



# Storytelling

Writing to engage and persuade

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## Stories are about feelings



**"I've learned that people will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."** Maya Angelou

## What we will cover today

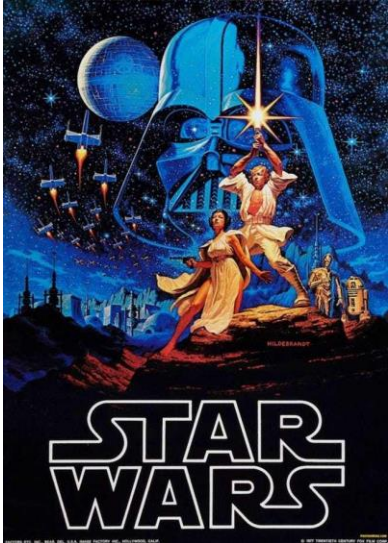
- What makes a good story
  - Our brand language guide
  - How to use our tone of voice to write interesting and engaging content
  - Importance of adapting your writing for different audiences and channels
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# Part one - the principles

**healthwatch**



## Overcoming the monster



The protagonist sets out to defeat something bad.

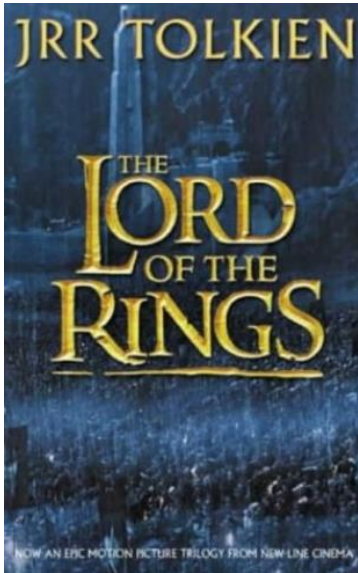
## Rags to riches

The poor protagonist gets power, money, love before losing it all.





## The quest



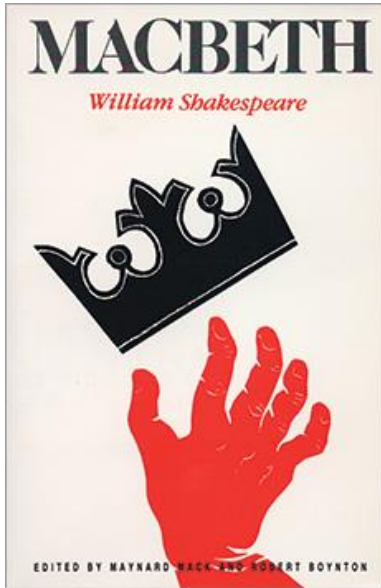
The protagonist sets out to achieve a goal and face challenges on the way.

## Voyage and return

The protagonist goes on a hard journey and returns with experience.



## Tragedy



Pity for the protagonists, unfortunate end or downfall.

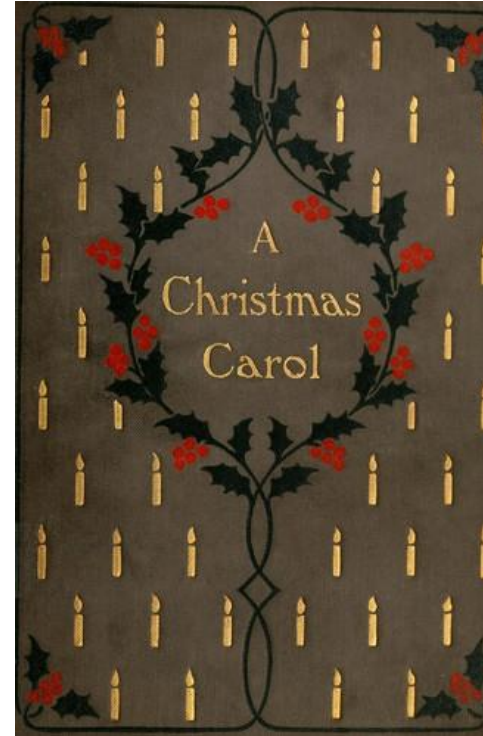
## Comedy

Humorous characters whose adventures result in a happy ending.



## Rebirth

An event forces the main character to change their ways and often become a better person.





## There are only seven plotlines

- Overcoming the monster
- Rags to riches
- The quest
- Voyage and return
- Comedy
- Tragedy
- Rebirth

## Three tools for persuasive language

- Ethos - ethics
- Pathos - emotion
- Logos - logic

## Ethos - ethics

If your audience see your augment as credible, it will be easier to persuade them.



## Pathos - emotions

Used to connect to an audience by appealing to their emotions.



## Logos - reason

If you can prove your argument, people are more likely to listen





## Power of three

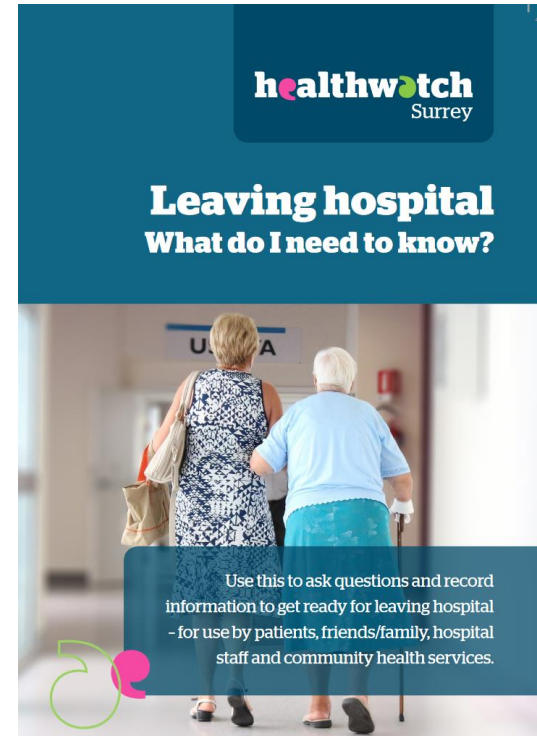
1. Ethics
2. Emotion
3. Logic



## Exercise

Your Healthwatch has produced a hospital discharge checklist that nurses and patients can use together. If your local hospital adopts it, it could save patients unnecessary suffering and the NHS money.

**Your task:** Write a key message using either ethos, pathos or logos - or all three - to persuade NHS staff to adopt the checklist.



## Examples

**Ethos:** *Four out of five dentists use McShine toothpaste*

**Pathos:** *Give your child a healthy smile for life, use McShine toothpaste*

**Logos:** *McShine is proven to protect teeth for 24 hours - longer than any other brand*

## Beware overuse of 'heroes'

Pros	Cons
Gives the story a focal point	Not all examples are good examples
Inspires people to be interested in an issue	They can distract people from the issue
A voice to call others to action - if they can do it, so can you	They can activate stereotypes
Makes people more likely to remember the story	Their achievements can feel unachievable for others

# What this means for our storytelling

Use representative examples

Showcase more than one experience (where possible)

Make examples relatable



## Part two - our brand language




## Why do we need a brand language guide?

- Clarity and consistency
- Differentiation
- Builds trust

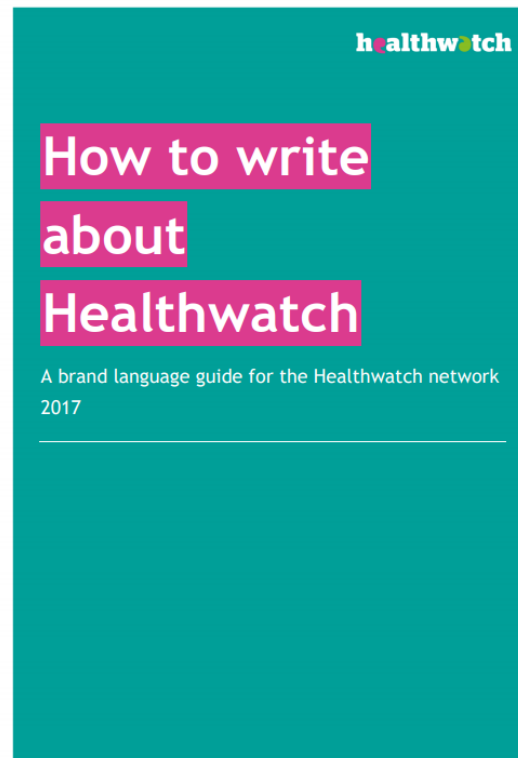
**“Your brand**  
is what people say  
about you when you  
are not in the room.

Jeff Bezos  
Founder of Amazon



## What's in the guide

- Our tone of voice and how to use it.
- Standard descriptors for our network, Healthwatch England and local Healthwatch.
- Our style guide and ways to avoid jargon
- Examples of how to put it all into practice.



## What is a tone of voice?

- Our voice remains consistent, but our tone varies depending on who we're speaking to.
- Our tone of voice is the personality we project.
- It's the language we use, and the way we construct sentences.
- The way we come across to our audiences.



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**innocent drinks** ✓  
@innocent

Good luck with results you lot

Don't let a few letters on a sheet of paper define you

Don't worry if you never got Pythagoras or tectonic plates or i before e or sceince

And don't let anyone tell you that tweeting about smoothies isn't a valid career choice

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GIF



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A large green abstract shape in the top left corner.

## Our personality

**Friendly** but not informal

We use plain simple language.

**Compassionate** but not emotional

We share real people's experiences.

**Authoritative** but not cold


We speak confidently about our evidence and stage where it comes from.

**Informed** but not superior

We share what our research tells us.

**Helpful** but not heavy handed

We suggest and guide people to the information they need.

A large pink abstract shape in the bottom right corner.

## Putting it into practice

Annual report website text before:

### **Healthwatch XX Annual Report 2015/2016**

Our third annual report is now available. See how Healthwatch XX has positively impacted on Health Services in the XX area, ensuring that your voice is always heard.

**After:**

### **How your views helped improve health and care in XX this year**

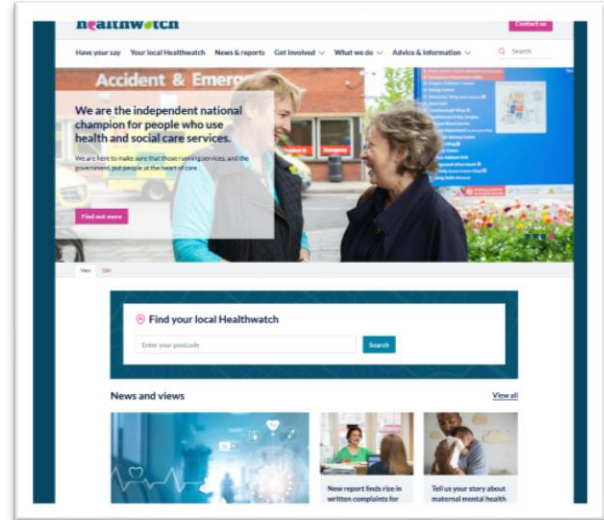
Find out how we used the stories and opinions you shared with us to help make care better for our local community. Download our annual report.

## Have a go...

*“Welcome to the Healthwatch Anytown website.*

*As your local Healthwatch we want to involve people of all ages and from all sections of the community, building on existing groups to ensure continuity, and reaching out into parts of the community that do not currently have a voice. Healthwatch will help you get the best from your local health and social care services.”*

**Your task:** Re-write this saying who we are, what we do and how I (the reader) could benefit



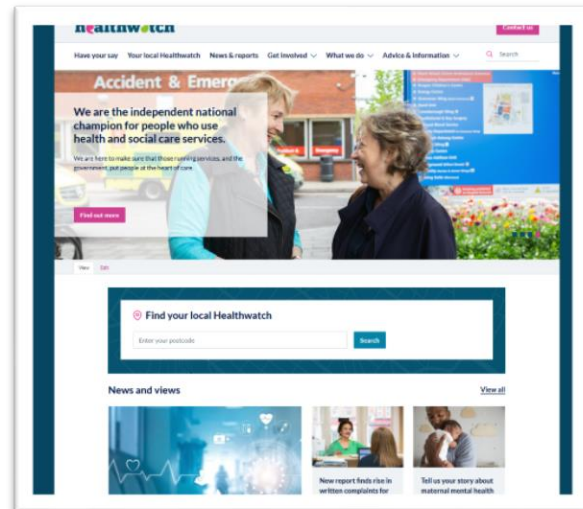
## What could work better

**Tell us what you think of health and social care services in Anytown**

We're Healthwatch Anytown. We're here to listen to what you think of health and social care in Anytown and to help make it better.

We share people's views with those running local services, and suggest improvements based on what you want.

We can also help you find information about which services are available locally. [FIND OUT MORE]



# Part three - bringing it all together





## Reasons you might be writing a story

- For a blog for your website - to launch a report, say what happened at an event, or call on people to share their views
- A case study for your annual report to highlight the value of the work you've done
- To contribute to a campaign being run by another organisation, to showcase the value Healthwatch and people speaking up can bring
- For an awards entry
- For social media

## What a good story should do

- Tell people what happened
- Make people want to hear more
- Make people feel something - empathy, compassion, rage etc.
- Make people want to take action

## What you don't want it to do

- Bore people
- Confuse people e.g. with jargon
- Leave people with more questions than answers

## Gathering the facts



Who?



What?



When?



Where?



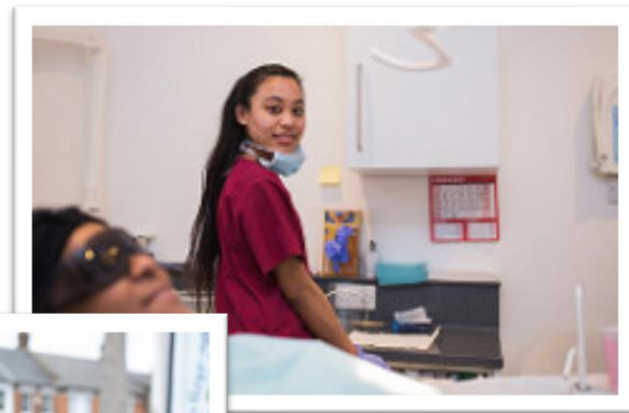
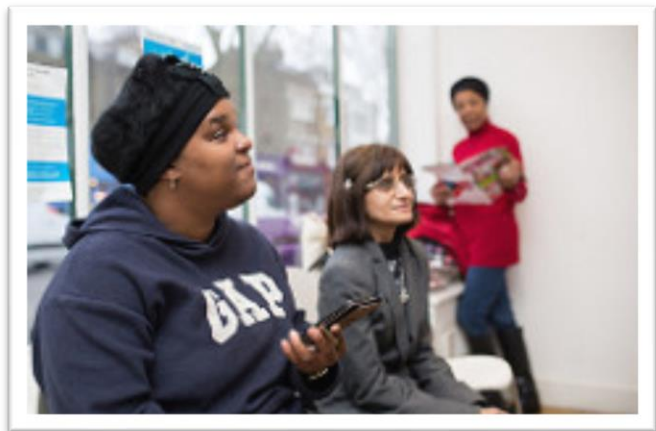
Why?



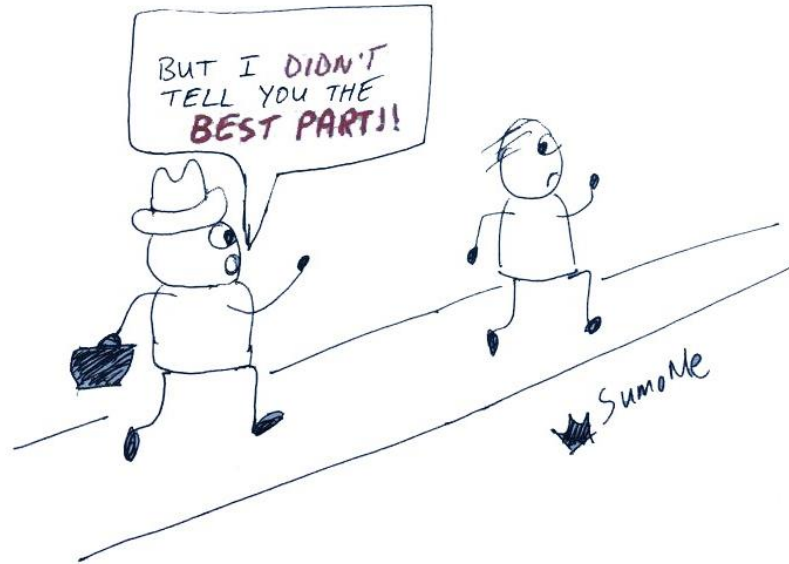
How?

# Identify the audience

Write with a real person in mind



# Why your introduction is the most important part



## How to write a great intro and headline

- The most interesting elements of the story should go right at the top.
- Imagine you're in a cafe and a friend asks you what happened - write what you would say as your intro.
- This will help you to:
  - Cut to the chase
  - Avoid jargon
  - Focus on the most interesting things
  - Work to maintain your audience's attention
  - Cut out unimportant facts
  - Find a simple way to explain complicated things

## Examples

If you're writing about change you've brought about, start with that

***5 new GP surgeries opening thanks to people in (area)***

*Five new GP practices will open in (area) after people spoke to Healthwatch XX about how hard it is to get an appointment.*

If you're writing about an opportunity to share your views, make it clear why they should

***How should dementia care in (area) improve?***

*People in (area) are being called on to share their views about what would make dementia care better to inform changes to local services.*

If you're writing up a case study, focus on the most interesting thing that person has to say

*A man who's been cancer-free for almost ten years says the way healthcare staff treated him and his family during treatment made all the difference.*



## Some ways to grab and keep attention

### Keep it short

**Say:** *Eight minutes. That's how long it should take for an ambulance to arrive. But for people in Newcastle...*

**Don't say:** *According to a recent survey conducted by Healthwatch Anytown of people who have experienced a medical emergency, 999 telephone calls are leaving people in Anytown waiting for an ambulance for 12 minutes.*

### Use everyday language

**Say:** *People in Worcester are the happiest in the country with their doctors, dentists and pharmacists. That's according to...*

**Don't say:** *Residents in Worcester are the most content in England with primary care services. A recent survey...*

## Writing for digital

- Entice with strong pictures and clear headline
- Be punchy
  - Short words
  - Short sentences
  - Short paragraphs
- Break up text with sub heading and bullets
- End should include the action you want the reader to take
- Remember SEO: use 'keywords' & include links
- Edit and edit again (people don't need to know everything)
- Use clear language everyone can understand
- Think about the journey to your content

Have a go...

# Write a story

Must  
Essential elements  
Who, what, where, when and how

Should  
More detail  
Quote or case study

Could  
Background

## Further help

Contact the Communications Team via email [hub@healthwatch.co.uk](mailto:hub@healthwatch.co.uk),  
phone <https://www.healthwatch.co.uk/our-staff> or Workplace  
<https://workplace.facebook.com/>

Useful toolkit with exercises for you  
to use for developing personas  
and showing impact  
<https://diytoolkit.org>

