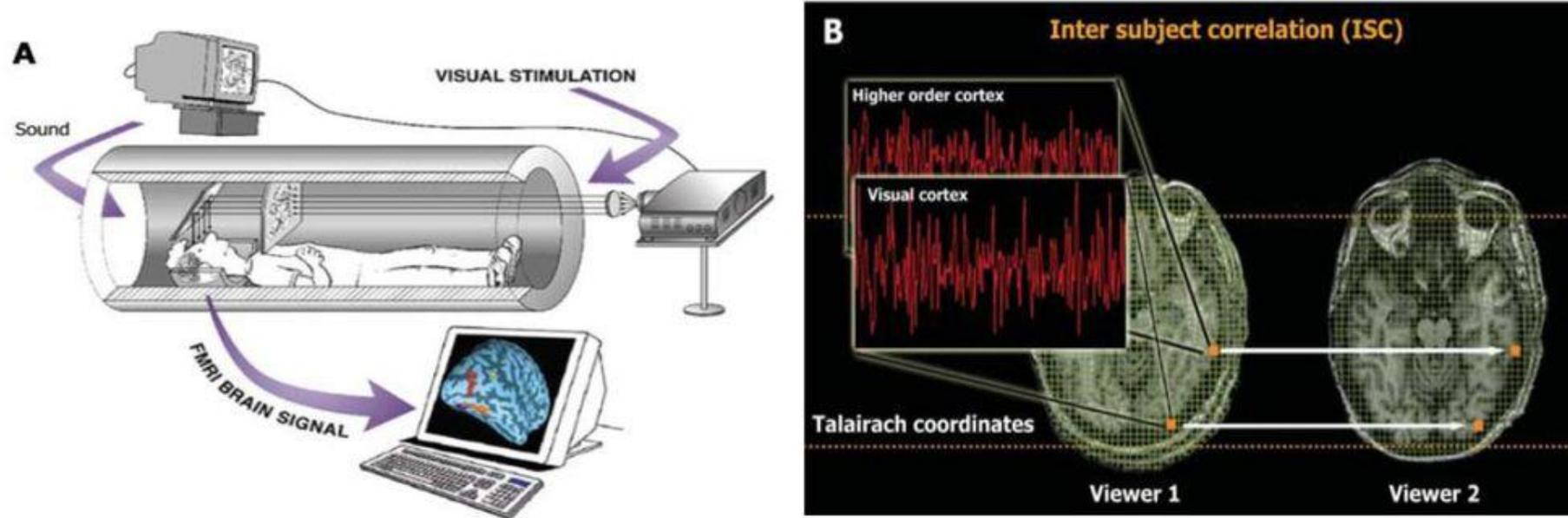
## Basic Plot Diagram





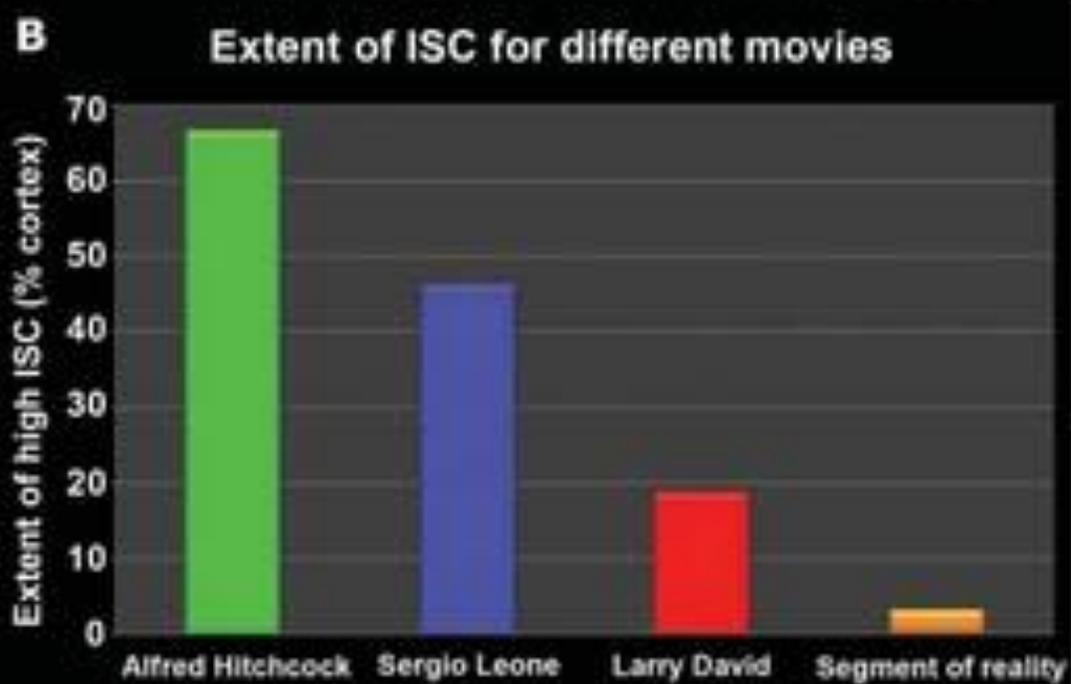
How does storytelling affect  
your brain?

# Measuring ISC During Film Viewing

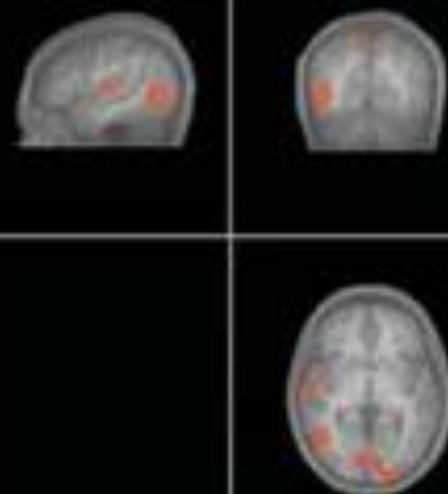


(A) Volunteers watched movies and TV episodes while their brain activity was recorded with fMRI.

(B) The ISC analysis measures similarity in brain activity across viewers by comparing the response time course in each brain region from one viewer with the response time courses obtained in the same brain region from other viewers during movie watching.



Washington Square Park  
(segment of reality)



# Your Brain on Stories

Cortisol  
(Focuses Attention)

Oxytocin  
(Boosts Empathy)



Neural Coupling  
(Increased connections)

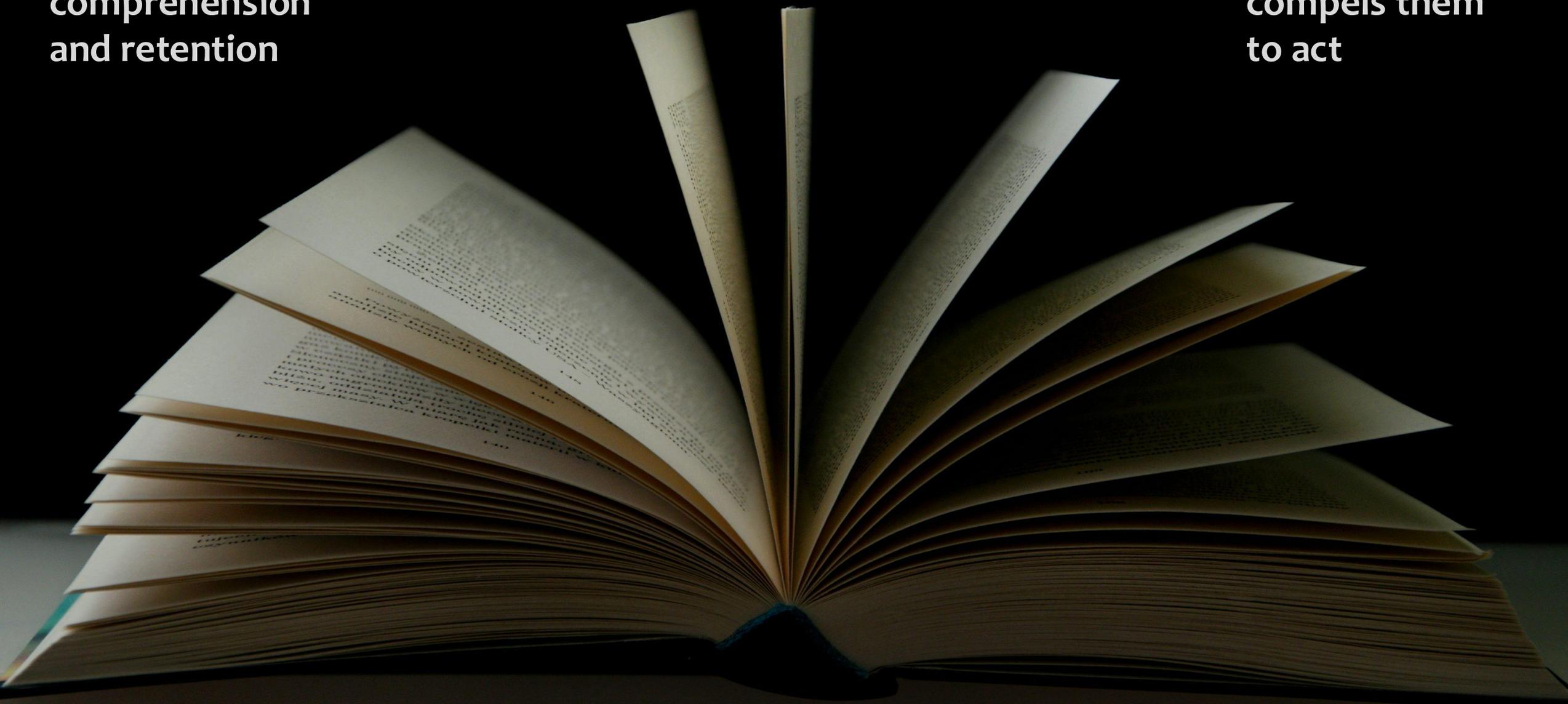
Dopamine  
(Aids Memory)

Why should you communicate  
research as a story?

**Increases  
engagement,  
comprehension  
and retention**

**Helps organize complex information**

**Persuades your  
audience and  
compels them  
to act**



How should you communicate  
research as a story?



Why Science Needs Story



**HOUSTON,**

**WE HAVE  
A NARRATIVE**



**Randy Olson**



Tell your story in three sentences using the ABT template

# The ABT template

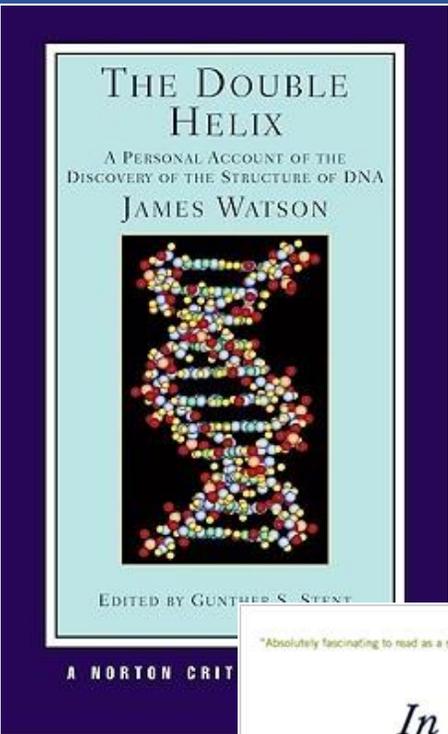


- A simple template for telling a story in three sentences
- And... But... Therefore
- **A:** beginning (exposition)
- **B:** middle (conflict)
- **T:** end (resolution)
- **Ex:** Our immune system protects us from “foreign” invaders by attacking them **and** destroying them **and** removing them from our bodies.
- **But**, if our immune system attacked our own bodies (“self”) like it attacks foreign things (*autoimmunity*) that could cause all sorts of problems!
- **Therefore**, I studied how immune systems could tell the difference between foreign and self.

Now it's your turn!

Tell the story of your research  
using the ABT Template





“Science is full of ‘vexing questions, conflict, dead ends, insights, and the occasional thrilling leap’ and as such, is ‘a story well told.’”

— Andrew Revkin

