



What makes a good story?



Funded by
the European Union



EaP | Eastern
Partnership



OECC

#1. A STORY SHOULD BE PERSONAL

A question often asked here is whether a story should be **your own or someone else's**. It doesn't matter unless it's a case of plagiarism. Shakespeare's "Hamlet" and "King Lear" are both not original ideas by the great English playwright. He wrote them based on legends. But his stories are personal.

It doesn't matter whether it's your own experience or someone else's. What is important is that **you allow it to pass through yourself**. Perhaps, you look at a character from an unexpected angle, see another aspect in an action, or formulate another point of view with regard to a current one.

#2. A STORY SHOULD BE EMOTIONAL

Don't be monotonous! If you really want to motivate a person to act or show them the need to participate in, for example, your project or your organisation's activity, you absolutely should focus on **evoking emotions** in them, as well as the desire "to allow your story to pass through themselves" and become an active participant in a process.

It's only when **we give** an emotion that **we can get** an emotion **back**. A blank and unemotional story is most likely to fail to touch anyone's heart.

#3. A STORY SHOULD BE TRUE AND REALISTIC

Of course, you can try writing about unicorns, but ask yourself the following: what is more likely to strike a chord with your audience – people and their stories or some things your audience can't relate to? It means **a story should be trustworthy**. Support your story with facts and figures and give your audience an opportunity to check information.

Be the one to **draw attention to sources** or allow your audience to find the data you refer to in open sources. There's nothing worse than undermined trust. Never use any unsubstantiated or false information in your story.

#4. A STORY SHOULD BE PERTINENT AND CLEAR

It's no use transforming all your content, a website, etc., into stories. There should be a **balance in everything**.

Don't overload your reader or listener. The story has to be **clear**. Today, people live in an overabundance of information. That's why they will listen to those they understand. It's not enough just to write an educative piece or a factual report – you need to put it in clear terms.

Focus on one thing. A myriad of plots, characters, or conflicts – that's a novel, a saga, but not a story. Your story doesn't have to be short but try to make it concise and concentrated.

#5. A STORY SHOULD CORRESPOND TO ITS AUTHOR

An oral speech conveys 40%–60% of the information, the rest is conveyed by appearance, gestures, and intonation, and the listeners see inconsistencies quickly. So, it should be **thought through** from the orator's point of view. In written stories, readers pay attention to their source and formatting, they find information about an author, and again – inconsistencies become obvious.

Oral or written, a story should be **correct in terms of language**. It will be fantastic if your story is vital, that is retaining its key messages after many retellings.