**Telling Our Stories**

*The Houston Zoo • Story Structure Worksheet*

Select one point about your work at the Houston Zoo that you would commonly make to a target audience and choose a story that will illustrate that point – *something that actually happened*, whether it’s an incident in which you were involved, something you observed, or simply a story you heard about from a colleague.

Follow the directions below and answer the questions in the spaces provided to outline your story. You do not need to write out the entire story word for word.

**THE POINT**

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| **What one point do you want listeners to take away upon hearing this story?** *(While this may not be evident to your audience until the end of the story, you must be clear on your intended message from the beginning.)* |

**YOUR AUDIENCE**

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| **To whom would you tell this story?** *(Your audience affects how you tell the story – i.e., the language you choose – as well as which parts you need to emphasize, so be clear on this as well.)* |

**BEGINNING (Act One)**

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| **Who is the protagonist of your story?** (Who is driving the action? With whom is your audience likely to identify? *Remember, you have to begin with one person and tell us enough about him or her so the audience has a picture of them.)* |
| **What is the setting for your story?** (Where and when does it take place? Any other important circumstances or conditions?) |
| **What is the protagonist’s goal?** (What do they want to do? What challenge or problem are they trying to overcome?) |

**MIDDLE (Act Two)**

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| **What is the first barrier standing in the protagonist’s way?** (What are the internal or external barriers?) |
| **How does your protagonist pursue the goal? (**What happens as the protagonist encounters subsequent barriers, and if there are no barriers, what is keeping the narrative interesting for the audience?) |

**END (Act Three)**

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| **What is the resolution of the story?** (Does your protagonist achieve his/her/their goal or is there another outcome?) |
| **What is the meaning of the story?** (Go back to the first question about the point you intend to make and confirm you have delivered on that promise.) |