

healthwatch

Storytelling

Writing to engage and persuade

Charlotte Buxton, Communications Manager
Flora Deshmukh, Campaigns Officer



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

A large, stylized green shape resembling a speech bubble or a drop, located in the top left corner of the slide.

What we will cover today

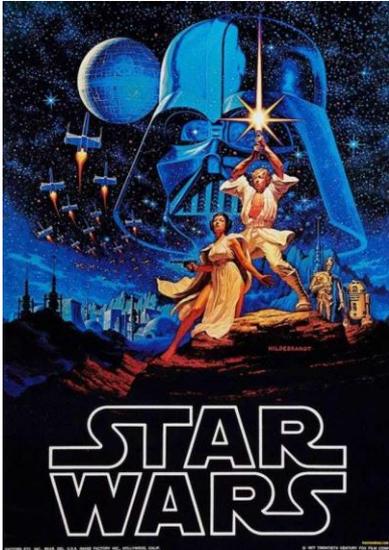
- What makes a good story
- Our brand language guide
- How to use our tone of voice to write interesting and engaging content
- Importance of adapting your writing for different audiences and channels



Part one - the principles



Overcoming the monster



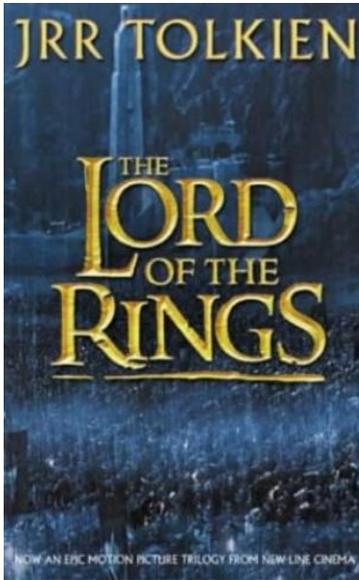
The protagonist sets out to defeat something bad.

Rags to riches

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



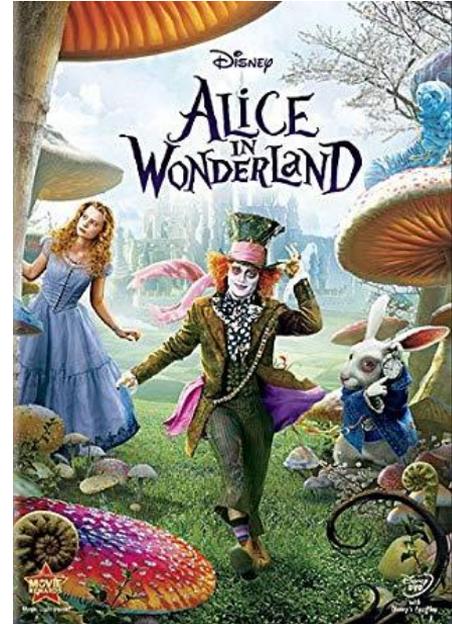
The quest



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.

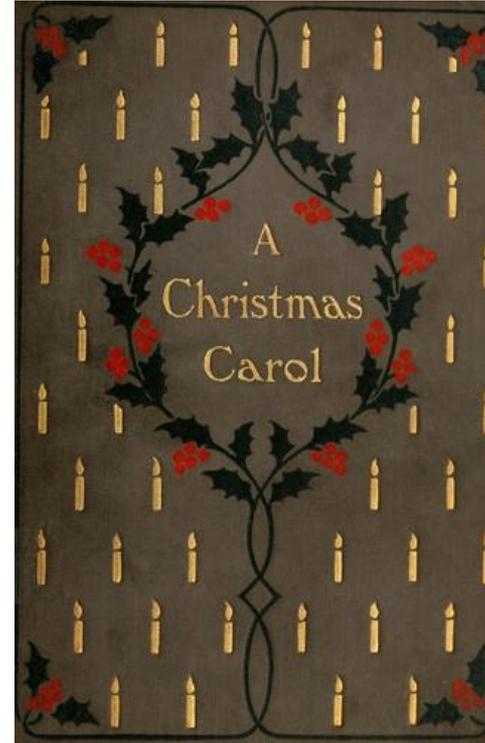
Comedy

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.



A large blue decorative shape in the top-left corner.

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

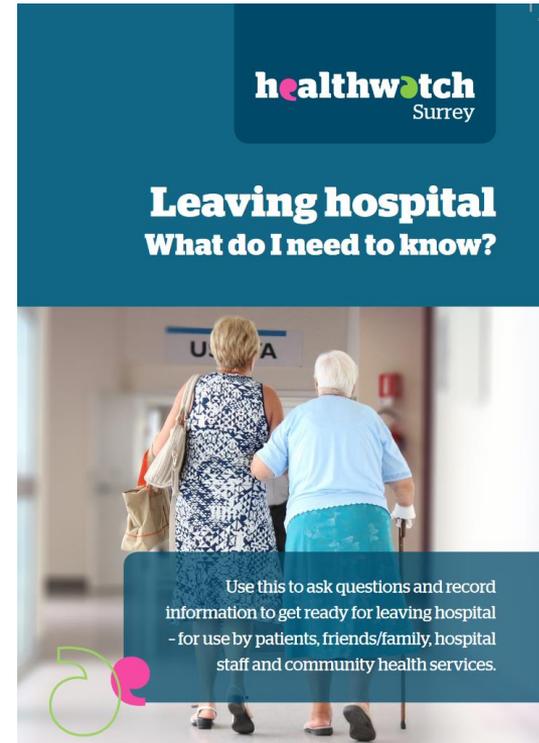
1. Ethics
2. Emotion
3. Logic



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.



The word "Examples" in a bold, blue, sans-serif font, positioned on the left side of the slide. A large blue decorative shape is partially visible on the far left edge of the slide.

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

A large green decorative shape on the bottom right corner of the slide, resembling a stylized letter 'C' or a partial circle.

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

A large, stylized blue shape on the left side of the slide, resembling a speech bubble or a bracket, partially overlapping the top and left edges.

What this means for our storytelling

Use representative examples

Showcase more than one experience (where possible)

Make examples relatable

A large, stylized green shape on the bottom right side of the slide, resembling a speech bubble or a bracket, partially overlapping the bottom and right edges.

Part two - our brand language



healthwatch

Why do we need a brand language guide?

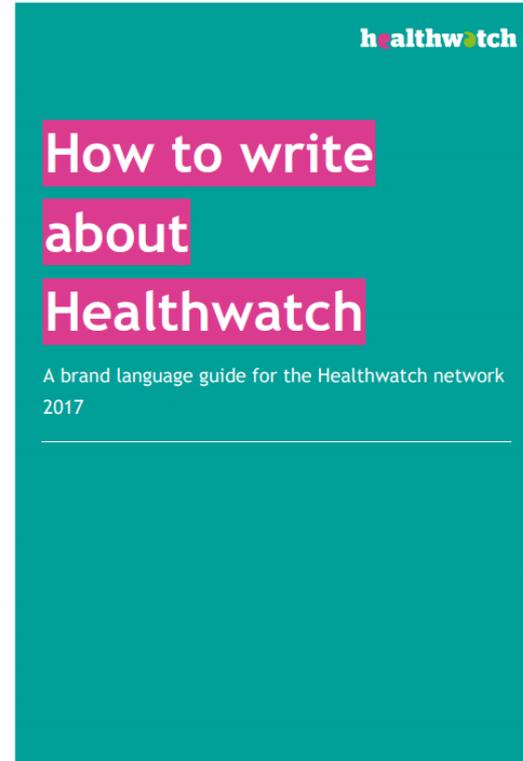
- Clarity and consistency
- Differentiation
- Builds trust

“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.



← **Tweet**

 **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 science

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

[#alevelresults2019](#)

8:32 AM · Aug 15, 2019 · [Twitter for iPhone](#)

335 Retweets 2.8K Likes

 **Dove UK & Ireland** ✓ @DoveUK · Sep 13, 2017

Thanks for all your wonderful pics! We've enjoyed watching you flaunt your fabulous [#RealUnderarms](#)



  [#RealUnderarms](#)

 2  3  11 

A large green decorative shape in the top-left corner, resembling a stylized 'P' or a speech bubble.

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 decorative shape in the bottom-right corner, resembling a stylized 'P' or a speech bubble.

A large, stylized green shape on the left side of the page, resembling a speech bubble or a drop with a tail.

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.

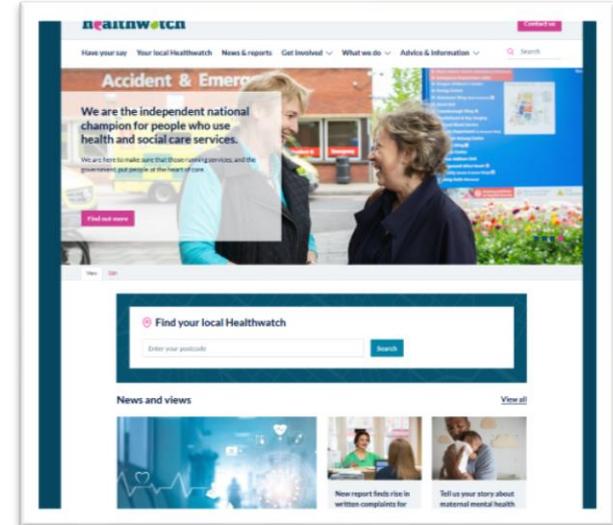
A large, stylized pink shape on the right side of the page, resembling a speech bubble or a drop with a tail.

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



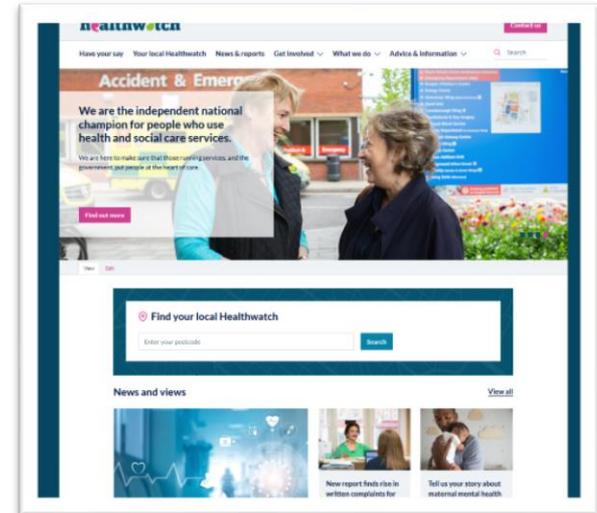
What could work better

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?



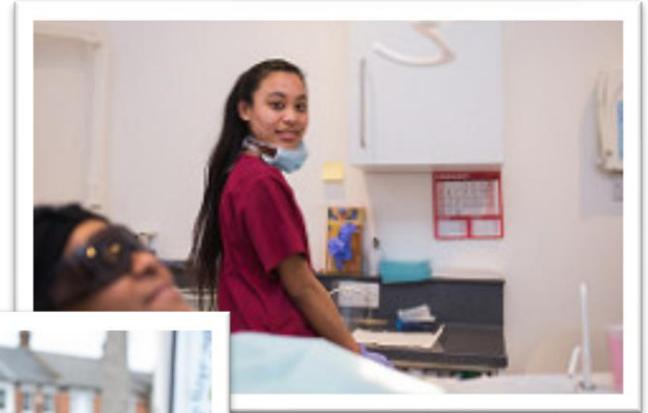
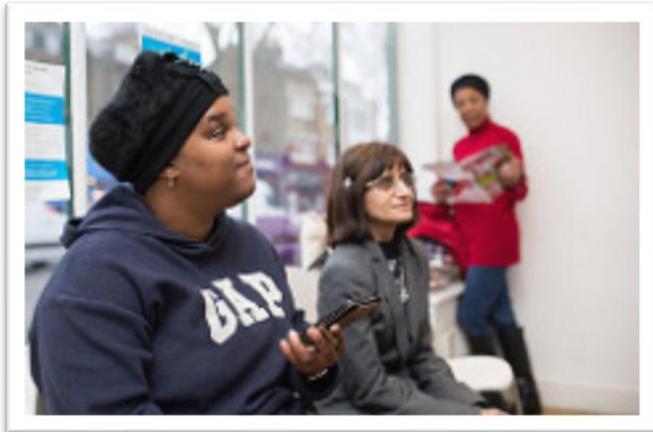
Why?



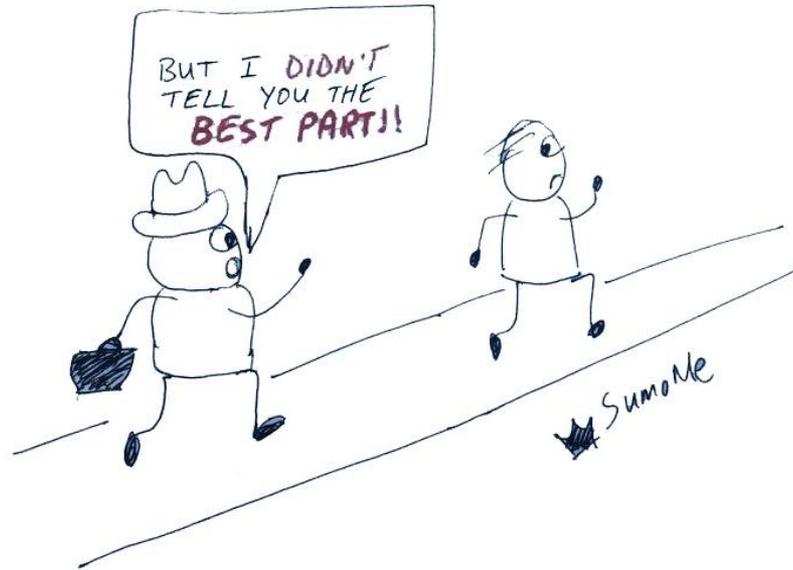
How?

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...



Further help

Contact the Communications Team via email 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>

